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THE FARMER, SCRIBE AND LAY
HISTORIAN GUNNLAUGUR JÓNSSON
FROM SKUGGABJÖRG
AND HIS SCRIBAL NETWORK¹

ICELAND CAN BOAST a rich cultural heritage in the form of manuscripts which date from as early as the twelfth century to as late as the twentieth. All aspects of their history, material and content are of scholarly interest, including their scribes, as they can reveal relevant information about their production, dissemination, reception and other parts of their cultural background. One particularly prolific scribe from the nineteenth century and his scribal network stand as the focus of this study: the farmer and lay historian Gunnlaugur Jónsson from Skuggabjörg (1786–1866), with whom more than 30 manuscripts from the Landsbókasafn Íslands in Reykjavík are connected.² I intend to provide answers to the questions of where or from whom he received books, manuscript exemplars or any other form of information, with whom he was in contact and who else was part of this network.³ This hitherto largely unnoticed farmer played an active role in a larger scribal and scholarly network in Iceland, which consisted of both officials and laymen. By analysing Gunnlaugur's scribal network,

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- 2 See Páll Eggert Ólason, ed., *Skrá um handritasöfn*, 3 vols. (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1918–37); and *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 1. aukabindi* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn, 1947).
- 3 In certain cases the texts in Gunnlaugur's hand can shed light on this network, but an in-depth discussion of his source criticism or the scholarly value of his studies is, although interesting, not part of this article and must wait for a different project.

the present study will contribute towards a more complete and exhaustive view of Icelandic post-Reformation manuscript dissemination and, more generally, Iceland's cultural history.

Gunnlaugur Jónsson lived during the time that is for the most part associated with the Enlightenment. A brief outline of the most important ideas of and research on this period will, therefore, be given first, followed by some biographical notes on Gunnlaugur. His scribal network will then be presented with examples of both official and common people. The analysis of this network is based on information found in the manuscripts in Gunnlaugur's hand and in the manuscripts otherwise connected with him.

Previous Studies about Common People and Lay Historians

The important role of lay historians and peasant farmers, who copied manuscripts and thereby contributed considerably to Iceland's rich cultural landscape, has been well documented over the last decades. Loftur Guttormsson conducts extensive research on literacy and shows that by the end of the eighteenth century, reading abilities were virtually universal among the Icelandic population and that the clergy was integral to this development.⁴ Writing abilities, on the other hand, he explains, were not common among Icelanders until well into the nineteenth century, and many boys taught themselves to write in secret. Around 1840, approximately only one quarter to one third of all adults were able to write, and the fraction was considerably lower among those who were over the age of fifty.⁵ This implies that the scribal output of Gunnlaugur Jónsson, who was born in 1786 and thus 54 years old in 1840, is truly an outstanding achievement. Ingi Sigurðsson focuses on the history of Icelandic historical research with an emphasis on lay historians and on the influence of

4 See, for example, Loftur Guttormsson, "Island: Læsefertighed og folkeuddannelse 1540–1800," in *Ur nordisk kulturhistoria: Läskunnighet och folkbildning före folkskoleväsendet: XVIII. nordiska historikermötet Jyväskylä 1981*, ed. Marino Jokipii and Ilkka Nummela (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 1981), 123–91; and "Læsi," in *Íslensk þjóðmenning*, ed. Frosti F. Jóhannsson, vol. 7, *Munnmenntir og bókmenning* (Reykjavík: Bókautgáfan Þjóðsaga, 1989), 127–37.

5 See Loftur Guttormsson, "Læsi," 137–40.

intellectual movements on the public.⁶ Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Davíð Ólafsson pursue a microhistorical approach with a specific emphasis on the study of personal documents. Sigurður Gylfi concentrates on the connection between education and emotions and on child development,⁷ while Davíð investigates the case of common people in relationship to manuscript transmission, historical research and post-medieval scribal culture in Iceland, using the example of Sighvatur Grímsson Borgfirðingur (1840–1930).⁸ The kind of writing known as *þjóðlegur fróðleikur* ‘folk or popular knowledge’ deals with folk tales and biographical, genealogical and historical research by common people without much formal education.⁹ The sources that these lay historians used often stem from oral tradition, but they also use church registers, annals and legal documents.¹⁰ They were often motivated by a wish to preserve and disseminate knowledge, but also to entertain,¹¹ even though they had to face great difficulties in their pursuit of knowledge, especially when coming from a poor background.¹² Magnús Hauksson has analysed the works, world view and (non-)critical reflection of several lay historians, such as Magnús Björnsson (1889–1963)

6 See, for example, Ingi Sigurðsson, “Sagnfræði,” in *Upplýsingin á Íslandi: Tíu ritgerðir*, ed. Ingi Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1990), 244–68; and “Þróun íslenzkrar sagnfræði frá miðöldum til samtímans,” *Saga* 38 (2000): 9–32.

7 See, for example, Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, *Menntun, ást og sorg: Einsögurannsókn á íslensku sveitasamfélagi 19. og 20. aldar*, Sagnfræðirannsóknir, vol. 13 (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun, Háskólaútgáfan, 1997).

8 See Davíð Ólafsson, “Wordmongers: Post-Medieval Scribal Culture and the Case of Sighvatur Grímsson” (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Andrews, 2009), <http://hdl.handle.net/10023/770> (accessed September 15, 2013).

9 See Magnús Hauksson, “Þjóðlegur fróðleikur á 19. og 20. öld,” in *Íslensk bókmenntasaga*, ed. Guðmundur Andri Thorsson, vol. 4 (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 2006), 307–9; and “Die Laienhistoriker in Island und die Rolle in der isländischen Laiengeschichtsschreibung,” *Island* 16, no. 2 (2010): 15–16.

10 See Magnús Hauksson, “Þjóðlegur fróðleikur,” 314–16.

11 See Magnús Hauksson, “Þjóðlegur fróðleikur,” 315 and 327. The motivation shifted during the course of the nineteenth century from education and preservation towards personal pleasure and joy. A similar development from preservation and dissemination to self-reflection and identification processes is visible for the motivation behind copying manuscripts, see Davíð Ólafsson, “Að ætla sér bækur með penna: Miðlun Íslendingasagna á 19. öld í handritum og prentuðum bókum,” in *Íslenska söguþingið 30. maí–1. júní 2002: Ráðstefnuvit*, ed. Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands and Sögufélag, 2002), 2:211.

12 See Ingi Sigurðsson, *Íslensk sagnfræði frá miðri 19. öld til miðrar 20. aldar* (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 1986), 48.

and Gísli Konráðsson from Skagafjörður (1787–1877), who industriously and passionately copied manuscripts and composed poetry, *sagnaþettir* and other historical texts. Magnús shows how wide Gísli's geographical horizon was, although he does not reflect critically on history or his home.¹³

In this discussion, Skagafjörður has received specific attention.¹⁴ Kristmundur Bjarnason illustrates that northern Iceland, and especially Skagafjörður, had one of the highest rates of literacy in Iceland. Already in the 1740s almost all the children of the parishes Hof and Miklabær, where Gunnlaugur Jónsson grew up, were able to read.¹⁵ Around 1840, when Gunnlaugur's most productive period of manuscript copying and writing annals started, approximately a third of Skagafjörður's population was able to write,¹⁶ which is a slightly larger percentage than in the rest of the country. Skagafjörður was also a learned centre, above all for historical research and annalistic writing.¹⁷ Among the (lay) historians mentioned by Kristmundur Bjarnason are several that are of importance to this article, such as Jón Espólin, Einar Bjarnason and indeed also Gunnlaugur Jónsson.¹⁸

There are furthermore several ongoing projects dealing with the lives of common people in premodern Iceland and Scandinavia. The interdisciplinary project “Prentsmiðja fólksins – Handrita- og bókmenning síðari alda” (The People's Press – Manuscript Culture in the Age of Print), of which this study is a part, aims at identifying the connections between various media, texts and the lower strata of society. The international and

13 See Magnús Hauksson, “Die Laienhistoriker in Island”.

14 My colleague Tereza Lansing is currently conducting research on the scribal activities of Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson (1792–1863) from Heiði, including his scribal network. A publication of her results will follow.

