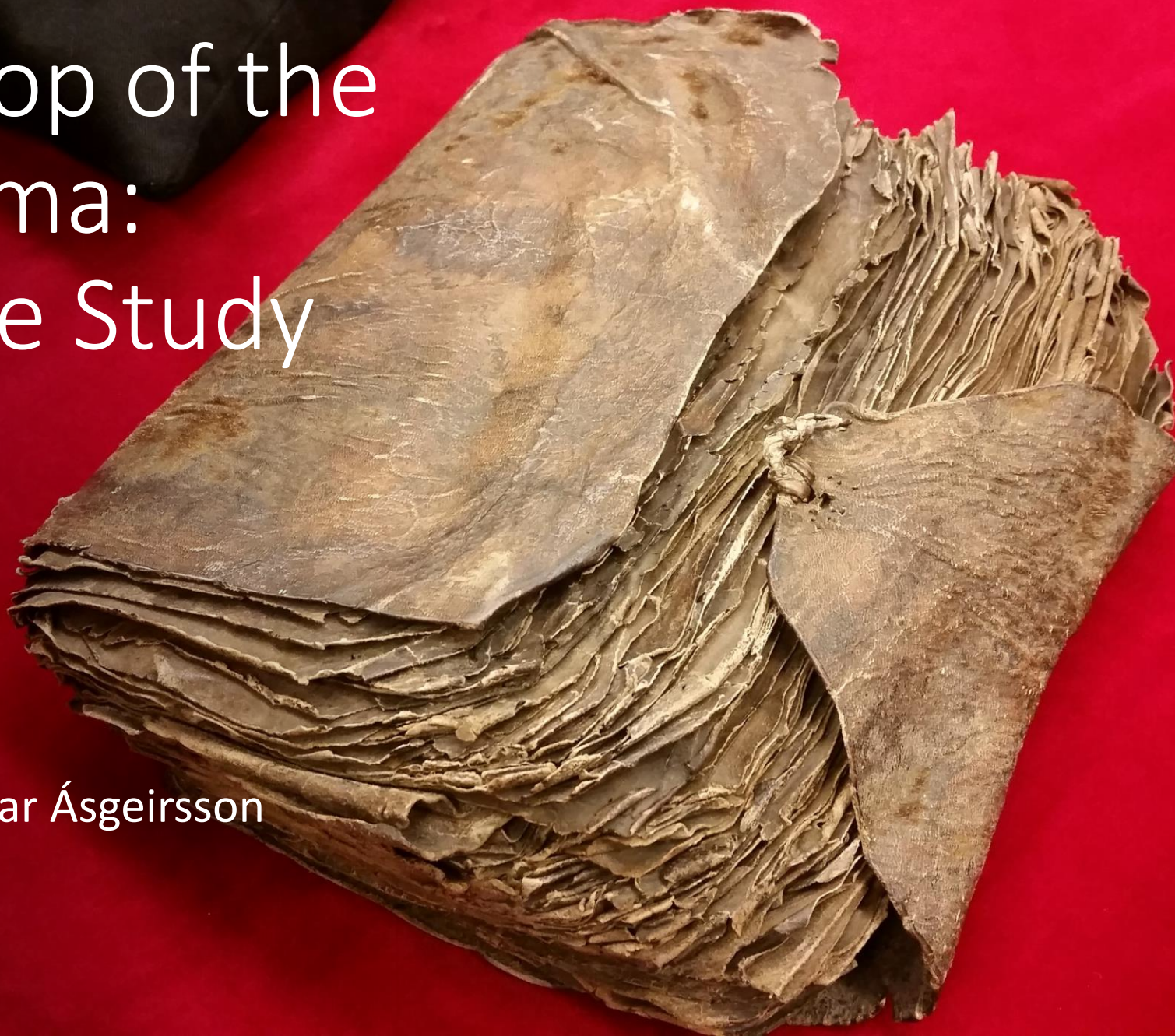


# The Top of the Stemma: A Case Study



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# Bédier's two hypotheses (as set forth by Odd Einar Haugen 2015)

- 1) When preparing an edition, an editor will try to reduce multi-branched stemmata to two-branched, so that he can constitute the text on the basis of whatever main branch he prefers, as each main branch will have the same stemmatic weight.
- 2) When building a stemma, the critic will continue his division of the manuscripts until he has established two main groups.

