

English-Speaking Vikings: Scandinavian Accents in the TV Series *Vikings* (2013-2020)

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1. Introduction

Vikings (2013-2020) is a popular historical fiction drama television series with a story set in the early Middle Ages, during the Viking Age. The languages spoken at that day and age by the Vikings were varieties of Old Norse, and although there are some depictions of these in the show, modern English is primarily used throughout. Most of the Viking characters in the series have distinctively non-standard English accents, which distinguishes them from the non-Viking characters. The hypothesis here is that the actors, wanting to “sound like Vikings” intentionally, modeled their speech on one or more of the Scandinavian English accents. It is assumed that the portrayed accents have been used as an artistic tool similar to how costumes, sets and lighting are used to create a series’ universe. Since many Scandinavians today are seen as descendants of the Vikings, the audience would probably expect the Vikings to sound like Scandinavians. So, a “Viking-accent” was fabricated and used for the purpose of placing the characters in a location and time. One wonders, however, exactly how the series’ creators and actors went about doing this. How was the “Viking-accent” achieved? It is the aim of this thesis to discover how accent was used to suggest a Viking identity in the series. An additional aim is to evaluate to what degree the portrayals were authentic. Do they bear a close resemblance to the actual phonological profile of Scandinavian English accents?

To answer the research questions and test the hypothesis, a first step will be to look at what current knowledge exists on the use of foreign accents for English-speaking characters in television and film. This will be followed by a chapter on the theoretical background of the present study, with explanations of central definitions and important terms. Then the Scandinavian English accents will be presented. After that, a presentation of the show’s first season as well as descriptions of the key characters chosen for analysis will be given. Then the methodology will be explained. This is also where a description of how the data will be collected, treated and organized will be given. Finally, the findings will be presented along with a discussion before a conclusion on what has been gained from this study can be attempted.

2. Literature Review

Many studies have been conducted on the use of accents in film and TV but few, if any, deal specifically with the use of foreign accents for English-speaking characters. None could be found that deal with fictitious accents, constructed for use in a popular TV series. As such, the present study is unique. The general focus, whenever accents are mentioned, seems to be on how accents have been used in the portrayal of ethnic minorities or socially marginalized groups and how accent portrayals have a tendency to perpetuate stereotypes. Many studies have for instance followed in the footsteps of Rosina Lippi-Green's (2011) renowned study of the representation of dialect in Disney films and, they all come to similar conclusions. Language ideologies are conveyed through the use of accents, and the portrayal of accents can reproduce and sustain language-based stereotypes of the groups who used these accents (Soares 2017:2). Obvious examples of such stereotypes are the crazy scientist with the "German accent" or the typical "Russian" sounding spy. (Steffensen 2012:2) similarly argues that "Foreign accents acted by Anglophone actors are a ubiquitous but politically and theoretically problematic feature of many audiovisual productions in the English-speaking world". He, too, focuses on how foreign accent portrayals are "used to represent and translate the outside in stereotyping ways that tend towards racialisation" (Steffensen 2012:1).

Language attitudes are, however, rather outside the scope of this thesis. The focus here is not on whether or not the foreign accents used by the actors perpetuate a Viking stereotype, but on which of the Scandinavian foreign accents the "Viking English accents" are modeled and on what role the authenticity of the accent portrayals play, if any at all. This study does not question or problematize whether a Viking stereotype is perpetuated by the use of accent in the series, it presupposes it. As such, this BA thesis attempts to add to a field that has been rather disregarded within the study of linguistics so far, namely the way accents are created and used as artistic tools, in this case to suggest a Viking identity and, to what degree, if any, the portrayals are authentic.

Much has been written in the popular media about the importance of authentic portrayals of accent in film and TV. A recent example is the public outrage over the accent portrayals in the TV series *Peaky Blinders* (2013-2022?). Fans are up in arms and viewers are said to be more obsessed with analysing accents than ever before (Sigeo 2020:1). A truly bad accent can derail any production and actors generally go to very great lengths to nail an accent down. However, what it all comes down to in the end is that the audience believes the stories we are watching and that may or may not require the accents to be one hundred percent accurate Sigeo (2020:1).

Because *Vikings* is a historical drama and not just fiction, and also because it was produced for and aired on the History Channel, it seems reasonable to assume that the aim has been towards high authenticity in all matters, including that of the use of accents. The fact that the famous voice coach Poll Moussoulides worked with the actors would also seem to support such an assumption Rudolph (2015:1).

Which linguistic stereotypes and markers would a professional voice coach like Poll Moussoulides have had the actors adopt in order to suggest a Viking identity? Why did he decide to have the actors use made-up Viking accents in the first place? He could simply have chosen to have them speak standard English most of the time with some depictions of Old Norse scattered here and there to remind the audience that the mother tongue of the Vikings was not really English. In one of his interviews Moussoulides offers some insights into his motivations when he says “Most people, they, don’t really have the opportunity to understand how our physicality, our vocality and tonality plays a huge role in how we feel about ourselves, and how other people feel about us” (Fitzpatrick 2019:13:08-13:28). This supports the assumption that the accents were deliberately used as an artistic tool, both helping the audience to believe in the story and the characters and also helping the actors get in character and deliver convincing performances. To whether the accent was deliberately modeled on the Scandinavian accents Moussoulides says “We had to find an accent, because nobody knew what the Vikings sounded like. So we had to find an accent that was both believable but understandable for an international audience. The Icelandic language is probably the closest to Old Norse, which was the language the Vikings spoke. We kind of landed on a combination of Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian” (Fitzpatrick 2019: 23:55-24:50). This explanation seems to confirm the hypothesis that the actors

intentionally modeled their speech on the Scandinavian English accents, but it offers nothing in the way of explaining how or whether a convincing Viking-English accent was achieved nor does it tell us anything about whether or not the portrayals were accurate or authentic.

A clue to what segmental and suprasegmental variables and realizations Moussoulides may have used to suggest a viking identity in the series can be found in the Scandinavian Accents Master (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013) compiled at the 2013 Voice and Speech Trainers Association Conference in Minneapolis. The document reads like an instructions manual for how to speak English with a Scandinavian accent. It presents an overview of the main similarities and differences between the Scandinavian accents and compares their pronunciation of vowels and consonant features, oral posture as well as prosody and intonation.

It will be by identifying and analyzing language traits like these in the speech of the actors in the series that it will be possible to ascertain whether Moussoulides' words hold true when he said they "landed on a combination of Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian" (Fitzpatrick 2019:23:55-24:50).

The following sources are essential in this context: *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Crystal 2008), *The Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (Wells 2008), *Introducing Phonetics and Phonology* (Davenport and Hannahs 2020), *The Phonological Basis of Foreign Accent: A Hypothesis* (Flege 1981) and *The Role of Intonation in Foreign Accents* (Els and Bot 1987). Much of what forms the theoretical background for the present work will be lifted directly from these sources.

3. Theoretical Background

Speech is an auditory representation of information. For there to be communication, at least two people are required. In a social context, deviation from the standard dialect or accent can have intricate social consequences but, this study is not concerned with a sociolinguistic analysis of the portrayed foreign accents. Here, the focus is on the mechanics of how the foreign accent has been constructed and used as an artistic tool for the purpose of placing the characters in a location and time and on whether the portrayals appear accurate or authentic when compared to typical features of the Scandinavian accents.

3.1 Foreign Accents

In general, what distinguishes a foreign accent from a dialect is that accent differences have to do with pronunciation only, whereas dialectal differences also concern grammar and vocabulary. (Melchers, Shaw, Sundkvist 2019:13). A foreign accent is distinctively different from a native one and is nearly unavoidable if the foreign language has been learnt after puberty according to the “critical period hypothesis for second language learning” (Flege 1981:444). The most influential factors that affect the accent of a foreign English speaker are at what age they learnt the language, who they learnt it from since it relates to the phonemic inventories of those people and, how the language was acquired. The speaker’s native language also affects the speaker’s foreign language production of syllables, i.e. the segments, vowels and consonants as well as the rhythm and intonation and stress of the utterances (Flege 1981:451).

However, the foreign accents of interest in this study did not arise in the normal way, as a consequence of factors such as those described above. For one thing, the accents in question are rehearsed portrayals, not spontaneous or natural speech. For another, the accents are fictitious, intentionally put together for artistic effect in a television production. This renders the social theories one would normally turn to for explanations more or less useless.

Because the subject of this thesis are rehearsed portrayals of a constructed, fictitious foreign accent, any attempt at a conventional explanation for the sounds the actors produce seems arbitrary. If we are to believe their voice-coach, the actors were coached to produce a

Viking-English accent which combined elements from the “Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian” foreign accents. How exactly this was realized will require a look at what characterizes these three foreign accents so that a comparison can be made between them and the actors’ performances.

How is a foreign accent perceived as such and how is it identifiable as indicative of a particular geographical location or nationality? It is not just mispronunciations. “Listeners are more likely to base a judgement of foreign accent on some combination of segmental, subsegmental, and suprasegmental differences which distinguish the speech of native from that of non-native speakers” (Flege 1981:455). A segment refers to “any discrete unit that can be identified, either physically or auditorily, in the stream of speech” and a subsegmental feature is one “which begins or ends within one of the phases of articulation of a segment” (Crystal 2008:426). Finally, a suprasegmental feature refers to “a vocal effect which extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as a pitch, stress or juncture pattern. In contrast with ‘segmental’, it is seen as one of two main classes into which phonological units can be divided” (Crystal 2008:466). The term *prosody* refers collectively to variations in *pitch*, *loudness*, *tempo* and rhythm. Sometimes it is used loosely as a synonym for *suprasegmental*, but in a narrower sense it refers only to the above variables, the remaining suprasegmental features being labelled *paralinguistic*” (Crystal 2008:393).

For the purpose of deciphering the code that is the accent that the Vikings speak in the series, it is the segmental and suprasegmental (prosodic) features that will be considered. The subsegmental and paralinguistic features fall outside of the scope of this study because the analysis of these features requires expensive, sophisticated technology (high tech microphones in a laboratory setting) and because background noise, such as the music and sound effects in a film recording, would make a reliable analysis of those variables virtually impossible.

3.2 Phonetic and Phonological Variation

On the segmental level, Phonetic and Phonological variation occurs within the vowels and the consonants. When analyzing variation within the two, the standard, established method is to record speakers reading either a list of words, usually the standard lexical sets developed by Wells (1982), or reading a passage and then analyzing the phonetic realization either auditorily or acoustically.

Auditory analysis involves transcribing the recordings using “the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)” (Gut 2013a:230) and in the case of consonants, “one of the IPA diacritic symbols is added to the transcription [...] in order to indicate additional articulatory details of its production” (Gut 2013a:239).

A problem with auditory analysis is the subjective factor. When different transcribers transcribe the same recording “the reliability of transcriptions vary between low and satisfactory, depending on the amount of training transcribers had and on the transcribing conditions” (Gut 2013a:239). An acoustic analysis on the other hand, yields much more reliable results because the “acoustic measurements are objective and quantitative” (Gut 2013a:239). However, acoustic analysis requires “high quality recordings and labour-intensive measurements [as well as] knowledge of the acoustic properties of consonants” and is much more time-consuming. In addition, specialist knowledge is also required in order to interpret the results correctly. Although the auditory analysis also requires some training, “perfect agreement between transcribers will never be reached” (Gut 2013a:239); it requires less technical support and is much more time-efficient.

To look at the suprasegmental level means to consider “all phonological units and processes that are larger than individual speech sounds” (Gut 2013b:244). In other words, it involves investigating prosodic features such as “stress placement in words and utterances, speech rhythm and intonation” (Gut 2013b:244).