15 See Kristmundur Bjarnason, “Alþýðufræðsla í Skagafirði fram um síðustu aldamót: Nokkrar athuganir,” in *Gefið og þegið: Afmælisrit til heiðurs Brodda Jóhannessyni sjötugum*, ed. Þuríður J. Kristjánsdóttir (Reykjavík: Iðunn, 1987), 222.

16 See Kristmundur Bjarnason, “Alþýðufræðsla í Skagafirði,” 227. More people, however, were able to scrawl or scribble: The vicar of Miklabær declared rather generally that many were able to write, whereas the vicar of Hof stated that there are many of his parishoners who “nokkuð geta hjálpað sér í því” (can manage somehow), see Pálmi Hannesson and Jakob Benediktsson, eds., *Sýslu- og sóknalýsingar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags 1839–1873*, vol. 2, *Skagafjarðarsýsla*, Safn til landfræðisögu Íslands (Akureyri: Norðri, 1954), 101 and 140; here cited after Kristmundur Bjarnason, “Alþýðufræðsla í Skagafirði,” 226.

17 See, for example, Ingi Sigurðsson, “Þróun íslenzkrar sagnfræði,” 14.

18 See Kristmundur Bjarnason, “Alþýðufræðsla í Skagafirði,” 227. Yet, despite the large number of (lay) historians from the north, there seem to be no explanations or attempts at explanations as to why Skagafjörður was the home of so many prolific historians.

interdisciplinary project “Reading and Writing from Below”, based in Helsinki, investigates the role of literacy and the written word, including the production, dissemination and reception of texts, of non-privileged and common people in northern Europe from c. 1770 until c. 1920.¹⁹ In general, the life, education and world view of the common people has considerably sparked the interest of scholars.²⁰

Scribal Networks and the Enlightenment

Within the field of sociology, social networks are defined as “direct and indirect connections that link a person or a group with other people or groups”.²¹ In this sense, I understand a scribal network as a specific social network between individuals with their mutual aim of committing both official and unofficial texts to the written word. The members of such a group are thus connected with each other through their common scribal activity. They do not necessarily have to know each other personally or meet, and not all members will be in contact with all other members of their scribal network, but will in certain cases be linked only through other scribes. Some of the links can be stronger, or more frequent, than others. The term ‘community’ highlights, in contrast to the term ‘network’, a strong geographical or local connection.

Scribal networks have not been the sole focus of scholarly attention, but have been an integral part of studies of, for example, individual scribes or areas of manuscript production. Matthew James Driscoll mentions the scribal network of the farmer Magnús Jónsson (1835–1922) from Tjaldanes, who contacted both neighbours and people far away to get

19 As a result of pre-project workshops a volume of articles was published, see Anna Kuismin and Matthew James Driscoll, eds., *White Fields, Black Seeds: Nordic Literary Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Studia Fennica Litteraria, vol. 7 (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2013), which also contains three articles dealing with Icelandic matters.

20 The book *Alþýðumenning á Íslandi 1830–1930: Ritað mál, menntun og félagsshreyfingar*, ed. Ingi Sigurðsson and Loftur Guttormsson, Sagnfræðirannsóknir, vol. 18 (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2003) has a similar topic, with specific emphasis on the education of the common people. Its focus lies, despite the title, more on the period 1880–1930 and thus describes mostly developments that do not occur during the time of Gunnlaugur Jónsson.

21 Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 6th ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 815.

hold of saga- and *rimur*-manuscripts.²² Peter Springborg, to name another example, analysed the network of scribes, commissioners and manuscript owners in Snæfjallaströnd.²³ Even though Springborg does not mention a scribal network in his historical study, it forms an important part of his seminal study. Ingi Sigurðsson refers to the personal connections between lay historians and the influence they exerted on each other.²⁴ Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Davíð Ólafsson emphasise the influence of lay historians on the spread of writing abilities and ways of escaping the daily hardship through literature. These ‘barefoot historians’, as the two scholars call the laymen, “formed an informal association with the function of exchanging material, organizing meetings and supporting each other”.²⁵ Although they sometimes use the term ‘network’ for these scribal associations, their focus is more on the scribal activities and influences on local communities, particularly of western Iceland,²⁶ than on the networks that scribes built.

The Icelandic Enlightenment, commonly dated to c. 1770–1830, was strongly influenced by the Enlightenment in Denmark and Germany, which is characterised by a stronger religious outlook than in France or Great Britain.²⁷ Its proponents formed a rather small group of the leaders of society, which led to a movement ‘from above’, with the top of society

22 See Matthew James Driscoll, *The Unwashed Children of Eve: The Production, Dissemination and Reception of Popular Literature in Post-Reformation Iceland* (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik, 1997), 58; and “Um gildi gamalla bóka’: Magnús Jónsson í Tjaldanesi und das Ende der isländischen Handschriftenkultur,” in *Text – Reihe – Transmission: Unfestigkeit als Phänomen skandinavischer Erzählprosa 1500–1800*, ed. Anna Katharina Richter and Jürg Glauser, Beiträge zur Nordischen Philologie, vol. 42 (Tübingen: Francke, 2012), 255–82.

23 See Peter Springborg, “Nyt og gammelt fra Snæfjallaströnd: Bidrag til beskrivelse af den litterære aktivitet på Vestfjordene i 1. halvdel af det 17. århundrede,” in *Afmalísrit Jóns Helgasonar*, eds. Jakob Benediktsson et al. (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1969), 288–327.

24 See Ingi Sigurðsson, *Íslenzk sagnfræði frá miðri 19. öld til miðrar 20. aldar*, 48.

25 Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Davíð Ólafsson, “‘Barefoot Historians’: Education in Iceland in the Modern Period,” in *Writing Peasants: Studies on Peasant Literacy in Early Modern Northern Europe*, ed. Klaus-Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt and Bjørn Poulsen (Kerteminde: Landbohistorisk Selskab, 2002), 198.

26 See, for example, Davíð’s Ph.D. dissertation on Sighvatur Grímsson Borgfirðingur, “Wordmongers,” esp. 124–80, or his article on a very similar topic, “Scribal Communities in Iceland: The Case of Sighvatur Grímsson,” in *White Field, Black Seeds: Nordic Practises in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Anna Kuismin and Matthew James Driscoll, *Studia Fennica Litteraria*, vol. 7 (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2012), 40–49.