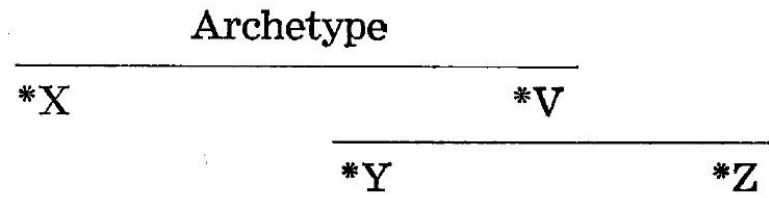
# Brennu-Njáls saga

- 100,000 words in 159 chapters
- Written ca. 1280
- 18 manuscripts (including fragments) dated to ca. 1300-1550
- 50+ manuscripts written in the 17th century or later

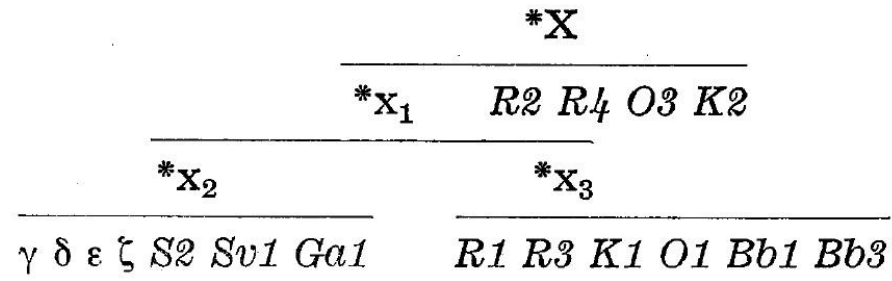
# The most complete medieval manuscripts

- Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling:
  - AM 468 4to, ca. 1300; Reykjabók (R [F])
  - AM 466 4to, ca. 1460; Oddabók (O [E])
- Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi:
  - AM 133 fol, ca. 1350; Kálfalækjarbók (K [B])
  - AM 132 fol, ca. 1330–1370; Möðruvallabók (M [A])
  - GKS 2870 4to, ca. 1300; Gráskinna (Gr [I]). Included are younger leaves which were added to the damaged manuscript ca. 1500–1550. This part is known as Gráskinnuauki (Ga).
- Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek:
  - GKS 2868 4to, ca. 1350; Skafinskinna (S [G])

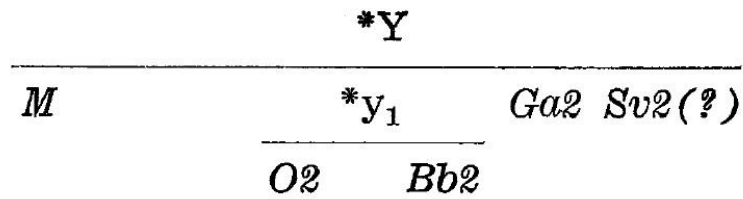
1)



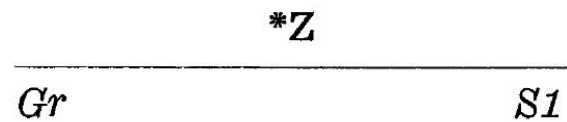
2) The X-class.