Whereas the definitions of *stress* as “the relative prominence a syllable has” (Gut 2013b:244) and *speech rhythm* as “the major organizing principles of speech” (Gut 2013b:248) are rather straightforward, the term *intonation* “is used with many different definitions in linguistics” (Gut 2013b:251) ranging from only the use of pitch and pitch movements, to broader definitions where phonological phenomena of intonational phrasing, nucleus placement and pitch are also included.

The methods used for suprasegmental analysis, both concerning *stress*, *speech rhythm* and *intonation*, are very similar to those employed for the segmental level. However, making judgements on the suprasegmental features of speech is more challenging. Speakers “are usually recorded while reading out (nonsense) word lists or lists of sentences. Subsequently, one or more raters listen to the recordings and indicate which syllable of a word they perceive as stressed” (Gut 2013b:245). As with segmental analysis, pros and cons have to be weighed and a choice made between the auditory and the acoustic method for analysis. Those pros and cons of one versus the other are also more or less identical. The auditory method, both when investigating intonation, stress and rhythm, is not considered very reliable because it is very dependent on the skill of the transcriber. That the auditory method is nevertheless favored in many studies, can again be explained by pointing to the technical and skill prerequisites of the acoustic method, as well as to the fact that it is much more time-consuming. In addition, ‘not very reliable’ is not the same as ‘totally unreliable’ and “the auditory analysis and the transcription system of intonation of the British School are a well established and widely accepted form of investigating and describing intonation in various languages” (Gut 2013b:255).

When looking at intonation, it is the minor and major tone units of the intonational structure that are considered (Trim 1959). Auditory analysis involves dividing utterances in a recording into tone units and then identifying them on the basis of a set of acoustic cues. A major tone unit always contains a nucleus, a stressed syllable with a distinct pitch movement and usually coincides with an utterance, while a minor tone unit is usually a phrase (Gut 2013b:253). Because a proper tone unit analysis would be to go too far into precise detail, a more superficial look at intonation will suffice for the purposes of this study.

In auditory analysis, rhythm is also often considered but is challenging to such a degree that the validity is often questioned and some researchers “have even proposed dispensing with the concept of speech rhythm altogether” (Gut 2013b:248). “Recent approaches to investigating speech rhythm are based on fine-grained acoustic measurements that focus on durational relationships between vowels and consonants within an utterance” (Gut 2013b:249).

For the purposes of the present study, going too far into detail as concerns the suprasegmental features has been deemed unnecessary. Here it will be sufficient to look at word stress and basic intonation, i.e. a more superficial analysis due to the smaller scope. The segmental, rather than the suprasegmental varieties will be in focus for the most part.

3.3 Scandinavian Accents, Stereotypes and Markers

According to Jan Terje Faarlund “English is in fact a Scandinavian language” (Nickelsen 2012). He claims that it is not just a matter of loanwords or vocabulary, but that the fundamental syntax and structure of English is strikingly similar to Norwegian. Moreover, the grammar is said to be more or less identical. Based on this, it seems safe to assume that there would be no point in attempting a comparison of grammar or vocabulary between standard English and the “Viking-accent”. Correspondingly, the focus in this thesis will be strictly on accents. The analysis here will not consider differences in grammar and vocabulary.

If the premise that the actors intentionally modeled their speech on one or more of the Scandinavian English accents is true, one would expect to find many examples of typical features of Scandinavian-English accents in their speech. It is likely that such typical features would be those perceived to be a stereotype of that group and this study expects that stereotypes have been used as an artistic tool to effect a foreign identity, a “flavour” to the speech of the Viking characters.

“Stereotype” can be defined as a linguistic variable which is a generally accepted characterization of the speech of a particular group, even though it does not always accurately reflect the speech of those it is supposed to represent (Crystal 2008:453). This is a definition

taken from sociolinguistics but it must be noted that the common social implications connected to the term “stereotypes” in sociolinguistics are not relevant here because the stereotypical features of the Scandinavian accents would not have been used in *Vikings* to carry modern Scandinavian stereotypical features. The intention would have been to suggest a geographical location and a Viking identity, not a (modern) Scandinavian identity, for the Viking characters. This study recognizes that identity brought through speech features brings with it social meanings that define groups in different ways. However, those social meanings would not relate to modern Scandinavians in *Vikings* but to Vikings in the Viking Age. The focus will be on the most salient features observed in the material in an attempt to showcase a selection of different stereotypical features of the Viking accents.

The stereotypical features identified in the material will most likely be those that a general audience would recognize as “Scandinavian sounding”. Stereotypical features are after all the sort of features that might have been “the subject of dialect performances and impersonations” (Melchers, Shaw, Sundkvist 2019:27). Neither markers, defined in sociolinguistics as variables “that speakers are less aware of than a stereotype but which shows consistent style effects” (Melchers, Shaw, Sundkvist 2019:28) nor indicators, “which conveys little or no social import [and people are] largely unaware of the distinction or its distribution within the speech community” (Crystal 2008:453) will be considered here. This is because, as previously mentioned, sociolinguistic terms have limited relevance in relation to the material analyzed here, i.e. rehearsed portrayals of a constructed accent used for artistic effect. It is the most salient features identified in the material that will be considered the *stereotypes* here.

3.4 The Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish EFL accents

Before diving into the material, in search of “Scandinavian sounding”, stereotypical features in the Viking-accent portrayals, it seems prudent to first have a look at exactly what one might expect to find. As mentioned previously, when asked about the accents used, the series’ voice coach Poll Moussoulides, said they landed on “a combination of Icelandic, Swedish and Norwegian” (Fitzpatrick 2019:23:55-24:50). In an interview about the series, Katheryn Winnick,

who plays Lagertha, says that special attention was afforded the accents: “we had to work with a dialect coach to try to find what kind of sounds they made and how they spoke. The fact that they were Norsemen meant that they had a Scandinavian accent” (Radish 2013) she also volunteers that the accent is “a Swedish accent and an old way of speaking” (Anonymous 2021). Echoing Katheryn Winnick, Alexander Ludvig, who plays the adult Björn, says in another interview that “they researched ... what the accent would have sounded like back then [and] it’s like a Norwegian” (Lash 2014).

Unsurprisingly, the Scandinavian EFL accents considered here, i.e. the three repeatedly singled out by the voice coach and the cast, are quite similar. That may have been what recommended this particular mix to them as a distinctively Nordic flavoring to the actors’ accents. Swedish and Norwegian are especially alike, “the two most similar accents in the [Scandinavian] bunch” (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013) and it may be rather hard to distinguish between them. Usually, Scandinavian speakers do not have very heavy foreign accents and speakers generally master “length contrasts, stress-timing, and vowel reduction in English” (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). However, as pointed out, there are some differences in the pronunciation of certain vowels and consonants as well as prosody variations which will give Scandinavian English speakers away.

For instance, Icelandic speakers, very much in contrast to Swedish and Norwegian speakers, will rely primarily on loudness to indicate stress/importance whereas Swedes and Norwegians will make great use of falling and falling-rising pitch contours. Norwegian speakers, in particular, speak in a sort of steady trudging forward motion with a consistent rise and fall, a rhythmic speech (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). “Icelandic places primary stress on the first syllable of a word, a feature which may well carry over into English, especially with unfamiliar words” (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013).

When analysing the actor’s accent portrayals one would also, in addition to such suprasegmental features as mentioned above, very much expect to find segmental features indicative of a Scandinavian accent. Segmental variation appears in the variables found in consonants and vowels. The combination of variation that emerges from these integral parts of language creates

unique expressions, making a style. To understand the expressions, we must look at the building blocks of the structure. Scandinavian accents, for instance, often have vowel shortening (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013; Weinberger 2015). All three accents under scrutiny here in fact have both vowel shortening and vowel raising (Weinberger 2015).

When considering the Scandinavian realizations of Monophthongs and Diphthongs and comparing them to the linguistic standard Received Pronunciation (RP), Wells' lexical sets come in handy as a useful tool for describing the common features of these accents. FLEECE AND NURSE are examples of lexical sets with vowel shortening in the Icelandic and Norwegian varieties. The lexical set NURSE is realized as an open mid central unrounded vowel [ɜ:] in RP but the Norwegian variety is shortened NE: [ɜ],[ɜr] while the Swedish and Icelandic varieties are much less open with more closed lips a rhotacized close-mid central unrounded vowel SE: [ɘ] IE: [ɘ]. Another lexical set to look out for is FLEECE, where the vowel in RP is realized as a long close front unrounded vowel [i:] but is shortened in the Norwegian variety [i] and shortened and raised in Icelandic [i̥]. The Swedish variety however not shortened but realized similarly long like RP SE: [i:]. KIT is yet another lexical set of interest here. In RP it is a long near-close near-front unrounded vowel [ɪ] but the Norwegian variety is raised [i̥]. The Icelandic variety remains identical to the RP variety, [ɪ] while, the Swedish variety is rather different, with a lowered close front unrounded vowel [i̯]. PALM is a striking lexical set also of interest. In RP it is an open back unrounded vowel [ɑ], whereas in the Norwegian and Icelandic variety it is realized all the way in the front, becoming an open front unrounded vowel, [a] and [a] respectively. The Swedish variety is, unlike the other two, more similar to the RP variety although it is more rounded [ɑ̥].

In the case of diphthongs, the lexical sets PRICE, FACE and GOAT are of special interest (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). These are realized in the following way. PRICE as [aɪ], [äɪ], [aɪ] and [eɪ], FACE as [eɪ], [eɪ̯], [eɪ̯], [e] and [eɪ] and GOAT as as [əʊ], [oʊ̯], [o] and [oʊ] in RP, the Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic varieties respectively.

Because the three Scandinavian languages studied here are all rhotic and even though rhoticity can be expressed in some different ways, some forms of it would most probably be found in the material. In addition, segmental variation of different sorts may be expected. In the consonants, the typical elements would include th-stopping: replacement of the voiceless dental fricative [θ] with the voiceless alveolar plosive [t] and of the voiced dental fricative [ð] with the voiced alveolar plosive [d] in words like *through, thorough, thought* and *that, these, them*. Replacement of the voiced alveolar fricative [z] with the voiceless alveolar sibilant [s], especially in final position, in words like *eyes, his, ladies* would also not be surprising as these are features common in all the three languages (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). Yet another feature to look out for would be replacement of the voiced labialized velar approximant [w] with the voiced labiodental fricative [v] which also features in all the three languages (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). Finally, all three also have final obstruent devoicing in common.

One difference between the three is that for Icelandic speakers, the voiceless dental fricative [θ] and the voiced dental fricative [ð] are used interchangeably depending on the position of the variety in correspondence with the structure of the word. However they are retracted as opposed to the RP variants. Another difference lies within “/ð/→[ɖ] as Swedish does not possess either /θ/ or /ð/ natively, but /θ/ appears in many foreign loan words and does not seem to pose much of a problem. The same definitely cannot be said for /ð/ which is usually realized as a dentalized [ɖ].” (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013). Swedish also has no /z/ phoneme, and so is very likely to replace English /z/ with their dentalized [s̺]. This is one of those features that are often heard even in speakers whose English is otherwise excellent. “Even when the initial /z/ has been mastered, and in certain other instances where /z/ is spelled with a ‘z’, Swedish speakers still use [s̺] in words like *rise, his, nose, physical, etc.*” (Singer, Eng, Fujita, Armstrong, Tyndall:2013).

4. Materials

The subject matter of this study is the popular television series *Vikings*, a historical fantasy drama television series, created by Michael Hirst. It consists of a total of 6 seasons and 89 episodes. Due to the necessary delimitations of a BA thesis, this study only considers the first season, which consists of 9 separate episodes. that “translate” to approximately 400 minutes of screen time.