27 See Ingi Sigurðsson, “Sagnfræði,” 244–45 and 250.

influencing the common people, particularly with legal enforcement.²⁸ The main aims of the Enlightenment were to eradicate superstition, to educate the common people, to improve them morally, and to improve their economic situation. Methods to reach these goals included the provision of good role models and Christianity and the improvement of reading and writing abilities and arithmetic, as well as the promotion of the joy of reading.²⁹ Considering the limits of the educational system,³⁰ home schooling and tuition from the local vicars were considered to yield the best results.³¹ The education of clergymen in general was not satisfactory to the proponents of the Enlightenment, and therefore the improvement of the pastoral education and the publishing of didactic literature and suitable children's literature had priority.³² The general tenor is that the Enlightenment exerted only limited influence and that only a small group of – often related – leaders of society were its proponents, but that it became influential in later times, particularly during the age of Romanticism.³³ A certain, albeit vague, influence can also be seen in the works of Gunnlaugur Jónsson from Skuggabjörg, as will be shown. The enlightened – and pietistic – wish for educating the common people is perhaps one of the aspects that facilitated Gunnlaugur's scholarly work. Efforts to spread literacy, or at least reading skills, and the opinion that we can learn from history, are surely factors that influence a peasant's or commoner's zeal for personal education and scholarly research.

28 See Loftur Guttormsson, "Fræðslumál," in *Upplýsingin á Íslandi: Tíu ritgerðir*, ed. Ingi Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1990), 178.

29 See Loftur Guttormsson, "Fræðslumál," 153–58, 164 and 174.

30 Until the nineteenth century there were no schools in Iceland, except the Latin schools in Hólar and Skálholt and their respective successors in Reykjavík and Bessastaðir. Children were taught at home or by their local parish priests. For a short overview, see, for example, Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years: History of a Marginal Society* (London: C. Hurst, 2000), 169–72.

31 See Loftur Guttormsson, "Fræðslumál," 158–59.

32 See Loftur Guttormsson, "Fræðslumál," 171–72.

33 Concise overviews of various aspects of the Enlightenment can be found in the article collection Ingi Sigurðsson, *Upplýsingin á Íslandi: Tíu ritgerðir*. Older, but still valuable, is Þorkell Jóhannesson, *Saga Íslendinga*, vol. 7, *Tímabilið 1770–1830: Upplýsingaröld* (Reykjavík: Menntamálaráð and Þjóðvinafélag, 1950); a more recent, concise overview is found in Gunnar Karlsson, *Iceland's 1100 Years*. The reasons behind the grass root-movement of lay historians slightly later than Gunnlaugur are analysed in Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Davíð Ólafsson, "Barefoot Historians".

Biography of Gunnlaugur Jónsson and His Manuscripts

Gunnlaugur Jónsson was born in 1786, probably at Gröf in Höfðaströnd in Skagafjörður. It is likely that he grew up a few kilometres south of Gröf at the farm Tumabrekka in Óslandshlíð, where his parents were farmers. In 1819 he married Bergljót Jónsdóttir, who was from this area as well. They had eleven children, five of whom reached adulthood and two of whom were born in Gröf. In 1823 the family moved to Skuggabjörg in Deildardalur, less than five kilometres east of Gröf, where they lived until Bergljót's death in 1863. Gunnlaugur then went to live with his nephew, Sigmundur Pálsson (1823–1905), at Ljósstaðir in Hofssókn, where he died in 1866. It is said that he was blind for the last twelve years of his life and that he was an excellent farmer and very hospitable.³⁴ He is furthermore said to have been a great lay scholar and a talented poet.³⁵ Today he is known, albeit not widely, as the author of the *Aldarfarsbók*, Icelandic annals covering the years 1801–66.

There are approximately 30 manuscripts in his hand now extant and kept in the *Landsbókasafn Íslands*.³⁶ They can be divided into three groups: prose literature, metrical literature and non-fiction. This division also reflects to a certain extent the development or different stages of Gunnlaugur's scribal activities. The group with prose literature consists of manuscripts dating to the 1830s, or more precisely, manuscripts in which Gunnlaugur states the years 1833–38 in colophons. The second group with metrical literature consists of manuscripts that are dated to between 1840 and 1854. The third group with non-fiction, which is also the largest group, spans the whole period of Gunnlaugur's scribal activities. Within this group is Gunnlaugur's diary, now Lbs 1588 8vo, which he kept from 1801 until 1854. The bulk of the manuscripts from this group, however, is dated

34 Bólu-Hjálmar (1796–1875) composed a poem about Gunnlaugur's hospitality, contained in, for example, Lbs 1507 8vo and HSk 393 8vo and printed in Hjálmar Jónsson frá Bólu, *Ritsafn*, vol. 1, *Ljóðméli*, ed. Finnur Sigmundsson, new ed. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja, 1965), 40.

35 On Gunnlaugur's biography, see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár: Frá landnáms-tímum til ársloka 1940*, 5 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1948–52), 2:215; and Eiríkur Kristinsson, *Skagfirzkar æviskrár: Tímabilið 1850–1890*, 2nd ed. (Akureyri: Sögufélag Skagfirðinga, 1988), 1:90–92.

36 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*; and *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 1. aukabindi*.

to the 1840s and 1850s. In other words, Gunnlaugur was always writing non-fictional, mostly historical manuscripts during his scribal career; he copied sagas and other prose literature in the 1830s, but moved to poetry and historical works in his later years. This also shows that he was most active during the 1840s and 1850s, from when he was in his mid-fifties until he ceased his scribal activities due to blindness.

It is, however, rather difficult to date precisely his manuscripts based on palaeographic features. His script in his non-fictional manuscripts is very distinct and consistent, with few changes over the years. After an analysis of his diary, Lbs 1588 8vo, which he may or may not have written over the span of 55 years, it seems that he changed writing the st-ligature and the capital H. The st-ligatures have usually a round top until c. 1835, but afterwards slightly more often a dip in the top bow. It seems, however, that this feature does not occur often enough for secure datings. The capital H, it seems, is written with a straight cross bar until c. 1848 and from c. 1815–17 onwards either with a straight cross bar or with a connecting line between the two ascenders. After c. 1848 he wrote it almost exclusively with a broken cross bar and only in some instances with a straight cross bar. The consistency in script and the resultant difficulties in dating Gunnlaugur's manuscripts connote that we cannot be sure when exactly he started working on his diary or *Aldarfarsbók*. It also means that we do not know for certain when or how his scribal activities started, more so because he does not mention any of this in his diary or other manuscripts. It seems, however, that some of his historical and non-fictional manuscripts might have been written before c. 1840. Lbs 484 8vo, for example, contains both annals covering the years 874–1800 and lists of abbots. It is dated to c. 1820,³⁷ but the occurrence of round-topped st-ligatures and capital Hs with a straight bar and with a connecting line suggest that it was written some time between c. 1815 and c. 1835. Gunnlaugur probably started to write the list of priests, now contained in the miscellany JS 617 4to, before 1838. Lbs 1273 8vo, containing the *Aldarfarsbók* until 1846 and dated to c. 1840–46,³⁸ was perhaps started earlier. Nevertheless, the bulk of these non-fictional manuscripts was written in the 1840s and 1850s.

37 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:100.

38 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:247.