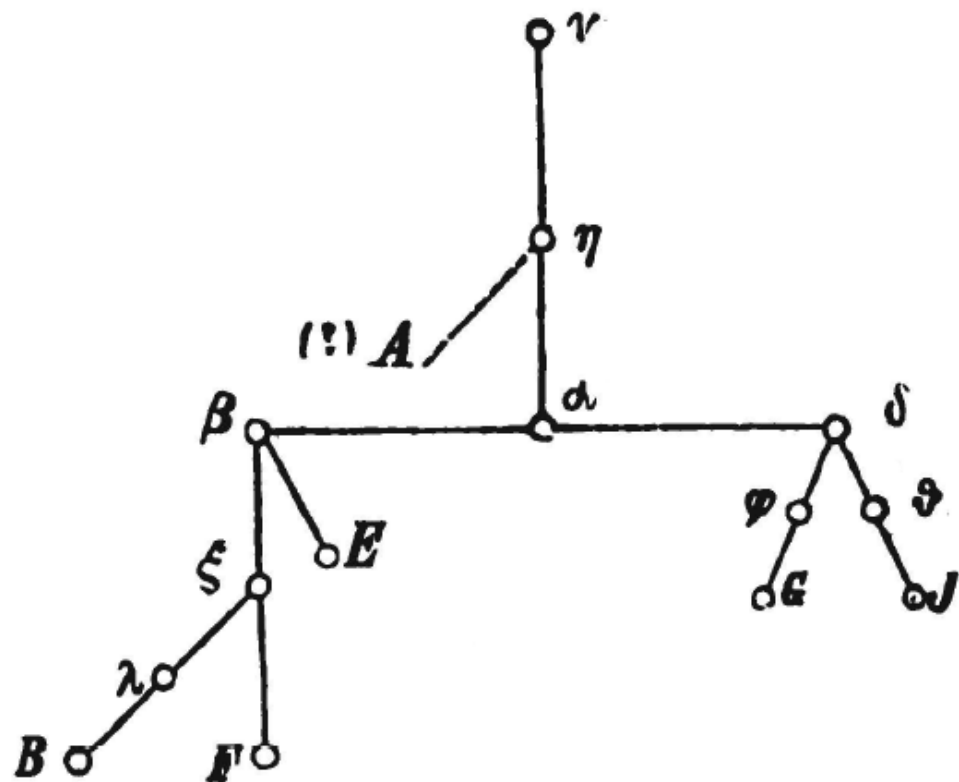
3) Y-class.



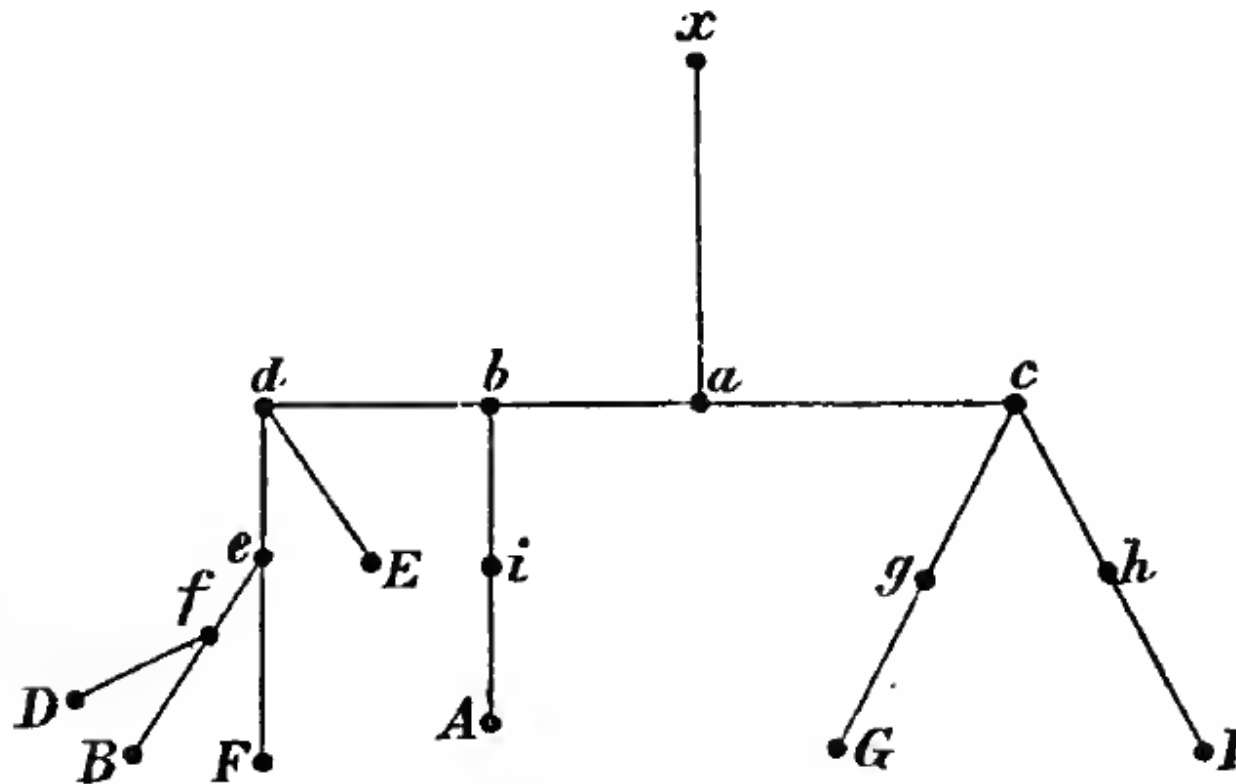
4) Z-class.