The subtitles which were used for the transcriptions were collected from the web page Sublikescript (Anonymous 2013). To type up the transcriptions, an online *IPA Keyboard* (IPA Typeit) was utilized. Finally, whenever necessary, transcriptions were checked by using the *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (Wells 2008).

4.1 Presentation of the characters

The list of characters in *Vikings* is very long and there is a large number of both major and minor characters. Focusing on all of them would have been impossible here. As it happens, nine characters were officially credited as main characters for the first season. Eight of them were Vikings. Of the eight, all except Aslaug, the protagonist’s lover, appear in most, if not all of the episodes. All are important to the plot and (except for Aslaug) have a lot of screen time. In addition to these remaining seven Vikings, two additional characters stand out. These two are Björn, the protagonist’s young son, and Jarl Borg, a powerful enemy of Ragnar’s. Both have considerable screen time and are important to the plot. Björn and Jarl Borg will therefore also be considered here.

The protagonist Ragnar Lothbrok, his wife Lagertha, his son Björn, his brother Rollo and his close friend Floki are played by Travis Fimmel, Katheryn Winnick, Nathan O’Toole, Clive Standen and Gustaf Skarsgård respectively. The antagonist and Ragnar’s predecessor as Earl of Kattegat, Earl Haraldsson, and the Earl’s wife Siggy, are played by Gabriel Byrne and Jessalyn

Gilsig. That leaves King Horik of Denmark, played by Donal Logue, and Jarl Borg, played by Thorbjørn Harr.

All of the actors are native English speakers except for Gustaf Skarsgård and Thorbjørn Harr, who are Swedish and Norwegian, respectively.

5. Methodology

The methodology used to discover how the “Viking-accent” was achieved in the series, reflects the aims of this thesis. The procedure of content analysis was used, and a qualitative research method, focusing on explaining the data, was chosen.

The data collection process encompassed watching the whole first season from start to finish, taking note of all occurrences of foreign accent in the speech of each and all of the selected characters. On the basis of these observations, characters were assigned to one of two groups, either the “Scandinavian Accent” or the “Other Accent” group. Then, key scenes showcasing the different actors were chosen for a much more detailed analysis, both in order to make sure that the initial classification of the accent portrayals had been correct but also, and even more importantly, in an attempt to decide which Scandinavian accent or mix of accents have been used in the portrayals. Care was taken to ensure that all of the characters, from both groups, appeared in at least one of the chosen scenes. Scenes with more examples of foreign accents were preferred over others.

Then, employing the auditory method, the linguistic output was carefully phonemically transcribed using the IPA and analyzed. In the end, after having considered all of the collected data and final analysis, each of the accent portrayals was assigned a final accent status as either “Scandinavian” or “Other”. The accents that were determined as “Scandinavian sounding” were singled out for a closer, much more detailed study. In order to attempt a better understanding of these “Scandinavian” accents, a narrower phonological transcription, in order to reveal the finer details, was attempted on selected sections.

6. Results and Discussion

This BA thesis set out to explore the accent portrayals in the TV series *Vikings* and find out how accents had been used to suggest a Viking identity in the series. The main hypothesis was that the actors had intentionally modelled their speech on one or more of the Scandinavian English accents and that this Scandinavian flavored accent had been used as an artistic device in order to locate the Vikings in a time and a place. A high degree of authenticity in the accent portrayals was expected. After all, the series is a historical fiction TV series based on historical figures and events and aired on the History channel. Actors in TV and film usually go to great lengths to get their accents right. It was assumed that the “right accent” would be the one spoken in Scandinavian countries, in the Lands of the Vikings.

To test hypotheses, two analyses were made, a general overview followed by a detailed scrutiny. First, the first season of the series was watched once from beginning to end in order to make an overall, general assessment. The findings at this stage only partly supported the hypothesis because many of the main characters, such as Rollo, Siggy, Earl Haraldson and most of the extras to boot, consistently spoke in typical, easily recognizable British accents. Only a handful of the actors studied were found to have attempted a Scandinavian accent or at least a Scandinavian flavoring to their speech. These were the actors playing Lagertha, the young Björn, Jarl Borg and Floki as well as to a lesser degree Ragnar and King Horik. In Lagertha, the young Björn, Jarl Borg and Floki’s portrayals, Scandinavian features could consistently and abundantly be found in the material. For Ragnar and King Horik, the portrayals had to be described as unique and peculiarly “foreign” sounding. The rest were, as mentioned above, standard British English, sometimes with a sprinkle of Canadian, American or Irish accent features thrown in for good measure. The characters of Rollo, Earl Haraldsson and Siggy fall into this latter group. It was clear that Received Pronunciation (RP) had been used as a general basis of the speech by most of the actors and actresses. The accent portrayals of actors and actresses that were standard RP were therefore not chosen for phonological transcriptions since the interest here lay firmly with the Scandinavian accent portrayals.

After the first general overview, a detailed scrutiny was carried out on the accent portrayals that had been grouped as “Scandinavian”. Here, the hypothesis that the actors, wanting to “sound like Vikings”, intentionally modeled their speech on one or more of the Scandinavian was confirmed. However, the actors who did attempt a Scandinavian accent, were often inconsistent in their portrayals. The segmental variables, and realizations that were used to suggest a Viking identity by these actors did not always show homogeneity. The features most commonly used by the actors to sound “foreign” were variations in the realm of suprasegmentals, as expected beforehand. Only very few cases of segmental variation were recorded but whenever they were used, they most certainly stood out. More detailed results, an evaluation of the validity of those results, plausible explanations for the findings, as well as possible implications of the general disregard for, or at least inattention to, accuracy and authenticity in the accent portrayals, will be discussed in the following.

Within the group of actors who were found to have modelled their portrayals on one or more of the Scandinavian accents, Katheryn Winnick’s accent as Lagertha contained the fewest examples of obviously Scandinavian features and her use of them was not always consistent. One example of inconsistency is her use of rhoticity. This is clear in for instance Scenes 2.1 and 2.4 from the second episode (Anonymous 2013). Sometimes the inconsistency in rhoticity appeared within a single line, as in the last line in Scene 2.4 with /ɑ:r/ and /tʊ'geðə/. Other times, contrary to the standard British pronunciation of “our” /'aʊə/, Lagertha’s rhotic inconsistency seemed also to reflect in her vowels, as such that the rhoticity appeared together with the GA vowels. This could be because the actress is originally Canadian, and slipping into rhoticity might also bring forth the vowels of that rhotic native accent. Her pronunciation of [r] however, is more in tune with a Norwegian voiced alveolar trill [r]. Lagertha’s non-rhotic accent also has a vowel quality more similar to RP.

The feature of Scandinavian English that makes Katheryn Winnick’s accent portrayal most distinctively Scandinavian flavored, is her tendency to replace [w] with [v], a stereotypical feature of both Icelandic and Norwegian English. However, there are some inconsistencies in her portrayal on this point as well as she does sometimes also use the RP [w].

The accent portrayed by Nathan O'Toole in the role of Björn was much more consistent and convincingly Scandinavian than Kathryn Winnick's. Björn's portrayal featured an ensemble of Scandinavian features. These most notably included replacement of [w] with [v], replacement of [z] → [s], aspirated/ejective stops as in /dʒʌst ə'baʊtʰ/, final consonant devoicing, aspirated [kʰ] and ejective [tʰ], th stopping [ð] with [d] and pronunciation of the [θ] → [θ̥] like when he says /vʌt vɪl 'hæpən ət də θ̥ɪŋ/. Björn also has a tendency to use Norwegian vowels. This could most often be seen in the lexical sets PALM, KIT and FACE. (Transcription Document 1.1, 1.4)

The Swedish actor Gustaf Skarsgård plays the character of Floki. His accent portrayal is, also not very surprisingly, quite consistently Scandinavian especially in the rhythm and intonation of his delivery. His speech shows consistent replacement of [z] with [s], especially in final position, medial & final /z/ realized as [s] when spelled with an 's', and often even when it is not, vowel shortening, final consonant devoicing, final obstruent devoicing, fully released geminated [p,t,k] stops, [tʰ] [k] → [k̥k̥ç], [l] → [l̥] and trill r to boot. (Transcription Document 1.4 5.1 9.1)

Jarl Borg, played by Thorbjørn Harr who is Norwegian also, like fellow Scandinavian Gustaf Skarsgård, unsurprisingly flavors his accent portrayal very consistently and abundantly with Scandinavian stereotypical features. His tone stands out as brightly forward-focused and features ample examples of [w] → [v], th stopping [ð] → [d], vowel shortening, rise and fall intonation and use of rhoticity. (Transcription Document, 9.1)

Of the remaining portrayals in the "Scandinavian Accents" group, Travis Fimmel's and Donal Logue's really only vaguely Scandinavian accents stand out. Travis Fimmel plays the protagonist, Ragnar Lothbrok. His accent portrayal is incredibly inconsistent. Ragnar does sound foreign, his manner of speaking does give him a unique sound. However most of this is a result of a peculiar intonation pattern. Ragnar uses both fall rise and rise fall patterns. He also uses some Scandinavian features, such as th stopping [ð] with [d]. 1.1 He also at times showcases final obstruent devoicing. (Transcription Document, 1.2) However, it is mostly Travis Fimmel's inconsistent accent portrayal that gives it a "foreign air". Not only does it show a mix of rhotic and non rhotic variants but perplexingly, can contain a voiced alveolar approximant [ɹ] and a

voiced alveolar tap or flap [r] together with the dropping of the phoneme [non-rhotic realization], all in one and the same sentence. (Transcription Document, 1.1 1.2)

Donel Lodge's accent portrayal as King Horik, while not as perplexing as Travis Fimmel's, is also a mix of features where scant pattern or system could be discerned. Features observed included sporadic vowel shortening, monophthongization alveolar tap [r], th fronting [z] -> [s] and final consonant devoicing [w] -> [v] and the accent portrayal achieved a "foreign" flavor in this way but it did not appear very convincingly Scandinavian. (Transcription Document, 8.1 - 9.1)

All in all, the most salient features of the fictitious Viking accents, those that could be characterised as stereotypical features, were found to be vowel shortening, replacement of the voiced labialized velar approximant [w] with the voiced labiodental fricative [v], replacement of the voiceless dental fricative [θ] with the voiceless alveolar plosive [t], replacement of the voiced dental fricative [ð] with the voiced alveolar plosive [d] and replacement of the voiced alveolar fricative [z] with the voiceless alveolar sibilant [s] in addition to final consonant devoicing. As for intonation wise, most of the performances fell within the Swedish - Norwegian rise & fall pattern.

When reflecting on the validity of these results, several elements have to be considered. First it must be acknowledged that the limited time for conducting and completing the research component of this thesis, as well as the necessary delimitations of a BA thesis, such as having to narrow down the sample of characters and key scenes for transcription, inevitably led to results which provide only a limited view of the accent portrayals in the series. A larger sample of both major and minor characters might have produced more nuanced results. However, although the generalizability of the results are thus somewhat limited, they nevertheless suffice for the purpose of answering the research questions posed in this thesis.

Another pertinent concern as to the results' reliability is the position of the researcher. One researcher working solo is never ideal. A second pair of eyes and ears and a second set of

transcriptions to which the ones painstakingly made here could have been compared, would have been preferable. However, even though it is possible that a second researcher might perceive some of the linguistic variables differently, it is unlikely that the general results would have varied greatly in the end, seeing as the features were mostly obvious and rarely very hard to identify.

Finally, there were some challenges involving the nature of the material which, in some cases made analysis difficult and which may therefore have affected the results, but only in a very minor way. These were challenges such as the presence of background music or sound-effects which in some cases made it difficult to reliably discern certain speech features.