Scribal Network 1: Prose and Poetry Manuscripts

The three manuscripts in the group containing prose literature will serve as the starting point for the analysis of Gunnlaugur's scribal network. Lbs 726 4to, written in 1833, contains *Margrétar saga* and a collection of *ævintýri*.³⁹ ÍB 250 4to contains *Íslendingasögur* and *-þættir* and was written in 1834–38. ÍB 277 4to from 1833–34 contains *fornaldar-* and *riddarasögur*, *ævintýri* and some short texts of an informative character.⁴⁰ None of these manuscripts reveal any definite information about Gunnlaugur's scribal network,⁴¹ even though they are of great interest for various other reasons.⁴²

The group of manuscripts with metrical literature, including *rímur*, contain possible information about Gunnlaugur's scribal network. In this group there are 13 manuscripts that were written entirely or partly by Gunnlaugur.⁴³ These include a five-volume collection, written between 1840 and 1845, and a four-volume collection, written between 1840 and 1854.⁴⁴ The manuscripts contain poems and verses from both the most

39 The date is written at the bottom of fol. 48v. In the catalogue of the *Landsbókasafn*, the scribe of Lbs 726 4to is listed as anonymous, see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 1:332. However, a comparison of the handwriting and layout of this manuscript and of ÍB 250 and 277 4to clearly prove that Gunnlaugur is the scribe.

40 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:788 and 793–94.

41 A comparison of *Hauks þáttur hábrókar* in ÍB 277 4to and Lbs 2796 4to, a manuscript owned by Halldór *konrektor* 'vice rector' Hjálmarsson (1745–1805), shows that the latter could have been the exemplar of ÍB 277 4to. A comparison of *Sneglu-Halla þáttur* in ÍB 250 4to and Lbs 355 4to, a manuscript also owned by Halldór and with marginal variants from a manuscript written by the Rev. Jón Helgason, shows that the text in ÍB 250 4to agrees with the variants from the Rev. Jón's manuscript. This makes it possible that Gunnlaugur used manuscripts that were once owned, or perhaps borrowed, by Halldór as his exemplars, but this seems too vague for any decisive statement about Gunnlaugur's scribal network.

42 ÍB 277 4to, for example, seems to be targeted at a female audience, as it contains mostly sagas that have either female heroes or strong, courageous female helpers of the male heroes, see Silvia Hufnagel, "*Sörla saga sterka: Transmission Studies of a Fornaldarsaga*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Copenhagen, 2012), 146–48.

43 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*; and www.handrit.is for detailed manuscript descriptions and photographs. The catalogue's attribution of ÍB 27 8vo to Gunnlaugur (see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 3:6) is most likely incorrect, as a comparison with the script of ÍB 277 4to shows.

44 These are JS 254–58 4to and JS 588–91 4to respectively, see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:537–38 and 602–3. The other manuscripts are Lbs 1213 4to, Lbs 563 8vo, Lbs 1765 8vo and ÍB 267 8vo. If Gunnlaugur is one of the scribes of Lbs 1213 is not entirely clear. It is doubtful that he is the scribe of fols. 74–91, as is claimed in the catalogue (see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 1:473), but he is probably the scribe of fols. 46–73.

famous poets of Iceland and some rather unknown local poets that were in several cases Gunnlaugur's neighbours or relatives. To name but two examples, poems by the Rev. Hallgrímur Pétursson and Guðmundur Kolbeinsson at Marbæli are included. Hallgrímur (1614–74) was the most outstanding Icelandic poet of his time, if not of all time.⁴⁵ It is possible that Gunnlaugur knew some of Hallgrímur's poems by heart or that he even owned some printed books containing them. In either case it would not have been difficult for Gunnlaugur to get hold of an exemplar, but it means that no information about Gunnlaugur's scribal network can be obtained in this instance. It cannot be established whether he made use of his own memory, printed books or handwritten manuscripts, either in his own possession or borrowed from somebody else. However, the case is different with Guðmundur Kolbeinsson (1770–1846), a contemporary of Gunnlaugur's and a farmer at Marbæli,⁴⁶ which lies in the vicinity of Gunnlaugur's home. Information about Guðmundur is even scarcer than that about Gunnlaugur, and only a few of Guðmundur's poems are extant. It is not clear how Gunnlaugur was able to include a poem by Guðmundur in one of his manuscripts.⁴⁷ In general, the manuscripts with metrical contents thus prove that Gunnlaugur used local, perhaps oral, sources and popular sources that were easily available in various media.⁴⁸

45 A team of scholars, based at the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum in Reykjavík, is currently working on an eight-volume edition of his complete works. By now four volumes have been published, see Hallgrímur Pétursson, *Ljóðmáli*, ed. Margrét Eggertsdóttir, Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, Kristján Eiríksson and Þórunn Sigurðardóttir, Rit-safn Hallgríms Péturssonar, vols. 1.1–1.4, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Rit, vols. 48, 57, 64, 75 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2000–).

46 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenskar aviskrár*, 2:168.

47 It seems possible that he wrote it down while or after his neighbour recited it. This implies that Gunnlaugur used oral sources, in this case a first-hand source, which would be an important reference to Gunnlaugur's scribal network. It is of course also possible that somebody, perhaps even Guðmundur himself, wrote the poem down and that Gunnlaugur copied it from such a written source. A similar case concerns the poems by Bólu-Hjálmar, a contemporary poet of Gunnlaugur who is mentioned in Gunnlaugur's diary as a visitor, see, for example, Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 451v:18–19 for the days 18–19 June 1852. Poems by Bólu-Hjálmar are also included in Gunnlaugur's poetry collections, for example in JS 588 4to. This makes it perhaps more likely that Gunnlaugur used first-hand sources.

48 Davíð Ólafsson came to similar conclusions concerning the scribal community in Akranes. Sighvatur Borgfirðingur used oral and written sources for his numerous poetry manuscripts; the oral sources were both the poets themselves and other members of the com-

Scribal Network 2: Non-Fictional Manuscripts

The third and largest group of manuscripts is a more reliable and fruitful source of information about Gunnlaugur's scribal network. It contains historical and other informative, non-fictional texts, such as descriptions of church farms, lists of graduates and successions of priests in various parishes. Gunnlaugur's main interest lay in parishes, priests, graduates and other annalistic information. His *Aldarfarsbók* contains information divided into the categories weather, catch, accidents, deaths and official appointments. The information is usually written in key words, half-sentences and sentences, with the year written in the outer margin. What differentiates Gunnlaugur's *Aldarfarsbók* from many other Icelandic annals is its surprisingly clear and consistent structure. It can be best described as topical, in opposition to a chronological structure. Most annals start annual entries with information about the weather during winter and continue with deaths, official appointments or news and noteworthy incidents. The rest of these annual entries follow the same routine for the following seasons. The *Vallaannáll*, annals covering the years 1659–1737 by the Rev. Eyjólfur Jónsson (1670–1745) from Vellir, can serve as an example. The entry for 1692 starts with the weather during winter and a partial lunar eclipse, theft, the catch and the weather in spring and official appointments. After an interlude of the death of an Icelander in Copenhagen that winter, the entry continues with weddings, a murder, official business and the weather, hay and catch during summer. The entry ends with outward voyages, a court case, the weather during autumn and winter and foreign news.⁴⁹ The structure of these annals is thus chronological or cyclic even within their yearly entries. Gunnlaugur, however, uses a topical structure, insofar as he divides his annual entries into topics such as the weather and catch. He even enhances the structure by using headings for these categories. The structure is also quite consistent. He uses the same headings and the same order of headings throughout almost all of

munity in Akranes, the written sources were both Sighvatur's own older transcripts and transcripts from others, including autographs. See Davíð Ólafsson, "Scribal Communities in Iceland," 45–6.