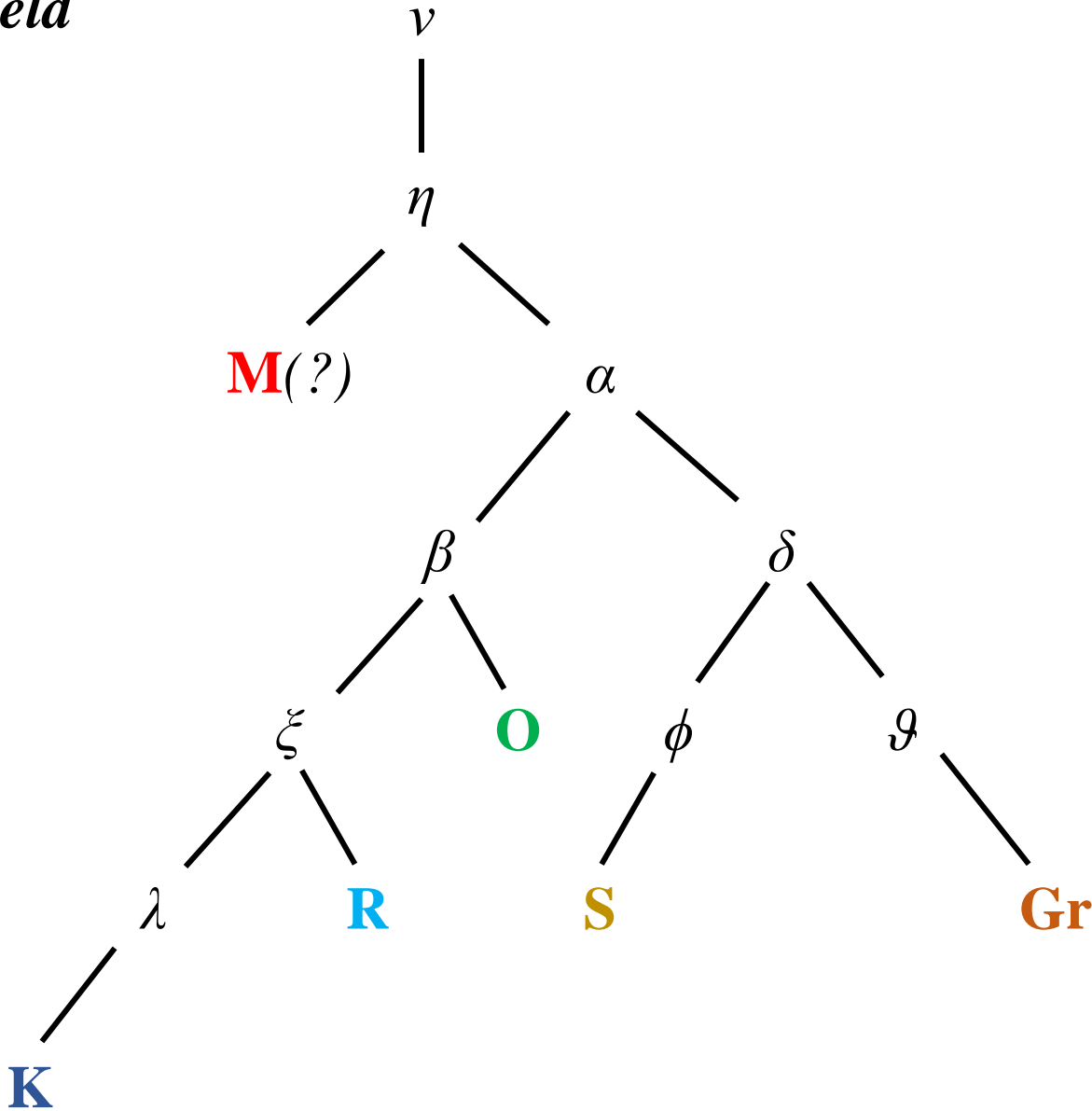
Hans Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1883)