The overall results do seem to contradict many of the initial assumptions made in this thesis. The Viking-accent portrayals only half the time bore close resemblance to the actual phonological profile of Scandinavian English accents and only in a handful of cases was the resemblance strong and consistent. The two performances that stood out as distinctly Scandinavian, the Viking-accent of Floki and Jarl Borg, were performed by Scandinavians: Gustav Skarsgård is Swedish and Thorbjørn Harr is Norwegian. These two actors may have chosen to exaggerate their own Scandinavian accents because it was an easy and convenient way for them to suggest a foreign identity for their Viking characters, not because of any desire for authenticity. Although the same cannot be said for the performances of Katheryn Winnick, Nathan O'Toole and some of the extras, who indeed do seem to have modeled their speech, rather successfully, on stereotypical features of the Scandinavian accents and to whom this would not have come naturally nor without effort and possibly also training, many of the accent portrayals studied here nevertheless did not attempt to sound Scandinavian.

One important assumption the results do not at all contradict, however, is that the portrayed accents were used as an artistic tool similar to how costumes, sets, lighting, and so on are used to create a series' universe. That a great majority of the Viking actors put on a distinctively non-standard English accent as part of their performances as Vikings is without dispute. That most did not strive for that accent to have a distinctive Scandinavian flavoring, is the surprising part. There may be different reasons for this.

First, it may be suggested that some of the actors were simply less skilled or successful than the others. Accent portrayals are challenging and some actors are famous for their ability to successfully put on convincing accents in film and on TV while others are ridiculed for their failures to do the same. However, this explanation is not very plausible seeing as the actors in question are not amateurs but professional actors and actresses in a global mega-success of a production.

Another explanation could be that even though actors as well as producers are generally quite occupied with making the accent portrayals, as with all other aspects of their work as authentic and accurate as possible, TV production is limited by budgets and time. Perhaps it was the voice coach Poll Moussoulides' honest ambition and intention to train the actors to portray the "Viking-accent" as Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish, as he claimed in the interview referred to earlier, but that there simply were not enough time or resources to make this a reality.

However, perhaps the most likely explanation, in light of what has been revealed here, is that the accent portrayals were never really required to do much more than help establish a foreign setting and perhaps to aid in character portrayal. The Vikings only needed to sound "different", sufficiently foreign and perhaps vaguely Nordic overall, to convince an audience who, it may have been hoped, would not have very strong opinions on what might be the correct or authentic way for Vikings to sound. After all, no bona-fide Viking accents to which the accent portrayals in *Vikings* could be compared, measured up against and possibly found wanting, actually exist in reality. Perhaps neither the actors nor the producers thought the target audience would be familiar enough with actual Scandinavian accents in order to tell the difference.

7. Conclusion

This thesis investigated the portrayal of distinctively non-standard English accents by Viking characters in the TV series *Vikings*. The ambition was to contribute meaningfully to the knowledge of how accents are created and used as artistic tools on TV, something that has been rather neglected within the study of linguistics thus far. The main hypothesis, that the accents were intentionally modelled on one or more of the Scandinavian English accents and used as an artistic tool to locate the Vikings in a time and place, was only partly confirmed. Most of the actors had indeed put on an accent as an artistic tool to affect a Viking identity, but not all of them could be said to have done so by intentionally modelling their speech on one or more of the Scandinavian accents. The Viking-accent portrayals that did bear a close resemblance to the actual phonological profile of Scandinavian accents did, for the most part, share a few stereotypical traits. These included replacement of [w] with [v], replacement of [z] with [s] and voiced alveolar trill [r]. The remaining portrayals studied did not seem to have attempted a foreign accent at all or displayed a mixture of foreign accent features following no discernible pattern. A few alternative explanations were suggested in the discussion, but no satisfactory answer can be given to why authenticity or accuracy in the portrayals do not seem to have been of paramount importance. Audience expectations seem to be the most likely culprit. This points to a major weakness of this study, namely its limited scope. It would have been ideal if the perceptions of the Viking accents by the audience could also have been put to the test. As it is, there is no way of telling for sure on what level the audience perceived the accuracy or authenticity of the accents. A tip for future studies would be to start there, with the audience.

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Appendix

Transcription Document: *Vikings* Season 1

Episode 1:

SCENE 1.1: Björn & Ragnar, 06:57 – 07:58

Björn: What will happen at the thing?

[ʃvat vɪl 'hæpən ðət də θɪŋ]

Norwegian [a] - [w] with [v] - [ð] with [d] - Rise and Fall + Raised [θ] ?

Ragnar: The Earl will deal with some criminal offences and then, we'll discuss the summer raids.

[ʃði: ɜ:rɪ wɪl di:l ðə wɪsəm 'krɪmɪnəl ə'fensɪz ʃæn'den ðə wi:t dɪ'skʌs ðə 'sʌmə rɛɪdz]

Notes: [ð] with [d] only once , Rise and Fall,

Björn: And where will you go?

[ʃ əŋd wɛr vɪl ju: go]

[w] with [v] Norwegian Monothongized GOAT Vowel - Icelandic DRESS Vowel [ɛ] - Final obstruent devoicing

Ragnar: The Earl decides.

/ði: ɜ:rɪ dɪ'saɪdz/

Ragnar: He owns the ships.

/hi: ounz ðə ʃɪps/

Ragnar: He'll send us to the east, as always, to the baltic lands.

/hi:ɪ send ʌs tə ði: i:st æz 'ɔ:lweɪz tə ði: bæltɪk lændz/

Ragnar: But I want to know what is to the west... what cities and gods are over there. See, I'm not satisfied... With this.

/bʌt aɪ wʌnə noʊ wɒtʒ tə ðə west wʌt 'sɪtɪz ænd ɡɒdz ər 'oʊvər ðer/

/si: am nɒt 'sætɪsfɑɪd wɪð 'ðɪs/

Ragnar: Odin gave his eye to acquire knowledge, but I would give far more.

[ʃ'ouðɪn geɪv hɪz aɪ ðə ə'kwɑɪ 'nɑ:lɪdʒ ʃ bʌt aɪ wʊd geɪv ʃ fɑ:r mɔ:]

A voiced alveolar approximant [ɹ] + trill [r], + non rhotic realization of more /mɔ:/. Rise and Fall

Björn: And will Earl Haraldson let you?

[ʃ ənd wɪl ɜ:rɪ hærlɪdʌn leɪt ju:] [w] with [v]

Features

Björn: [w] with [v] - [ð] with [d] - Rise and Fall Intonation + Norwegian Vowels

SCENE 1.2: Scene, Björn & Ragnar, 9:52 – 11:23

Ragnar: I went to confess my love to her, but I was set upon by a bear and an enormous hound who guarded her home.

[ɪ wɛnt tu: kən'fes maɪ lʌv tu: hɜ:r ʃ bʌt aɪ wʌz set ə'pɑ:n baɪ ə beər ænd ʌn ɪ'nɔ:ɪməs haʊnd
hu: 'gɑ:rdɪd hɜ:r hoʊm]

Fall & Rise. Final Obstruent Devoicing, Alveolar approximant and Alveolar tap is both observed

Ragnar: I killed the bear with my spear, and I managed to strangle the hound with my bare hands. Did she tell you the same story?

/aɪ kɪld ðə beər wɪð maɪ spi:r ænd aɪ 'mænɪdʒd tə 'stræŋgəl də haʊnd wɪt maɪ beər hændz/

Ragnar: And that is how I gained her hand in marriage.

/ænd ðætʒ haʊ aɪ geɪnd hɜ:r hænd ɪn 'me:rəʒ/

Björn: Just about.

[↗ dʒʌst ə'baʊt]

Ejective Voiceless Alveolar Plosive [t']

Ragnar: Are you ready to receive your arm ring and become a man?

/ɑ:r ju: 'redi: tu: ɪ'si:v jɔr ɑ:rm rɪŋ ænd bɪ'kʌm ə mæn/

Björn: Yes.

[jɛs]

Norwegian DRESS Vowel

Ragnar: And what does a man do?

/ænd hwʌt dʌz ə mæn du: /

Björn: He fights.

[hɪ faɪts]

Ragnar: And...?

/ænd/

Björn: He looks after his family.

[↗ hɪ lʊks 'æftəɹ hɪs 'fæmʌli]

Vowel Shortening, Norwegian FLEECE [i]

Ragnar: That's right.

/ðætʒ raɪt/

Ragnar: Could you look after our family?

/kʊd ju: lʊk 'æftəɹ ɑʊ 'fæmʌli: /

Björn: What do you mean?

[vat' du ju mi:n]

Vowel Shortening , Ejective [t']

Björn: You look after us.

[ju: lək 'æftər ʌs'] Fully Released S

Ragnar: Say I wasn't there.

/seɪ aɪ wəznt ðeɪ/

Ragnar: I have a big decision to make.

/aɪ hæv ə bɪɡ dɪ'sɪʒən tu: meɪk/

Ragnar: It may change many things.

/ɪt meɪ tʃeɪndʒ 'meni: θɪŋz/

Ragnar: Now, go to sleep.

/naʊ ɡoʊ tu: sli:p/

Ragnar: You have a big day tomorrow.

/ju: hæv ə bɪɡ deɪ tu: 'mɔ:roʊ/

Features

Björn: Rise and Fall Intonation, Vowel Shortening. IE feature: Treatment of final unvoiced stops [t] are ejective [t'] + Typical Stress

SCENE 1.3: Ragnar, Rollo, Björn, Earl Haraldson, 21:55 – 22:57

Ragnar: You must watch, for his sake.

/ju: mʌst wɑ:tʃ fər hɪz seɪk/

Rollo: It's his only hope of reaching Valhalla.

/ɪts hɪz 'əʊnlɪ həʊp əv 'ri:ʃɪŋ vɑ:l'hɑlə/

Earl Haraldson: Feed him to your pigs!

/fi:d hɪm tə jo pɪgz/

Earl Haraldson: And I curse him.

/ənd aɪ kɜ:s hɪm/

Earl Haraldson: May he never enter Valhalla.

/meɪ hi: 'nevər 'entə væl'hælə/

Earl Haraldson: May he never feast with the gods.

/meɪ hi: 'nevə fi:st wɪð ðə ɡɒdz/

Björn: Why did he do that?

[vɑɪ dɪd hi də dætʰ]

PRICE vowel NE: [aɪ], GOOSE vowel NE: [u]

[w] with [v] [ð] with [d] Final Obstruent Devoicing Vowel Shortening

Ragnar: He should not have done

/hi: ʃəd nɑ:t həv dʌn/

Rollo: Someone told me he wanted that land for himself and he knew Trygvasson had the best claim to it but refused to sell it.

/'sʌmwʌn təʊld mi: hi: 'wɒntɪd ðæt lænd fə hɪm'self ənd hi: nju: trɪɡvʌsʌn həd ðə best kleɪm tə ɪt bʌt ɪɪ'fju:zd tə sel ɪt/

Ragnar: You hear that, boy?

/ju: hi:r ðæt bɔɪ/

Ragnar: This how things are done around here

/ðɪs haʊ θɪŋz a:r dʌn ə'raʊnd hi:r/

Features:

Björn: PRICE vowel NE: [aɪ], GOOSE vowel NE: [u]

[w] with [v] [ð] with [d] Final Obstruent Devoicing Vowel Shortening

SCENE 1.4: Ragnar, Floki, Björn, 32:15 – 36:15

Ragnar: We have someone special to visit.

/wi həv 'sʌmwʌn 'speʃəl tə 'vɪzɪt/

Ragnar: His name is Floki.

/hɪz neɪm ɪz floki/

Björn: Floki?

[floʊki]

Björn: Like Loki the God?