49 See Hannes Þorsteinsson, ed., *Annálar 1400–1800* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1922–27), 1:418–21.

his *Aldarfarsbók*.⁵⁰ One of the very few similarly structured annals is, to my knowledge, the *Djáknaannáll* by Tómas Tómasson (1756–1811) from Stóra-Ásgeirsá in Víðidalur. Here there are headings, too, which structure the contents of the yearly entries.⁵¹ In general, the geographical horizon in Gunnlaugur's annals is quite broad. Although the focus is on the North and especially Skagafjörður, Gunnlaugur includes a great deal of information from the other districts and quarters of Iceland. There is, however, no real critical reflection on the information or source criticism detectable; something that Gunnlaugur has in common with other lay historians such as Gísli Konráðsson and Sighvatur Borgfirðingur.⁵²

The *Aldarfarsbók* is contained in two manuscripts: Lbs 1273 8vo and Lbs 1301 4to. The former, written solely by Gunnlaugur and dated in the catalogue to c. 1840–46 but which he might have started earlier than that,⁵³ covers the years 1801–46 and was the exemplar or source of the latter. This manuscript was written by Gunnlaugur and his nephew Sigmundur Pálsson (1823–1905) from Ljósstaðir, probably between c. 1848 and 1866.⁵⁴ It covers the years 1801–66 and divides entries of deceased from 1817 onwards into *merkis folks lát* 'deceased notables' and *bænda og alþýðu folks lát* 'deceased farmers and common people', whereas Lbs 1273 8vo has only one, overall category of deceased. Some entries which are crossed out in Lbs 1273 8vo are not included in Lbs 1301 4to. Lbs 1273 8vo is in general

50 Gunnlaugur applied the same structure even to his other annals, albeit without headings, and to his diary.

51 See Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., *Annálar 1400–1800* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1987), 7:35–330. The structuring and headings are similar to Gunnlaugur's, though not the same. The *Djáknaannáll* combines, for example, information about the weather and catch under one heading, whereas Gunnlaugur divides the information into two paragraphs with separate headings.

52 See Magnús Hauksson, "Die Laienhistoriker in Island," 34.

53 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:247 and above.

54 As the entries contain some forms of a capital H with a broken bar, it seems likely that Gunnlaugur wrote the manuscript after c. 1848. According to information about the verso-side of the fly-leaf, Gunnlaugur covered the years 1801–60 on pp. 1–251, where Sigmundur took over and wrote pp. 251–320. As previously mentioned, Gunnlaugur was apparently blind for the last twelve years of his life, which would mean that he could not have written the entries for 1854/55–60; these entries are indeed very clearly written and differ from his usual hand. The script is still more similar to Gunnlaugur's hand than to Sigmundur's, though, and I therefore believe that Gunnlaugur wrote the entries until 1860. The catalogue dates the manuscript to c. 1840–66, see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 1:493.

slightly more extensive and detailed than its copy, although many entries are identical.

Another manuscript belonging to the third group, JS 334 4to, contains annals that Gunnlaugur compiled. The manuscript was probably written c. 1840–50⁵⁵ and is divided into two parts. The first part contains annals of the period 866–1600, with information mostly concerning accidents or noteworthy incidents and deaths, but also information about the weather. Gunnlaugur noted in a considerable number of instances his sources, for the most part *Íslendingasögur* such as *Njáls saga* and *Sturlunga saga*. He mentions, for example, the battle at Viðines in his entry for the year 1208 and ends with a reference to *Sturlunga saga*, where this battle is described in great detail. Gunnlaugur's entry reads: "Ó höpp. Bardagi í vidirnesi í Hjaltadal, fjell þar Kolbeinn Tumason – Þordur prestur Einarsson – og Brúsi prestur – *Sturlunga Saga* 3ia þ. 3ia kap:" [Accidents. Battle in Viðines in Hjaltadalur. Kolbeinn Tumason, the Rev. Þórður Einarsson and the Rev. Brúsi were killed there. *Sturlunga saga*, 3rd þ[?], 3rd chapter]⁵⁶ The second part of this manuscript comprises annals for the years 1601–1800, with a title-page⁵⁷ and a preface in which Gunnlaugur informs the reader about his reasons for taking upon the task of compiling the annals and their sources. He states that he has met with rather many uninformed opinions about the past weather, catch and accidents and that he wants to prove that Iceland has not taken a turn for the worse, but that such incidents as described in his annals are not out of the ordinary. This wish for education

55 It is dated to c. 1840 in the catalogue, see Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:554.

56 JS 334 4to 1, pp. 36:30–37:1. The transcriptions in this article are semi-diplomatic, with the original punctuation, a slightly normalised orthography and expanded abbreviations in italic. Translations are my own.

57 Although the title page labels the annals as *Aldarfarsbók*, it is not entirely clear which term Gunnlaugur himself used for these annals. The title page was possibly written by somebody else, as the script is not similar to Gunnlaugur's, who was furthermore not in the habit of supplying his historical manuscripts with title pages. In the preface to the second part, he only refers to his "blöd" [pages], JS 334 4to 2, p. 3:10, and the first part does not have a title page or preface at all. Gunnlaugur wrote, however: "Aldarfars Bók frá 1800 framm haldid" [*Aldarfarsbók* from 1800 continued] as title on fol. 1r in Lbs 1273 8vo, which suggests that he considered his annals covering the time before 1800 also as part of his *Aldarfarsbók*. He must have changed his mind at some point, though, because in his annals in Lbs 484 8vo we read "Registr" [Register], 1, p. 1:1, and "Annalar frá 1600" [Annals from 1600], 2, p. 1:1. I therefore apply the term *Aldarfarsbók* only to his annals covering the nineteenth century.

of his contemporaries and positive outlook on history, including his own time, might be influenced by the Enlightenment insofar as the movement's general intellectual ideas had eventually spread from the leaders of the country to the lower strata of society. This does not make Gunnlaugur an active or deliberate proponent of the Enlightenment but shows the ways in which its concepts reached the general public.⁵⁸ Gunnlaugur's preface can furthermore be classified as scholarly, or perhaps pseudo-scholarly, as the statement on his sources and aims bears witness.

Gunnlaugur lists in his preface as some of his sources *Mannfækkun af hallerum* by Bishop Hannes Finnsson, Jón Espólín's *Árbækur*, protocols of the *Alþingi*, genealogies, newsletters (*fréttabréf*) and metrical annals (*ljóðaannálar*) by the provost Þorlákur Þórarinnsson (1711–73), the Rev. Jón Jónsson from Kviabekkur (1739–85) and the Rev. Jón Hjaltalín (1749–1835). Bishop Hannes Finnsson (1739–96) published *Historia ecclesastica islandiae*, a history of Christianity in Iceland compiled by his father, Finnur Jónsson. Hannes wrote, among other works and studies, *Mannfækkun af hallerum*, a work on the hard times that Iceland had to endure between the twelfth century and 1789.⁵⁹ And although annalistic writing diminished during the Enlightenment, *Íslands árbækur í söguformi* or *Árbækur Espólíns*, annals by Jón Espólín (1769–1836) covering the years 1262 onwards and published in 12 volumes between 1821 and 1855, enjoyed great popularity.⁶⁰ Poems of both the Rev. Jón from Kviabekkur and the Rev. Jón Hjaltalín are contained in Gunnlaugur's poetry collections.⁶¹ A considerable number of manuscripts containing *tíðavísur* 'verses of times' and similar poetry by the Rev. Þorlákur are extant, as well as a small number of *tíðavísur* by the Rev. Jón from Kviabekkur,⁶² which Gunnlaugur might have utilised,

58 It is possible that Gunnlaugur's words of optimism are a paraphrase of Hannes Finnsson's introduction to his *Mannfækkun af hallerum* or a general expression used in introductions, but they nevertheless express a view on history that has its roots in the Enlightenment.