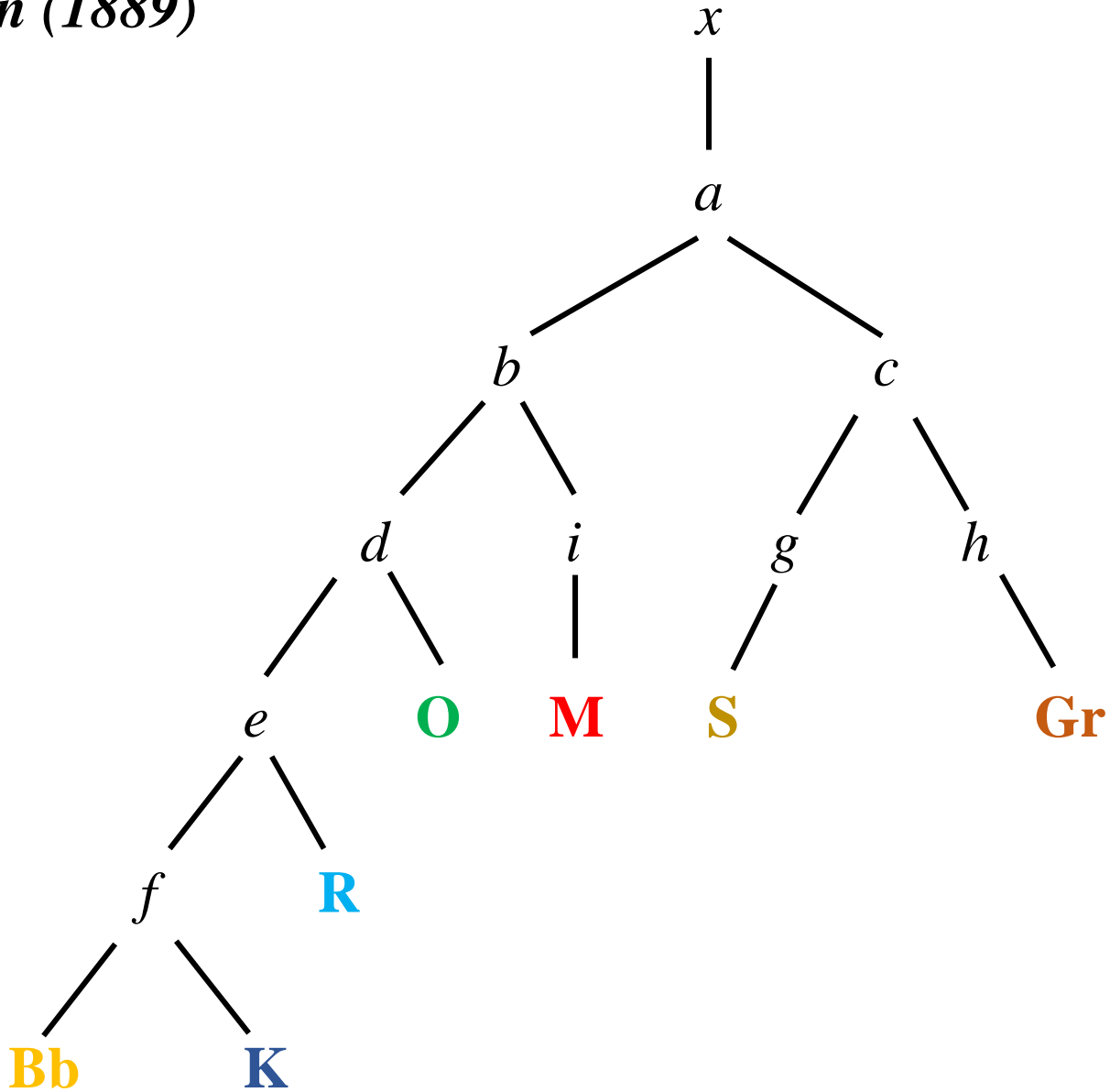
Jón Þorkelsson (1889)