[ʎ laɪk^h lɒki də ɡɒd]

[k^h] Aspirated, [ð] with [d]

Ragnar: Yes, only different.

/jes 'əʊnlɪ 'dɪfrənt/

Björn: How is he different?

[ʎ haʊ ɪs hi: \ 'dɪfrənt']

[z] with [s] Ejective [t']

Ragnar: He's not a God.

/hiz nɒt ə ɡɒd/

Björn: Why didn't he come to the Thing?

[waɪ dɪdnt' hi: kʌm tə də θɪŋ]

[ð] with [d] , [w] is realized like RP

Ragnar: Because... Because he's shy.

/bɪ'kɒz hiz ʃaɪ/

Ragnar: Floki, this is my son, Björn.

/floki ðɪs ɪz maɪ sʌn Bjɔ:n/

Floki: Hello. How are you?

['he'ləʊ haʊ əɪ jʊ]

Björn: Well. Thank you sir!

/vel tæŋk jʊ sɜ:r/

Floki: Let me see.

[læt mɪ si] Vowel Shortening

Floki: You have your father's eyes... Unfortunately.

[ju hæv jʊə 'fɑ:dərs 'aɪsʰ ʌn'fɔ:rtʃnɪtli]

Vowel Shortening /ju/ [z] with [s]

Ragnar: Why unfortunately?

/waɪ ʌn'fɔ:rtʃnɪtli/

Floki: It means he will be like you, and therefore he will want to do better than you, and you will hate him for it.

[ʌɪt mi:nz hi: wɪl bi: laɪkʰ ju: ənd ðə'ðeəfɔ:r hi: wɪl want tə du: 'betər dæn ju ənd ju vɪl heɪt hɪm fɔr ɪt]

Rise and Fall, [w] is SE , aspirated [k^h]

Björn: How can you tell that by just looking at my face?

[ʃhaʊ kən ju tel dæt baɪ dʒʌst 'lʊkɪŋ ət maɪ feɪs']

[z] with [s] Ejective [s'] + [ð] with [d]

Floki: Oh, it's the same with trees.

/əʊ ɪts də seɪm wɪð tri:s/

Floki: I can tell which trees will make the best planks just by looking at them.

/aɪ kæn tel wɪʃ tri:s wɪl meɪk ðə best plæŋks dʒʌst baɪ 'lʊkɪŋ ət ðəm/

Floki: I can look inside the tree.

/aɪ kæn lʊk 'ɪn 'saɪd də tri:/

Ragnar: Floki is a boatbuilder... Among other things.

/floki ɪz ə boʊt 'bɪldər ə 'mʌŋ 'ʌðər θɪŋz/

Floki: Hmm... This is one.

/ðɪs ɪz wʌn/

Floki: Inside this tree are two almost perfect planks.

/'ɪn 'saɪd ðɪs tri: ə tu: 'ɔ:lməʊst 'pɜ:rfɪkt plæŋks/

Floki: They will bend, then curve, like a woman's body from the thighs to the back.

/ðeɪ wɪl bend ðen kɜ:rv laɪk ə 'wʊmənz 'bɒdɪ frɒm ðə 'θaɪz tə ðə bæk/

Floki: When I split this tree, I will find them.

/wen aɪ splɪt ðɪs tri: aɪ wɪl faɪnd ðəm/

Björn : You can see that?

[ju kæn si dæt']

Vowel Shortening + Ejective [t'] + [ð] with [d]

Floki: You think I'm joking?

/jʊ tɪŋk aɪm 'dʒoʊkɪŋ/

Floki: I joke about many things, son of Ragnar, but never about shipbuilding.

/aɪ dʒoʊk ə'baʊt 'meni θɪŋz sʌn əv ragnar bʌt 'nevər ə'baʊt 'ʃɪp,bɪldɪŋ/

Floki: Do you imagine ships are just dead things?

/du: jʊ ɪ'mædʒɪn ʃɪps ər dʒʌst ded θɪŋz/

Ragnar: So... what about our boat?

/soʊ wʌt ə'boʊt 'aʊr boʊt/

Floki: It will be lighter and carry a bigger sail.

/ɪt wɪl bi: 'laɪtər ænd 'kæri: ə 'bɪgər seɪl/

Ragnar: The construction is different.

/ðə kən'strʌkʃən ɪz 'dɪfərənt/

Floki: It's built with a strong central plank.

/ɪts bɪlt wɪt ə strɔ:ŋ sen'trəl plæŋk/

Floki: The two strakes above it are nailed directly onto the knees of the frame.

/ðə tu: (strakes) ə'bʌv ɪt ɑ:r neɪld dɪ'rektli: 'ɑ:ntu: ðə ni:z əv ðə freɪm/

Floki: But the ones below - look!...

/bʌt ðə wʌnz bɪ'loʊ lʊkʰ/

Floki: are cleated and lashed onto the frames, not nailed, so they can move in relation to each other.

/ɑ:r 'kli:tɪd ænd læʃt 'ɑ:ntu: ðə freɪmz nɑ:t neɪld soʊ ðeɪ kæn mu:v ɪn rɪ'leɪʃən tu: ɪ:tʃ 'ʌðər/

Floki: This means the boat won't butt against the waves like a goat but move over them like a ripple.

/ðɪs mi:nz ðə bəʊt vɔʊnt bʌt ə'genst ðə veɪvz laɪk ə goʊt bʌt mu:v 'oʊvər ðəm laɪk ə 'rɪpəl/

Ragnar: The hull is deeper.

/ðə hʌl ɪz 'di:pər/

Ragnar: How will my men set their oars?

/haʊ wɪl maɪ men set ðeə ɔ:z/

Floki: I will cut them into the sheerstrakes, and the ports can be closed when the boat is at sea.

/aɪ wɪl kʌt ðəm 'ɪntu: ði: ʃɪ:rstreɪks ənd ðə pɔ:ts kæn bi: kləʊzd ven ðə bəʊt ɪz ət si:/

Ragnar: And you think it could handle long sea voyages?

/ənd ju: θɪŋk ɪt kʊd 'hændl lɔ:ŋ si: 'vɔɪədʒɪz/

Floki: That's why I'm building it.

/tæts vaɪ aɪm 'bɪldɪŋ ɪt/

Ragnar: But will it be strong enough?

/bʌt wɪl ɪt bi: strɔ:ŋ ɪ'nʌf/

Floki: We won't know that until we try.

/wi: vɔʊnt noʊ dət ən'tɪl vi: traɪ/

Ragnar: For the anchor.

/fər ði: 'æŋkər/

Ragnar: It's all I have left from last summer's raids.

/ɪts ɔ:l aɪ hæv left frʌm læst 'sʌmərz reɪdz/

Floki: Don't worry.

/dəʊnt 'wɜ:ri:/

Floki: We'll soon be as rich as dwarves!

/wi:l su:n bi: æz riʃ æs dʊɑ:rvəz/

Notes:

Ragnar:

Mostly GA pronunciation, with some Rp vowels appearing here and there, while some r's are dropped. Peculiar, Idiolect rhythm.

Floki:

Replacement of [z] with [s], especially in final position,

Vowel shortening released /s/

Final obstruent devoicing aspirated /k/

trill r - Foreign rhythm?

Björn:

Replacement of w -> v - Vowel Shortening

Th stopping [ð] with [d], x2 - Foreign rhythm?

Aspirated t

Ragnar:

Typical American pronunciation with Ragnar's rhythmic and prosodic qualities

Floki:

The phonemic inventory, and the sounds are very often reminiscent of foreign sounds somehow, yet still being very intelligible. I believe this is because of the rhythm and intonation of his delivery.

Both these actor's deliveries, makes one question if a conversation could be had in such a style, in a natural setting.

EPISODE 2

SCENE 2.1: Ragnar & Lagertha, 6:00 – 7.30

Lagertha: So when do we sail?

/səʊ wen du: wi seɪl/

Ragnar: I already told you.

/aɪ ə:l'redi: təʊldʒu:/

Ragnar: I don't want you to come.

/aɪ doʊnt wɑ:nt ju: tu: kʌm/

Lagertha: Why not?

[waɪ nɒt]

Ragnar: I need to leave the children and the farm in the hands of someone I trust.

aɪ ni:d tu: li:v ðə 'ʃɪldrən ænd ðə fɑ:rm ɪn ðə hændz ɒv 'sʌmwʌn aɪ trʌst/

Ragnar: What if the Earl finds out we have gone without his permission?

/hwʌt ɪf ði: ɜ:rl faɪndz aʊt wi: həv gɔ:n wið'aʊt hɪz pər'mɪʃən/

Ragnar: He might try and claim our family home.

/hi: maɪt traɪ ænd kleɪm ɔ:ər 'fæməli: hoʊm/

Lagertha: This was going to be the most exciting voyage of our lives.

/ðɪs wʌz 'gəʊɪŋ tu: bi: ðə moʊst ɪk'saɪtɪŋ 'vɔɪdʒ ɒv ɔ:ər laɪvz/

Lagertha: To go west!

/tu: gəʊ væst/

Lagertha: I have dreamed of it many times, and in my dreams we are always together.

/aɪ həv dræmt ɒv ɪt 'meni: taɪmz ænd ɪn maɪ dri:mz wi: ɑ:r 'ɔ:lweɪz tə'geðə/

Ragnar: What if there is no west?

/hwʌt ɪf ðer ɪz noʊ west/

Ragnar: This is the most dangerous and stupid voyage ever.

/ðɪs ɪz ðə moʊst 'deɪndʒərəs ænd 'stʊ:ɪd 'vɔɪdʒ 'evə/

Ragnar: What if we both die, hmm?

/hwʌt ɪf wi: boʊθ daɪ əm/

Ragnar: Then who would take care of the children...

/ðen hu: wʊd teɪk keɪ əv ðə 'ʧɪldrən/

Ragnar: Rollo?!

/'roʊlɔ:/

Lagertha: You have no right to say that!

/ju hæv nəʊ raɪt tə seɪ ðæt/

Ragnar: All right, all right.

/ɔ:l raɪt ɔ:l raɪt/

Lagertha: You go.

/ju: goʊ/

Lagertha: You go and I shall stay here and look after the children.

/ju: goʊ ænd aɪ ʃəl steɪ hi:ɪr ænd lʊk 'æftər ðə 'ʧɪldrən/

Notes:

(w -> v) (final obstruent devoicing) (dreamt) (ænt) (Lagertha non rhotic accent?)

Replacement of [z] with [s], especially in final position,

SCENE 2.2: Björn & Ragnar 10:45 – 11:25

Björn: Stop!

/stɒp/

Björn: Are you mad?

/ə jʊ mə:d/

Björn: You could have killed each other!

/jʊ kʊd həv kɪld i:tʃ 'ʌðər/

Björn: Is that what you want?

/ɪz ðæt wɒt tʃʊ wɒnt/

Ragnar: We were just having an argument.

wɪ wɜ:r ɟʌst 'hævɪŋ ən 'ɑ:rgjʊmənt/

Björn: Well, never argue like that again.

/wel 'nevə 'ɑ:gju: laɪk ðæt ə'ge:n/

Notes:

This is an example of Björn completely tripping up and using his British accent.

SCENE 2.3: Earl Haraldson & Siggy, 11:30 – 12:30

Siggy: Olafur surprised me.

/oʊlfr sə'praɪzd mi:/

Siggy: I didn't think, out of all of them, he would behave like that.

/aɪ dɪdnt θɪŋk aʊt əv ɔ:l əv ðəm hi: wʊd bi'heɪv laɪk ðæt/

Earl Haraldson: A man lives or dies by his honor.

/ə mæn lɪvz ə 'daɪz baɪ hɪz 'ɒnə/

Siggy: That's true.