59 The *Historia ecclesiastica* was published in Latin in Copenhagen in four volumes 1772–78, with a reprint from 1970. *Mannfækkun* was published by Jón Eyþórsson and Jóhannes Nordal in Reykjavík, also in 1970, but Gunnlaugur mentions its publication as the 14th volume within the series *Rit Lærdómslistafélagsins* from 1796, see JS 334 4to 2, p. 3:16–17. Gunnlaugur used sources from both media, handwritten as well as printed, and he seems to have used the different media indiscriminately.

60 See Ingi Sigurðsson, "Sagnfræði," 265.

61 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:538 and 603.

62 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns*:

although it is not possible to determine a specific source or manuscript. The Rev. Jón Hjaltalín was one of the foremost poets of his time and has even been called a “best-selling author” by the standards of his day,⁶³ with an abundance of extant copies of his literary works, both in handwritten and printed form. During his lifetime, more than fifty of his psalms were published in Magnús Stephensen’s psalm book, printed in Leirárgarðar in 1801 (the *Aldamótabók*), followed by posthumous publications of poems. Although he was forgotten for some time, some of his works have recently been printed and published.⁶⁴ The Rev. Jón was perhaps best known for his religious poetry,⁶⁵ but had wide interests in literature, politics, law and history.⁶⁶ It was most likely the Rev. Jón’s *Fimtiú og sex tíðavísur*, printed in Copenhagen in 1835 and transmitted in a number of manuscripts, that Gunnlaugur used as source. It is unlikely that the two men, the Rev. Jón Hjaltalín and Gunnlaugur, met personally, but the Rev. Jón’s *tíðavísur* were widely known and are cited in extracts in Jón Espólin’s *Árbækur*,⁶⁷ which Gunnlaugur also cites as sources and whose author he sporadically mentions in his diary. It is also possible that Gunnlaugur became familiar with the Rev. Jón’s work through his acquaintance Einar Bjarnason (1782–1856), a lay historian working under the Rev. Jón Konráðsson (1772–1850) at Mælifell. However, for more reliable statements about Gunnlaugur’s sources, such as the genealogies and newsletters that he mentioned, and his scribal network other sources have to be consulted.

1. *aukabindi*; Lárus H. Blöndal, ed., *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns*: 2. *aukabindi* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn, 1959); Grímur M. Helgason and Lárus H. Blöndal, eds., *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns*: 3. *aukabindi* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1970); Grímur M. Helgason and Ögmundur Helgason, eds., *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns*. 4. *aukabindi* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn); and www.handrit.is.

63 Driscoll, *The Unwashed Children of Eve*, 76. A thorough analysis of the Rev. Jón’s literary work can be found there, as well as a detailed biography.

64 For example Jón Hjaltalín, *Fjórar sögur frá hendi Jóns Oddssonar Hjaltalín*, ed. Matthew James Driscoll, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, Rit, vol. 66 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 2006), an edition of four sagas either written or translated by the Rev. Jón.

65 See Driscoll, *The Unwashed Children of Eve*, 78.

66 See Driscoll, *The Unwashed Children of Eve*, 88–89, 208 and 213.

67 See Jón Espólin, *Íslands árbækur í sögu-formi* (Copenhagen: Hið islenzka bókmenntafélag, 1821–55; reprint, Reykjavík: [s.n.], 1942–47), 9:112–14.

Scribal Network 3: Gunnlaugur's Diary

A manuscript in Gunnlaugur's hand that contains an abundance of possible information about his scribal network is the diary that he kept from 1801–54, Lbs 1588 8vo. This diary is what Davíð Ólafsson calls an 'almanac diary'. Such diaries contain a calendar, brief information about the weather, travels and guests; they are concise and rather impersonal. Usually there is one page per month and entries consist of a few words or one line per day.⁶⁸ The structure of Gunnlaugur's diary follows this pattern. He normally used one page per month and divided the space up in three parts. On the top left of the page there is a calendar including symbols for moon phases and an indication of Sundays and other important church days. On the top right part there are daily entries on the weather, work, travels and guests, and on rare occasions also personal information. He noted, for example, when his children were born: on 22 March 1822 we read: "fór eg tvýveigis upp ad Brúarlandi Fæddest mér pilt barn, sem skyrt var Baldvin af presti Sjra Benjamin" [I went twice to Brúarland. My son was born, who was christened Baldvin by the Rev. Benjamin].⁶⁹ The entries are usually just a few words, but extend to a few lines in some instances. On the bottom part of the page there is general information about the weather of the year, catch, wool, hay and grass, accidents, deaths, official appointments and ordinations and other noteworthy incidents, structured with headings. This part, which concerns all of Iceland, albeit with a specific focus on the North, and Skagafjörður in particular, can extend to whole pages after the entries of December, if more space was needed. This part of the diary seems to have served as a basis for the *Aldarfarsbók*. Usually Gunnlaugur used one quire of paper per year for his diary, but inserted sometimes notes written on slips of paper, such as cut-up letters or bills. According to Davíð Ólafsson, the combination of almanacs and annals is clear in Gunnlaugur's diary; on the one hand there is the typical information of almanacs, such as the calendar, but on the other hand there is annalistic information that concerns the whole country, such as the catch and official appointments.⁷⁰

68 See Davíð Ólafsson, "Bækur lífsins. Íslenskar dagbækur og dagbókaskrif fyrr og nú" (MA diss., Háskóli Íslands, 1999), 70–71 and 91.

69 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 179r:4–7.

70 See Davíð Ólafsson, "Bækur lífsins," 106–7.

Judging from the codicological and palaeographical evidence, Gunnlaugur Jónsson did not write his diary entries every day, but rather, once a year. The script and colour of ink are consistent within the annual entries. It therefore seems likely that he jotted down notes every day or every few days somewhere else, perhaps in a notebook, printed almanac or any scrap of paper that was at hand. Unfortunately nothing of this kind is extant. It also seems possible that he did not start this manuscript in 1801, but rather a few years later, and copied somebody else's weather notes for the first few years in retrospect. There are only three personal entries for the year 1801, three for 1802 and two for 1806. For the years 1807–10, the only personal notes that Gunnlaugur kept are his descriptions of his fishing trips to the South of Iceland in spring. It is not until 1811 that he starts writing down information about journeys in his local district or other personal information. The palaeographical features suggest that he wrote the diary over the span of years, but does not allow for a precise dating.