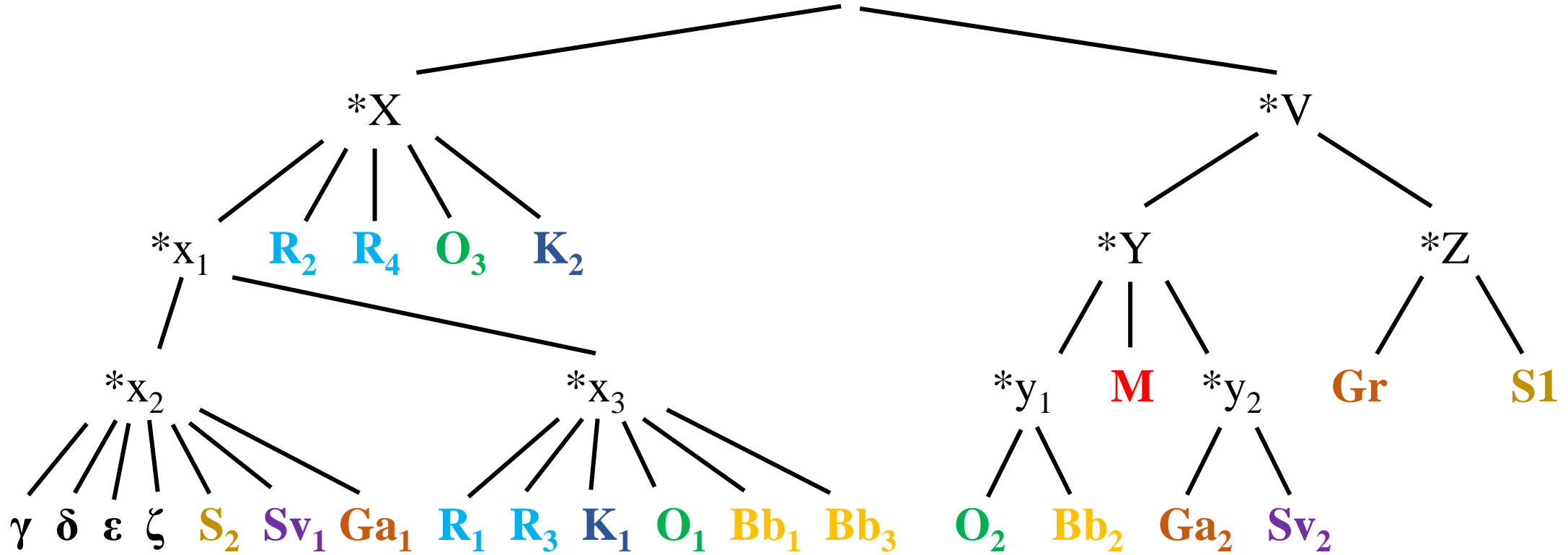
*Hans Schnorr von Carolsfeld*  
(1883)