/ðæts tru:/

Earl Haraldson: He thought so little of mine that he really believed that I would give you to him.

/hi: θɔ:t səʊ 'lɪtl əv maɪn ðæt hi: 'rɪəlɪ bi'li:vd ðæt aɪ wʊd gɪv jʊ tə hɪm/

Earl Haraldson: Honor is a rare commodity these days.

/'ɒnə, ɪz ə reə kə'mɒdɪtɪ ði:z 'deɪz/

Siggy: Yes.

/jes/

Earl Haraldson: Almost as rare as those in whom I can trust.

/'ɔ:lɪməʊst æz reə æz ðəʊz ɪn hu:m aɪ kæn trʌ:st/ - Irish Pronunciation of /trʌst/

Siggy: It's true, my love, our enemies are everywhere.

/ɪts tru: maɪ lʌv 'aʊə 'enɪmɪz ə 'evriweə/

Earl Haraldson: Everywhere?

/'evriweə/

Siggy: They cannot prevail.

/ðeɪ 'kænɒt pri'veɪl/

Earl Haraldson: They cannot prevail.

/ðeɪ 'kæn nɒt pri'veɪl/

Notes: Almost completely standard British

SCENE 2.4: Lagertha, 19:30- 20:50

Lagertha: The great sea is held in place by Jormungand, the serpent, whose giant body encircles it and who keeps his tail in his mouth to complete the circle and stop the waves breaking loose.

[ʌðə greɪt si: ɪs held ɪn pleɪs baɪ jɔ:mʊŋgænd ðə 'sɜ:rpeɪnt hu:z 'dʒaɪənt 'bɒdɪ ɪn 'sɜ:rklz ɪt ənd hu: ki:ps hɪz teɪl ɪn hɪz maʊθ tə kəm'pli:t ʌðə 'sɜ:kl ənd stɒp ðə veɪvz 'breɪkɪŋ lu:s]

[z] with s]

Lagertha: But one day, the God Thor, son of earth, was fishing in the sea for the serpent, using a bull's head for bait.

[ʌbʌt wʌn deɪ ðə ɡɒd θɔ: sʌn əv ɜ:rt vɔ:z 'fɪʃɪŋ ɪn ðə si: ʌfə ðə 'sɜ:rpeɪnt 'ju:zɪŋ ə bʊlz hed fə beɪt]

[ð] with [d]

Lagertha: Jormungand reared up and the waves pummeled the shore as he twisted and writhed in a fury.

/jɔrmɔŋgand rɪərd ʌp ənd ðə weɪvz 'rʌmlɪd ðə ʃɔ: æz hi: 'twɪstɪd ənd raɪðd ɪn ə 'fjʊəri/

Lagertha: They were well matched, serpent and God, in that furious fight.

/ðeɪ wɜ:r wel mæft 'sɜ:rpənt ənd gɒd ɪn ðæt 'fjʊəriəs faɪt/

Lagertha: The seas boiled around them, but then the hook became dislodged, and the serpent slithered free and sank again, so quickly, beneath the waves.

/ðə si:z bɔɪld ə'raʊnd ðəm bʌt ðen ðə hʊk br'keɪm dɪs'lɒdʒd ənd ðə 'sɜ:rpənt 'slɪðəd fri: ənd sæŋk ə'gen səʊ 'kwɪklɪ br'ni:θ ðə weɪvz/

Lagertha: And soon, the sea was calm once more, as if nothing had disturbed it.

/ənd su:n ðə si: wəz kɑ:m wʌns mɔ: æz ɪf 'nʌθɪŋ həd dɪs'tɜ:rbd ɪt/

Notes:

Lagertha starts pronouncing a lot of r's in this scene.

One replacement of w -> v

A couple of instances of final obstruent devoicing

Particular rhythm and intonation

SCENE 2.5: Extras & Ragnar, 38:40-39:48

Extra #1: I don't understand.

/aɪ dɒnt ʌndə'stænd/

Extra #1: Why do they leave such treasures unprotected?

/vaɪ du: ðeɪ li:v sʌʃ 'tʃeɪzəz ʌnpɹə'tektəd/

Extra #1: Is there some spell, some magic which protects them?

/ɪz ðeɪ sʌm spel sʌm 'mædʒɪk vɪʃ 'prətɛkts ðəm/ Unfamiliar Stress on protects

Extra #2: It appears not.

/ɪt ə'pɪəz nɒt/

Ragnar: Perhaps they think their god protects them.

/pər'hæps ðeɪ θɪŋk ðeɪr gɔ:d prə'tekts ðəm/

Extra #2: If this is their god, then he's dead.
/ɪf ðɪs ɪz ðer ɡɑ:d ðen hi:z ded/

Extra #2: He is nailed to a cross.
/hi: ɪz neɪld tu: ə krɔ:s/

Extra #1: He cannot protect anyone.
/hi: 'kænɑ:t 'prɔtekt eni ,vʌn/

Extra #1: He is not alive, like Odin, Thor or Freyr.
/hi: ɪz nɑ:t ə 'laɪv laɪk 'oʊdɪn to:r ər freɪ/

Extra #2: What use is he then?
/wɒt ju:s ɪz hi: ðen/

Notes:

Very peculiar accent from Extra #1, almost reminiscent of Polish / Russian

EPISODE 3

SCENE 3.1: Extra, Björn & Lagertha, 01:48 – 3:50

Extra #1: Hello!

'he'ləʊ/

Extra #1: You are Ragnar Lothbrok's son, Björn.

/jʊ ə Rɑɡnɑr loθbrɔks sʌn bjɔrn/

Extra #1: I remember you from the thing.

/aɪ rɪ'membə jʊ frɒm ðə θɪŋ/

Björn : Yes.

/jes/

Extra #1: Where is your father?

/weə ɪz jə 'fɑ:ðər/

Lagertha: Björn?

/Bjɜ:m/

Lagertha: Who are you talking to?

/hu: ə jʊ 'tɔ:kɪŋ tʊ/

Extra #1: I was just asking your son where Ragnar Lothbrok might be.

/aɪ wəz dʒʌst 'ɑ:skɪŋ jə sʌn weə Ragnɑr loθbrɔk maɪt bi:/

Björn: He's gone fishing.

/hɪz gɒn 'fɪʃɪŋ/

Extra #1: Fishing?

/'fɪʃɪŋ/

Extra #1: He's gone fishing?

/hɪz gɒn 'fɪʃɪŋ/

Björn: Yes.

/jes/

Björn: Fishing.

/'fɪʃɪŋ/

Extra #1: When will he return?

/wen wɪl hi: rɪ'tɜ:n/

Björn: I don't know.

/aɪ dəʊnt nəʊ/

Extra #1: In which case, I must take someone back as surety.

/ɪn wɪtʃ keɪs aɪ mʌst teɪk 'sʌmwʌn bæk æz 'ʃʊərətɪ/

Extra #1: Just in case.

/dʒʌst ɪn keɪs/

Extra #1: In case... In case your husband has not gone fishing.

/ɪn keɪs ɪn keɪs jə 'hʌzbənd həz nɒt gɒn 'fɪʃɪŋ/

Extra #1: You!

/jʊ/

Extra #1: Come!

/kʌm/

Lagertha: Come!

/kʌm/

Extra #1: You have to come with me.

/jʊ həv tə kʌm wið mi:/

Lagertha: If you don't obey this order, the Earl will never give you an arm ring!

/ɪf jʊ dəʊnt ə'beɪ ðɪs 'ɔ:də ði: ɜ:l wɪl 'nevə gɪv jʊ ən ɑ:m rɪŋ/

Extra #2: I'll come.

/aɪl kʊm/ -- Vowel split, northern England vowel in Extra #2's performance

Extra #1: Good.

/ɡʊd/

Extra #1: Then let's be on our way.

/ðen lets bi: ɒn 'aʊə weɪ/

SCENE 3.2: Extras, 8:31 – 9:25

Extra #1: We've brought slaves to sell.

/wi:v brɔ:t sleɪvz tə sæl/

Extra #1: But there's more, woman.

/bʌt ðeəz mɔ: 'wʊmən/

Extra #1: More things of gold and silver than you and I have ever seen before, nor anyone else here in Kattegat.

/mɔ: θɪŋz əv ɡəʊld ənd 'sɪlvə ðæn jʊ ənd aɪ hæv 'evə si:n brɪ'fɔ: nɔ: 'eniwʌn els hɪə ɪn (Katteɡat)/

Extra #1: Ragnar Lothbrok, welcome back.

/Ragnar Lothbrok 'welkəm bæk/

Extra #1: We know you sailed west across the open ocean and found land and plunder, as you promised.

/wi nəʊ jʊ seɪld west ə'krɒs ði: 'əʊpən 'əʊʃən ənd faʊnd lænd ənd 'plʌndə æz jʊ 'prɒmɪst/

Extra #1: So, let no man say anymore that it is not possible, and we salute and praise you
/səʊ let nəʊ mæn sei ənɪmɔːr ðæt ɪz nɒt 'pɒsəbl ənd wi sə'lu:t ənd preɪz jʊ/

SCENE 3.3: Ragnar, Björn, Lagertha, Gyda. 18:15 – 20: 25

Gyda: I told them you'd come home.

/aɪ təʊld ðəm ju:d kʌm həʊm/

Björn: Father!

/'fɑːdə/

Björn: You're home!

/jə həʊm/

Ragnar: Little man...

/'lɪtl mæn/

Björn: Did you reach the west?

/dɪd jʊ ri:ʃ də vest/

Lagertha: So, where's all the treasure you promised?

/səʊ weəz ɔ:l ðə 'treʒə jʊ 'prɒmɪst/

Ragnar: The Earl took it all for himself.

/ðiː ɜːrl tʊk ɪt ɔ:l fɜː hɪm'self/

Ragnar: But I found it, and it filled the boat.

/bʌt aɪ faʊnd ɪt ənd ɪt fɪld ðə bəʊt/

Lagertha: I believe you.

/aɪ br'iːv jʊ/

Ragnar: You ought to believe me.

/jʊ ɔ:t tə br'iːv miː/

Ragnar: This is a priest from the temple to prove it.

/ðɪs ɪz ə priːst frɒm ðə 'templ tə pruːv ɪt/

Ragnar: Priest!

/priːst/

Ragnar: This is my family.

/ðɪs ɪz maɪ 'fæmɪli/

Ragnar: His name is Athelstan.

/hɪz neɪm ɪz (Athelstan)/

Ragnar: Although he's a foreigner, he speaks our language, don't you?

/ɔ:l'ðʊ hiːz ə 'fɔːrənər hiː spiːks ɔːr 'læŋgwɪdʒ doʊnt juː/

Athelstan: A little, yes.

/ə 'lɪtl jɛs/

Björn: What is wrong with your head?

/wɒt ɪz rɒŋ wɪð jə hed/

Athelstan: When we become monks, they cut our hair.

/ə wen wi bi'kʌm mʌŋks ðeɪ kʌt 'aʊə heə/

Athelstan: It marks us out.

/ɪt mɑːks ʌs aʊt/

Gyda: If you're a priest, which god do you like best?

/ɪf jə ə priːst wɪʃ ɡɒd duː jʊ laɪk best/

Athelstan: There is only one god.

/ə ðeə ɪz 'əʊnli wʌn ɡɒd/

SCENE 3.3: Ragnar & Athelstan , 27:08 – 29:40

Athelstan: Mmm, no more.

/nəʊ mɔː/

Ragnar: We don't like those in our house to go hungry or thirsty.

/wiː doʊnt laɪk ðoʊz ɪn aʊr ˌhæʊs tuː goʊ ˈhʌŋɡriː ər ˈθɜːrstiː/

Ragnar: I am very curious about England.