There are several people, contemporaries of Gunnlaugur, who kept similar almanac-diaries and who could have inspired him to keep his own, although it ought to be mentioned that keeping a diary was, while not as usual as today, not uncommon in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Printed Icelandic almanacs were available already at the end of the sixteenth century, and personal diaries developed from almanacs with information about the weather.⁷¹ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was mostly clergymen and officials who kept diaries, usually in the form of almanacs with short entries.⁷² There are, however, a large number of extant diaries written by laymen, without an official post.⁷³

It is possible that Gunnlaugur used the diary of Jón Espólin, Lbs 696 8vo, as inspiration. Jón Espólin started his diary in 1797, when he was still in the West of Iceland, and usually wrote one line of notes per day, although not for every day. The entries are about the weather, farming and guests and include symbols for moon phases and references to other entries, but no calendar. He wrote his entries every day, as codicological and palaeographic evidence, such as individual letter shapes and ink colour, prove. He also included lists of deceased persons, sorted

71 See Davíð Ólafsson, "Bækur lífsins," 76 and 82.

72 See Davíð Ólafsson, "Bækur lífsins," 83.

73 See Davíð Ólafsson, "Bækur lífsins," 87.

into *minoris notæ* ‘lesser known’ and *majoris notæ* ‘better known’. Although Gunnlaugur adopts a different style of the overall structure of the diary and daily entries, it seems likely that he used this classification of people into better and lesser known (or officials and non-officials) for his own lists of the deceased. Furthermore, Gunnlaugur started writing down more personal entries in 1811, including visits to Viðvík, where Jón lived between 1806 and 1822.⁷⁴ Jón himself never mentions Gunnlaugur in his diary, and entries about the weather, which constitute the main content of both Gunnlaugur’s and Jón’s diaries, are different. Gunnlaugur did, however, state that he used Jón’s *Árbækur* as a source for his *Aldarfarsbók*, as mentioned above. In general, it seems that Gunnlaugur did not have a direct model for his diary, but drew on the general idea of keeping almanacs and diaries.

One of Gunnlaugur’s first personal entries in the diary gives information about possible influences on his scribal activity. On 29 September 1801 he wrote “gékk eg [i] SKýdadalnum. fór so framm [i] Hofstada Sel umm kvöldid hvar eg átti heima” [I went [to] Skíðadalur, then out to Hofstaðasel where I lived].⁷⁵ At this time Halldór *konrektor* ‘vice rector’ Hjálmarsson (1749–1805), a close friend of Jón Espólin,⁷⁶ lived there. After he graduated from the Latin school in Hólar, he became the scribe of Ólafur Stefánsson, *stiftamtmaður* ‘governor’ and father of Magnús Stephensen. Later Halldór became the rector of the Latin school and was, according to biographical information compiled in *Íslenzkar æviskrár*, industrious in preserving the see’s library.⁷⁷ At least 30 manuscripts in his hand, and nearly the same number of manuscripts partly written by him, are extant today. They are mostly in Icelandic, but also in Latin, Danish and German, and cover a broad range of literature and learned works: linguistic, literary and also historical material of some sort, for example genealogies, lists of pupils and biographies of clergymen. When looking at the manuscripts in Halldór’s hand, it becomes clear that he had strong

74 See Páll Sigurðsson, “Nokkur orð um Jón sýslumann Espólin, rit hans og embættisstörf,” *Úlfjótur* 25 (1973): 45.

75 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 7r:22–25. Gunnlaugur’s use of the past tense “átti” enforces the impression that he had not written the entry immediately, but at some later point when he had already moved away from Hofstaðasel.

76 See Þorkell Jóhannesson, *Tímabilið 1770–1830*, 498–99.

77 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár*, 2:256–57.

scholarly interests; he collated, for example, saga texts and added variants in the margins of his own manuscripts, including information about the sources of the variants, as described above. Some of his manuscripts are of importance in connection with Gunnlaugur. The annals of the county magistrate Sveinn Sölvason, covering the years 1740–75 in Iceland, contained in Halldór's manuscript JS 121 8vo (c. 1800),⁷⁸ are similar to Gunnlaugur's annals and his diary; for each year there is information about the general weather, deaths, accidents and noteworthy incidents. However, there are no headings like in Gunnlaugur's work and the order of topics is different. The wording is in some cases very similar, but in others, markedly different. The drowning of two fishermen is described thus in Sveinn's annals: “forgeck um Vorid átrædingr frá Munkaþveráklaustri í Lendingu vid Grímsey, tópuðust 2 menn af skipshófninni, enn hinir komust Lífs á Land” [An eight-oared boat from the monastery at Munkaþverá sank at the landing in Grímsey. Two men from the harbour were lost, but the other survived].⁷⁹ In Gunnlaugur's annals, however, the incident is described only briefly: “af áttæring frá Munkaþverá, vid Grímsey 2” [from an eight-oared boat from Munkaþverá, at Grímsey 2].⁸⁰ These similarities and differences make it likely that Gunnlaugur did not use the annals by Sveinn Sölvason in Halldór's hand as his exemplar, at least not concerning accidents and the weather, but it is possible that he knew them and consulted them for information about the catch. It seems thus possible that Halldór was one of the first people to influence Gunnlaugur and perhaps even introduced him to the works of his friend Jón Espólin.

Halldór Hjálmarsson was not the only learned man living at Hofstaðasel. Gísli Jónsson (1766–1837 or 1838) spent the summers of 1791–96 there, while he was the vice rector of the Latin school in Hólar, and lived there year-round between 1797 and 1806, after which he moved to Hólar. He married Halldór's daughter in 1796 and became parish priest of Stærri-Árskógur in Eyjafjörður in 1827. In 1838 he moved to his daughter at Neðri-Ás, where he passed away later that year.⁸¹ Gunnlaugur mentions those places regularly in his diary. In the years 1813 and 1817–19, Gunnlaugur

78 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 2:644.

79 JS 121 8vo, p. 2:16–19.

80 JS 334 4to 2, p. 126:6–7.

81 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenskar æviskrár*, 2:64–65.

made several trips to Hólar, for example on 19 November 1813: “fór eg upp ad Bjarna Stöðum og heim ad Hólum” [I went to Bjarnastaðir and to Hólar].⁸² After 1819 the visits were less frequent, but he was regularly at Neðri-Ás between 1823 and 1839, for example on 7 November 1838 – just a few days before the Rev. Gísli died: “fór eg ad Nedrási” [I went to Neði-Ás].⁸³ For the years 1835–38 there is one entry for each year concerning written communication between the two men.⁸⁴ There are admittedly not countless notes concerning the Rev. Gísli in Gunnlaugur’s diary, but he nevertheless mentions him more frequently than other learned men. It is most likely that he used several manuscripts written or owned by the Rev. Gísli as exemplars for his annals, as an exemplary comparison of weather entries for the year 1652 proves. The manuscript Lbs 3724 4to, written by the Rev. Gísli, seems to be a conflation of several annals covering the years from Iceland’s settlement until 1729, including excerpts of *Vatnsfjarðarannáll yngri*, followed by some sentences from *Sjávarborgarannáll*.⁸⁵ The manuscript Lbs 1210 4to, written by the Rev. Gísli, contains several annals, among them the so-called *Vallholtsannáll* by the Rev. Gunnlaugur Þorsteinsson (1601–74) from Vallholt. This annal describes the weather for the year 1652 such: “Vetr góðr, þó Vindasamr, og Frostamikill, Vor gott og Sumar, einkum Nordanlands, enn sydra og Vestra mióg Votsamt, svo ad ej nýttust hey og Elldividr” [Good winter, though windy and very frosty, good spring and summer, especially in the North, but in the South and West very wet, so that no good use could be made of hay and fire-wood].⁸⁶ Gunnlaugur describes it in this way: “Vetur góðr – vor gott – þó votsamt. Nýttist illa Elddividr” [Good winter, good

82 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 109r:16–18.