*Jón Þorkelsson (1889)*







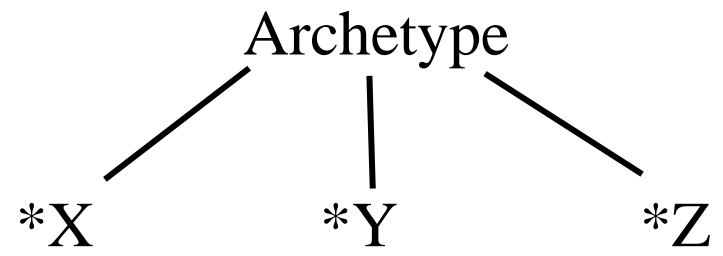
**Reykjabók**, parts **1** and **3** (chs. 1–38 and 116–140): copied from \*x3

**Reykjabók**, parts **2** and **4** (chs. 39–116 and 140–159): copied from \*X

# Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1953: 141)

- “When we try to determine the relationship of \*X, \*Y and \*Z, there is of course no reason to devote time to enumerating agreements between two of these against one, when the text of the former is above suspicion. We must seek instances where two of the manuscripts agree in erroneous readings; if we find many of them, it is probable that the two manuscripts are copies of the same exemplar, an intermediary between them and the archetype.”

- “The author of Njálssaga is no doubt one of the greatest masters of Icelandic prose style, of all ages, and certainly the scribes felt his excellence. Their way of treating the text seems to show more respect for it than is generally the case with our scribes in those times.” (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1954: 16)
- “I suggest the R-reading is a correction in \*x1; it is excellent **and worthy of the great master, the author, himself.**” (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1953: 130)



	Möðruvallabók (*Y)	Oddabók 2 (*y1)	Bæjarbók 2 (*y1)	Gráskinnuauki 2 (*y2)	Sveinsbók 2 (*y2)
1.1–19.33					
20.1–25.8		O			
25.8–36.85	M	O			
36.85–38.82	M	*			
38.82–49.82	M	O			
49.82–50.13	M	O	Bb		
50.13–51.61		O	Bb		
51.61–54.18	M	O	Bb		
54.18–62.52	M	O			
62.52–82.79	M	O	Bb		
82.79–84.32		O			
84.32–115.26	M	O			
115.26–118.23	M				
118.23–134.100	M	O			
134.100–136.17	M				
136.17–138.62	M	O			
138.62–139.51	M	O		Ga	
139.51–141.75	M	O			
141.75–142.367	M	O		Ga	
143.1–154.57	M			Ga	
155.1–157.104	M			Ga	Sv
157.104–159.43	M			Ga	

# The Y-class

- Jón Þorkelsson, in Einar Ólafur Sveinsson's translation (*Studies* 1953: 35; cf. *Njála* II, 1889: 777):
  - “The redaction of this manuscript (*M*) seems on the whole to be the most harmonious and to take a middle position between the two classes [i.e., the X-class and the Z-class]”
  - “Thus it is almost equally closely related to all the more important manuscripts.”
- Einar Ól. Sveinsson (*Studies* 1953: 49) about Oddabók after *Njáls saga*'s chapter 19:
  - “In all that follows it appears strangely inconsistent, following now the one, now the other class. Thus it reminds us of *M*.”