/aɪ æm ˈveriː ˈkjʊəriːəs əˈbaʊt ɪŋlənd/

Ragnar: Does it have one king who rules over the whole country?

/dʌz ɪt hæv wʌn kɪŋ huː ruːlz ˈoʊvər ðə hoʊl ˈkʌntriː/

Athelstan: There are four kingdoms with four kings.

/ðeə ə fɔː ˈkɪŋdəmz wɪð fɔː kɪŋz/

Athelstan: You landed in the kingdom of Northumbria.

/jʊ ˈlændɪd ɪn ðə ˈkɪŋdəm əv (Northumbria)/

Athelstan: The King of Northumbria is called Aelle.

/ðə kɪŋ əv (Northumbria) ɪz kɔːld (Aelle)/

Athelstan: He is a great king.

/hiː ɪz ə greɪt kɪŋ/

Athelstan: A powerful king.

/ə ˈpaʊəfʊl kɪŋ/

Ragnar: Then why did his men not protect your temple?

/ðen hwaɪ dɪd hɪz men nɔːt prəˈtekt jʊr ˈtempəl/

Athelstan: Before you came, we had no need to protect our monastery.

/brɪˈfɔː jʊ keɪm wi həd nəʊ niːd tə prəˈtekt ˈaʊə ˈmɒnəstəri/

Athelstan: We lived in peace.

/wi lɪvd ɪn pi:s/

Athelstan: Everyone respected it as a place of God.

/'evriwʌn rɪs'pektɪd ɪt æz ə pleɪs əv ɡɒd/

Ragnar: Why does your god need silver and gold?

/hwai dʌz jʊr ɡɑ:d ni:d 'sɪlvər ænd ɡoʊld/

Ragnar: He must be greedy.

/hi: mʌst bi: 'ɡri:di:/

Ragnar: Like Loki!

/laɪk (Loki)/

Ragnar: We have greedy gods, too.

/wi: həv 'ɡri:di: ɡɑ:dz tu:/

Ragnar: Then why is his kingdom so full of treasure?

/ðen hwai ɪz hɪz 'kɪŋdəm sɒʊ fʊl əv 'treʃər/

Athelstan: Christian people give away their riches to the churches and monasteries in order to save their souls.

/'krɪstjən 'pi:pl ɡɪv ə'weɪ ðeə 'rɪʃɪz tə ðə 'tʃɜ:ʃɪz ənd 'mɒnəstərɪz ɪn 'ɔ:də tə seɪv ðeə səʊlz/

Ragnar: What are their souls?

/hwʌt ɑ:r ðeə səʊlz/

Ragnar: I want to learn some of your language.

/aɪ wɑ:nt tu: lɜ:rn sʌm əv jʊr 'læŋɡwɪdʒ/

Ragnar: Will you teach me, priest?

/wɪl ju: ti:ʃ 'mi: pri:st/

SCENE 3.4: Ragnar – Lagertha 34:50 – 36:40

Ragnar: I have the Earl's permission to sail back to England.

/aɪ həv ði: ɜ:rlz pə'r'mɪʃən tu: seɪl bæk tu: (England)/

Ragnar: I want to leave as soon as possible.

/aɪ wɑːnt tuː liːv æz suːn æz 'pɑːsəbəl/

Lagertha: How soon is that?

/haʊ suːn ɪz ðæt/

Ragnar: Tomorrow.

/tuː 'mɔːrəʊ/

Lagertha: We all wish you success.

/wi ɔːl wɪʃ ju sək'ses/

Lagertha: We will sacrifice to Odin.

/vi wɪl 'sækrɪfaɪs tə 'əʊdɪn/

EPISODE 5

16:20 - 17:20 Floki and Björn

Björn: Floki!

/flœki/

Helga: Who are you?

/hu ə ju/

Björn: I must speak with Floki.

[aɪ mʌst spɪkʰ wɪt flœki] Aspirated [kʰ], [w] with [v]

Björn: Is he here?

[ɪs hi hɪrɛ]

[z] with [s], Norwegian KIT vowel, Final consonant devoicing,

Floki: Björn?

/(Bjɜːrɪn)/

Björn: My father is dying.

[maɪ 'faːtər ɪs 'daɪɪŋ]

Floki: Helga, get the bark of the ash, and the garlic and the sage.

[hɛlɡə get' də bɑ:k əv di æf ənd də 'gɑ:lɪk ənd də seɪdʒ/
[ð] with [f], Vowel Shortening

Floki: Get the sage.
[get də seɪdʒ]

We make a paste to put on the wounds.
/wi meɪk ə peɪst tə pʊt ɒn ðə wu:ndz/

But first, we must clean them.
/bʌt fɜ:st wi mʌst kli:n ðəm/

And the only way to make them clean is with fire.
/ənd ði: 'əʊnli weɪ tə meɪk ðəm kli:n ɪz wɪð 'faɪə/

Bjorn, get more logs back there.
/ get mɔ: lɒgz bæk ðeə/

A knife...
/ə naɪf/

EPISODE 6

25:30 – 28:30 Björn

Björn: Drink.
[drɪŋk] vowel shortening, Norwegian Fleece vowel

Björn: Drink!
[drɪŋk] vowel shortening, Norwegian Fleece vowel

Athelstan: There's that slave girl, the one who has chosen to die.
/ðeəz ðæt sleɪv gɜ:l ðə wʌn hu: hɜz 'tʃəʊzn tə daɪ/

Athelstan: What are they doing?
/wɒt ə ðeɪ 'du:ɪŋ/

Björn: She is having sex with the men who live in there.
[ʃi ɪz 'hævɪŋ seks wɪt də men hu: lɪv ɪn ðe]
[ð] with [d]

Björn: Each one of them says to her, "Tell your master I did this out of love for him."
/i:tʃ wʌn əv ðəm seɪz tə hɜ: tel jə 'mɑ:stə aɪ dɪd ðɪs aʊt əv lʌv fə hɪm/

Björn: Because she will soon be reunited with her master in death, and she will be able to speak to him.

/bɪ'kɒz ʃi: wɪl su:n bi: 'ri:ju:'nɑ:ɪd wɪð hɜ: 'mɑ:stə ɪn deθ ənd ʃi: wɪl bi: 'eɪbl tə spi:k tə hɪm/

Extra: Silence!

/'saɪləns/

Athelstan: Björn, who is that woman?

/bjɜ:n hu: ɪz ðæt 'wʊmən/

Björn: We call her the Angel of Death.

/wi kɔ:l hɜ: ði: 'eɪndʒəl əv deθ/

EPISODE 8

28:10 – 30:00 **Scene 8.1** Horik

Horik: You must be Ragnar Lothbrok!

[ju: mʌst bi ragnar lɔ:θbrɒk]

Horik: I must tell you it is my privilege and pleasure to clap eyes on you.

[aɪ mʌst tel ju ɪt ɪs maɪ 'prɪvɪlɪdʒ ənd 'pleʒə tə klæp 'aɪs ɒn ju]

Vowel Shortening, [z] with [s]

Horik: Your reputation goes ahead of you, Ragnar Lothbrok.

[jə 'repʊ'teɪʃən gəʊz ə'hed əv ju ragnar lɔ:θbrɒk]

Horik: I know this because so many have told me how you killed Earl Haraldson, and then built a new kind of ship, were the first to sail west, and defeated a king of England!

[aɪ nəʊ ðɪs bi'kɒs səʊ 'meni hæf təʊld mi haʊ ju kɪld ɜ:rl haraldsən ənd den bɪlt ə nju: kænd əv ʃɪp wɜ:r ðə fɜ:rst tə seɪl west ənd drɪ'fi:tɪd ə kɪŋ əv ɪŋlənd]

[w] with [v], [z] with [s] Final consonant devoicing, vowel shortening

Horik: In fact, I can hardly believe my eyes that you are standing right here in front of me.

[ɪn fækt aɪ kæn 'hɑ:dlɪ bi'li:v maɪ 'aɪs dət ju ə 'stændɪŋ raɪt hɪə ɪn frʌnt əv mi]

Norwegian Fleece vowel

[ð] with [d]

Horik: Please, please.

[plɪs' plɪs'] Icelandic Fleece vowel, full released s

EPISODE 9

SCENE 9.1: Floki, Rollo, Ragnar, Jarl Borg, 01:40 – 08:50

Floki: If I stay like this, I will rust.

[ɪf aɪ steɪ lɪk̩ ðɪs ɪ wɪl rʌstʰ] [w] → [v]

fully released geminated [p,t,k] stops, [tʰ] [k]→[k̩k̩], [l]→[l̩]

Rollo: What kind of fellow is this Jarl Borg?

/wɒt kɑnd əv 'feləʊ ɪz ðɪs Ja:rl Bo:g/

Rollo: This is no way to treat guests, whoever they are.

/ðɪs ɪz nəʊ weɪ tə tri:t gests hu:'evə ðeɪ ə/

Extra: Especially if they've been traveling for days on end. Note: lowered æ, british vowels + rhotic

/e'speʃəli: ɪf ðeɪv bi:n 'trævnɪŋ fər 'deɪs ɒn ændʰ/

Jarl Borg: Are you the emissaries from King Horik? Note: Vowel Shortening - Rise & Fall - Rhotic

[ɑ:r ju: di 'emɪ,serɪs frʌm kɪŋ 'hɔrɪkʰ] Note: Norwegian-bright forward-focussed tone, Th stopping [ð] → [d]

Well, I can tell you at once, you're wasting your time. Note: Vowel Shortening [w] → [v]

[wel aɪ kæn tel ju ət vʌns jʊr 'weɪstɪŋ jʊr taɪm]

It's my land, and I want it returned to me. Note: Final consonant devoicing Th stopping [ð] → [d]

[ɪts maɪ lændʰtænd aɪ wʌnt ɪt rɪ'tɜ:rnd tu: 'mi:]

That's all I have to say.

ðdæts ɔ:l aɪ hæv tə seɪ]

Ragnar: He wants to make peace with you and come to some kind of agreement.

/hi: wɑ:nts tu: meik pi:s wið ju: ænd kʌm tu: sʌm kɑ:nd əv ə'gri:mənt/

Jarl Borg: Then tell him if he leaves my land, we can have peace. Note: Th stopping [ð] → [d]

[den tɛl him ɪf hi: li:vs maɪ lænd vi: kæn həv pi:s]

Jarl Borg: But not before.

/bʌt nɑ:t bi'fɔ:r/

Ragnar: How can you make peace, Jarl Borg, if you insist on humiliating him?

/həʊ kæn ju: meik pi:s Ja:rl Bɔ:rg ɪf ju: ɪn'sɪst ɑ:n hju: 'mɪli: ,ertɪŋ him/

Jarl Borg: If I invade and defeat him, will he not be even more humiliated? Note: Final consonant devoicing, Vowel Shortening

/ɪf aɪ ɪn'veɪd̥t̚ ænd dɪ'fi:t̚ him vɪl hi: nɑt bi: 'ivən mɔ:r hju: 'mɪli: ,ertəd/

Ragnar: Not if he fights well.

/nɑ:t ɪf hi: faɪts weɪ/

Ragnar: In any case, I am sure that he would relish a fight.

/ɪn 'eni: keɪs aɪ æm ʃʊr ðæt hi: wʊd 'relɪʃ ə faɪt/

Jarl Borg: What's your name? Note: Rise Fall

/vʌts jɔr neɪm/

Ragnar: Ragnar Lothbrok.

/rægnɑr loθbrɔk/

Jarl Borg: You are Ragnar Lothbrok,

/ju: ɑ:r rægnɑr loθbrɔk/

Jarl Borg: the one who sailed west?

[ðə wʌn hu: seɪld west]

Ragnar: I am surprised that you've heard about that.

/aɪ æm sər'praɪzd ðæt ju:v hɜ:rd ə'baʊt ðæt/

Jarl Borg: How are you surprised?

/haʊ a:r ju: sər'praɪzd/

Everyone has heard of your exploits.

/evri: ,wʌn həz hɜ:rd əv jɔr ɪk'splɔɪts/

Jarl Borg: Why have we not offered our guests dry clothes and food?

/hwai həv wi: nɑ:t 'ɔ:fərd ɔr gests draɪ kloʊz ænd fu:d/

Jarl Borg: Treat these folk well.

/tri:t ði:z fɔk wel/

Give them ale, let them dry out, feed them.

/gɪv ðem eɪl let ðem draɪ ɔʊt fi:d ðem/

Tomorrow, you and I will talk again, Ragnar Lothbrok.

/tu: 'mɔ:roʊ ju: ænd aɪ wɪl tɔ:k ə'gen ragnar lothbrɔk/

Jarl Borg: I take it, from what you said yesterday, that King Horik is prepared to compromise and offer some deal regarding those lands of mine, which he still occupies?

/aɪ teɪk ɪt frʌm hwʌt ju: 'sed 'jestərdi: ðæt kɪŋ (Horik) ɪz prɪ'pɛrd tu: kɑ:mprə ,maɪz ænd 'ɔ:fər sʌm di:l rɪ'gɑ:rdɪŋ ðoʊz lændz əv maɪn hwɪf hi: stɪl 'ɑ:kjəpaɪz/

Ragnar: He is prepared to pay you to renounce your illegal claims of his lands.

/hi: ɪz prɪ'pɛrd tu: peɪ ju: tu: rɪ'naʊns jɔr ɪ'li:gəl kleɪmz əv hɪz lændz/

Jarl Borg: You disappoint me now, Ragnar Lothbrok.

/ju: ,dɪsə'pɔɪnt 'mi: nʌʊ (Ragnar) (Lothbrɔk)/

Jarl Borg: thought you'd come here with a serious purpose.

/θɔ:t ju:d kʌm hi:r wɪð ə 'si:ri:əs 'pɜ:rpəs/

Jarl Borg: If you would just name your price.

/ɪf ju: wʊd dʒʌst neɪm jɔr praɪs/

Jarl Borg: The land is priceless.

/ðə lænd ɪz 'praɪslɪs/

Jarl Borg: Which is why King Horik wants to keep it for himself.

/hwɪf ɪz hwai kɪŋ (Horik) wɑ:nts tu: ki:p ɪt fər hɪm'self/

Rollo: Every piece of land has a price, just like every human.

/'evri: pi:s əv lænd həz ə praɪs dʒʌst laɪk 'evri: 'hju:mən/

Jarl Borg: Well, you don't understand.

/wel ju: doʊnt ʌndər'stænd/

Jarl Borg: This is not a small plot of land on which you grow turnips and onions.

/(ðɪs ɪz nɑ:t ə smɔ:l plɑ:t əv lænd ɑ:n hwɪf ju: grəʊ 'tɜ:rnɪps ænd 'ʌnjənz/

Jarl Borg: We're talking about a vast swathe of land, and on this land, in the earth, are minerals, things of great value.

/ wi:r 'tɑ:ki:ŋ ə'baʊt ə væst swɑ:ð əv lænd ænd ɑ:n ðɪs lænd ɪn ði: ɜ:rθ ɑ:r 'mɪnərəlz θɪŋz əv greɪt 'vælju: /

Jarl Borg: Why else would I assert my claim?

/hwai els wʊd aɪ ə'sɜ:rt maɪ kleɪm/

Ragnar: King Horik resists your claim, but still, in good faith, he is willing to settle with you.

/kɪŋ (Horik) rɪ'zɪsts jɔr kleɪm bʌt stɪl ɪn gʊd feɪθ hi: ɪz 'wɪlɪŋ tu: 'setl wɪð ju: /

If you will name a reasonable price.

/ɪf ju: wɪl neɪm ə 'ri:zə nə bəl praɪs/

Jarl Borg: At the moment, my price is King Horik's head.

/ət ðə 'moʊmənt maɪ praɪs ɪz kɪŋ hed/

Ragnar: Well, then, it seems I am done.

/wel ðen ɪt si:mz aɪ æm dʌn/

Jarl Borg: Hold on, please, sit down, sit down.

/hoʊld ɑ:n pli:z sɪt daʊn sɪt daʊn/

Let's see if we can find another way.

/lets si: ɪf wi: kæn faɪnd ə'nʌðər weɪ/

Jarl Borg: What do you have in mind?

/hwʌt du: ju: həv ɪn maɪnd/

What if my claim was acknowledged, Jarl Borg: But I was willing to lease the land back to the King during his lifetime?

/hwʌt ɪf maɪ kleɪm wʌz æk'nɑ:lɪdʒd bʌt aɪ wʌz 'wɪlɪŋ tu: li:s ðə lænd bæk tu: ðə kɪŋ 'dʊrɪŋ hɪz laɪf'taɪm/

Jarl Borg: Or what if we deferred judgment on ownership but shared the mineral rights?

/ər hwʌt ɪf wi: dɪ'fɜ:rd 'dʒʌdʒmənt ɑ:n ɔʊnər'shɪp bʌt ʃeɪd ðə 'mɪnərəl raɪts/

Jarl Borg: What do you say?

/hwʌt du: ju: seɪ/

Jarl Borg: Can we start negotiating in this manner?

/kæn wi: stɑ:rt nɪ 'gouʃɪ,eɪtɪŋ ɪn ðɪs 'mænʌr/

Jarl Borg: Why not?

/hwaɪ nɑ:t/

Ragnar: I have not been given the authority to negotiate in this manner.

/aɪ hæv nɑ:t bɪn 'grɪvən ðɪ: ə 'θɔ:ri:ti: tu: nɪ 'gouʃɪ,eɪt ɪn ðɪs 'mænʌr/

Jarl Borg: You mean King Horik sent you here with nothing but a demand?

/ju: mi:n kɪŋ sent ju: hi:r wið 'nʌθɪŋ bʌt ə dɪ'mænd/

Jarl Borg: And yet he speaks of peace!

/ænd jet hi: spi:ks əv pi:s/

Ragnar: I don't know what is in his mind.

/aɪ doʊnt noʊ hwʌt ɪz ɪn hɪz maɪnd/

Jarl Borg: Well, then, maybe you should ask him.

/wel ðen 'meɪbi: ju: ʃəd æsk hɪm/

Let me make a suggestion. Why don't you send one of your men back Jarl Borg: So he can put to King Horik my ideas for a remedy?

/let 'mi: meɪk ə (suggestion) Why doʊnt ju: send wʌn əv jʊr men bæk (Jarl) (Borg) soʊ hi: kæn pʊt tu: kɪŋ (Horik) maɪ aɪ'di:əz fər ə 'remɪdi:/

Ragnar: If you think that will work.

/ɪf ju: θɪŋk ðæt wɪl wɜ:rk/

Jarl Borg: Good.

/ɡʊd/

Your messenger will take several days.

/jʊr 'mesɪndʒər wɪl teɪk 'sevrəl 'deɪz/

Jarl Borg: So, in the meantime, why don't you and your men go and visit our famous ash tree?

/soʊ ɪn ðə 'mi:ntaɪm hwaɪ doʊnt ju: ænd jʊr men ɡoʊ ænd 'vɪzɪt ʌr 'feɪməs æʃ tri:/

Jarl Borg: It is famous not only for its size, but because it never loses its leaves, summer or winter.

/ɪt ɪz 'feɪməs nɑ:t 'oʊnli: fər ɪts saɪz (butbecause) ɪt 'nevər 'lu:zɪz ɪts li:vz 'sʌmər ər 'wɪntər/

Jarl Borg: Some people even say it's Yggdrasil, the tree that holds up the sky.

/sʌm 'pi:pəl 'i:vən seɪ ɪts (Yggdrasil) ðə tri: ðæt hoʊldz ʌp ðə skaɪ/

SCENE 9.2 : Floki & King Horik, 23:30 – 25:20

Floki: Fenrir, the giant wolf, could not be constrained by any means known to man, so the dwarves forged a chain, but not from metal.

/fɛnrɪr ðə 'dʒaɪənt wʊlf kʊd nɒt bi: kən'streɪnd baɪ 'eni: mi:nz noʊn tu: mæn soʊ ðə dvarfs
fɔ:rdʒd ə ʃeɪn bʌt nɑ:t frʌm 'metl/

Floki: Nothing made by man could constrain Fenrir, so they forged it from the things we cannot see and the things we cannot hear.

/'nʌθɪŋ meɪd baɪ mæn kʊd kən'streɪn fɛnrɪr soʊ ðeɪ fɔ:rdʒd ɪt frʌm ðə tɪŋz vi: 'kænɑ:t si: ænd ðə
tɪŋz wi: 'kænɑ:t hi:r/ Note: Th Stopping - [w] [v]

Floki: Like the breath of a fish, he sound a moving cat makes.

/laɪk ðə breθ əv ə fɪʃ hi: saʊnd ə 'mu:vɪŋ kæt' meɪks/ Note: Released Ending [t']

Horik: The roots of a mountain.

/ðə ru:ts əv ə 'maʊn,tʌn/ alveolar tap [ɾ]

Floki: You know?

/ju: noʊ/

Horik: Of course I know!

[əf kɔ:rs aɪ no] Note: Vowel Shortening, Monophthongization alveolar tap [ɾ]

Horik: These things interest me!

[ði:z tɪŋz 'ɪntərest 'mi:] Note: Th fronting

Horik: Like the terrible tricks of the god Loki.

/laɪk də 'terəbəl trɪks əv də go:d lɔki:/ Note: Th Fronting alveolar tap [ɾ]

Horik: How he turns into a flea to divest the goddess Freyja of her precious necklace.

/haʊ hi: tɜ:rnz 'ɪntu: ə flɪ: tu: dɪ'vest ðə 'gʊ:dɪs freɪjə əv hɜ:r 'preʃəs 'nekləs/

Floki: He's only a distant ancestor. Note: Vowel Shortening, [z] -> [s]

/his 'oʊnli: ə 'dɪstənt 'ænsɛstər/

Floki: I came to ask about Jarl Borg.

/aɪ keɪm tu: æsk ə 'baʊt (Jarl) (Borg)/

Horik: He won't sell.

/hi: woʊnt sel/

Floki: He wants to make a deal.

/hi: wɑ:nts tu: meɪk ə di:l/

Horik: I'm not interested in deals. Note: [z] -> [s] Final consonant devoicing

/aɪm nɑ:t 'ɪntərɪstət ɪn di:ls/

Floki: That would make it hard for Ragnar. Note: Final consonant devoicing [w] [v]

/ðæt vʊd meɪk ɪt hɑ:rt fər rɑ:gnɑ:r/

Horik: Ragnar will come to the right conclusion and make the right decision.

/ræ:gnɑ:r wɪl kʌm tu: ðə raɪt kən 'klu:ʒən ænd meɪk ðə raɪt dɪ 'sɪʒən/

Horik: In any case, there is someone else in Götland who looks after my affairs.

/ɪn 'eni: keɪs ðer ɪz 'sʌmwʌn æls ɪn ju:tlænd hu lʊks 'æftər maɪ ə 'fers/

Note: [z] -> [s] Final consonant devoicing, Norwegian GOOSE vowel [ʊ]

Floki: Don't you care if the negotiations fail?

/doʊnt ju: keə ɪf ðə nɪ,ɡoʊʃɪ: 'eɪʃəns feɪl/

Note: Swedish: Full release of last consonant