83 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 319r:9–10.

84 On 21 February 1837, for example, Gunnlaugur received a letter from the Rev. Gísli: “fjekk eg bref frá Sjra Gísla” [I received a letter from the Rev. Gísli], Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 304v:25–26.

85 See Lbs 3724 4to, pp. 524:12–525:14. For *Vatnsfjarðarannáll yngri*, Lbs 3724 4to was compared with Hannes Þorsteinsson, Jón Jóhannesson, Þórhallur Vilmundarson, and Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, eds., *Annálar 1400–1800*, 8 vols. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1922–2002), 3:129–30, which is based on ÍB 15 fol. and supplied with Rask 49. For *Sjávarborgarannáll*, the manuscript was compared with Hannes Þorsteinsson et al., *Annálar 1400–1800*, 4:290–91, which is based on Lbs 290 fol.

86 Lbs 1210 4to, p. 12:26–13:1.

spring, though wet. No good use could be made of fire-wood].⁸⁷ The similarities in the wording between Lbs 1210 4to, the manuscript written by the Rev. Gísli, and the annals written by Gunnlaugur, strongly suggest that Gunnlaugur used the Rev. Gísli's manuscript as one of his sources for his own annals.⁸⁸ When all this is taken into consideration – the similarities of the Rev. Gísli's and Gunnlaugur's manuscripts and historical works, the regular contact of the two men as documented in Gunnlaugur's diary – it seems that the Rev. Gísli Jónsson was one of the most important influences on Gunnlaugur's scribal and scholarly work.

In connection with Gunnlaugur, the diaries of the Rev. Jón Konráðsson (1772–1850) from Mælifell are perhaps relevant. The reverend was said to be among the most important historians of his time in northern Iceland.⁸⁹ He went to the Latin school in Hólar, where he graduated in 1794, and became an assistant priest in Glaumbær three years later. In 1807 he was appointed assistant provost in Hegranesþing and priest in Mælifell in 1810, which he kept until his retirement in 1835.⁹⁰ An almanac diary from the years 1799 and 1801–42 is extant today and kept under the shelf-mark ÍB 729 8vo in the *Landsbókasafn*. The Rev. Jón used a double page per month; on the left page there is a church calendar including information about moon phases, on the right page there is information about the weather, farming and visitors on one line per day. He also included lists of book loans, both borrowed and lent. It seems clear, however, that the Rev. Jón's diaries were no direct model for Gunnlaugur's and that they were certainly not used as an exemplar, if Gunnlaugur copied weather entries for his early years from somebody else, as the entries are different. On 2 January 1802, for example, Gunnlaugur notes "hrein[t] lofft og pínu harka" [Clear air and a bit of frost], whereas the Rev. Jón writes only "Frost" [Frost].⁹¹ It is more important, however, that the Rev. Jón and Gunnlaugur met several times, as we can read in their diaries. Gunnlaugur wrote, for example,

87 JS 334 4to 1, p. 36:24–25.

88 The wording is identical in all extant manuscript copies of the *Vallholtsannáll* in the *Landsbókasafn*. The printed version adds the verb "var" after "vestra", Hannes Þorsteinsson, *Annálar 1400–1800*, 1:337.

89 See Gísli Brynjúlfsson, "Jørgen Pjetr Havsteen," *Heimdallur* 9 (September 1884), 132.

90 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskár*, 3:211.

91 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 10r:3–4; and ÍB 729 8vo, n.p.

on 17 December 1842: “gékk eg at Mælifelli” [I went to Mælifell].⁹² The Rev. Jón noted in his diary, too, that Gunnlaugur came to visit him, and furthermore that Gunnlaugur lent him a manuscript in octavo containing lists of vicars.⁹³ This manuscript could be Lbs 485 8vo, which has the year 1840 on its title page. Lbs 1209 4to, written by the Rev. Jón between c. 1830 and 1850,⁹⁴ contains lists of vicars and other church-related information, including an extract of Gunnlaugur’s annals 1601–1800.⁹⁵ This signifies that Gunnlaugur was an informant of the Rev. Jón and an active member of the network of scribes and historians of his time. It also proves that Gunnlaugur was not just influenced by others, but that he also exerted influence on scribes belonging to his network.

Scribal Network 4: Influence on Others

Daði Nielsson (1809–52), another lay historian, was in contact with both the Rev. Jón Konráðsson and Gunnlaugur. Daði is described as a scholar and poet who wrote a large number of manuscripts.⁹⁶ After the year 1830 he started to write annals, but gave up around 1835 or ‘36 and started working on biographies of priests instead.⁹⁷ Daði gave the Rev. Jón valuable information and assistance concerning the biographies of priests in the northern bishopric of Iceland that the Rev. Jón was compiling,⁹⁸ and the Rev. Jón in return helped Daði, for example by lending him books and manuscripts. In a letter dated 1 August 1840, the Rev. Jón asks Daði to return a manuscript that he had lent him.⁹⁹ In addition, the Rev. Jón’s diary contains notes about books and manuscripts that Daði lent him. For 1842, for example, there is an entry about a defective list of vicars in the see of Skálholt that the Rev. Jón borrowed.¹⁰⁰ Concerning Gunnlaugur,

92 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 267v:15.

93 See ÍB 729 8vo, n.p.

94 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 1:471–72.

95 See Lbs 1209 4to, fols. 54r–65v.

96 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár*, 1:303; *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns, Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 1. aukabindi*; and Lárus H. Blöndal, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 2. aukabindi*.

97 See Jón Jónsson Aðils, “Daði Nielsson ‘fróði’ Aldarminning,” *Skírnir* 84 (1910): 117–37.

98 See Jón Jónsson Aðils, “Daði Nielsson ‘fróði’,” 134.

99 The letter is now part of the manuscript Lbs 1236 4to.

100 See ÍB 729 8vo, n.p.

there are a considerable number of diary entries noting when Daði came to visit, starting in 1847. Daði stayed usually overnight, for example 19–20 October 1851.¹⁰¹ There are furthermore two extant newsletters, *fréttabréf*, that he sent to Daði. The letters, contained in Lbs 1236 4to, are dated 18 December 1848 and 16 July 1849 respectively, and are about accidents, deaths, office appointments, other noteworthy incidents, etc.: in other words, topics that Gunnlaugur used in his own annals. This information was of interest to Daði, too, and he may have used it in his own research. Such newsletters were a popular means of circulating information, and an abundance of them are still extant today, for example newsletters sent to Halldór Hjálmarsson, which are now part of the manuscript ÍB 713 8vo. Newsletters are a material embodiment of the past scribal and scholarly network of Iceland, and as described above, Gunnlaugur utilised newsletters for his *Aldarfarsbók*.¹⁰²

Another person who was to some degree influenced by Gunnlaugur is his nephew Sigmundur Pálsson from Ljósstaðir (1823–1905). Sigmundur grew up at the home of the Rev. Gísli Jónsson, mentioned previously as an influence on Gunnlaugur's work; Gísli was Sigmundur's teacher until 1844, when the latter went to study at the school in Bessastaðir. He returned to the North in 1850, became a merchant and *hreppstjóri* 'district officer' and produced handwritten newspaper-like letters that were circulated in the area.¹⁰³ Together with his paternal uncle, Gunnlaugur, Sigmundur is the scribe of two historical manuscripts, Lbs 1261 4to and Lbs 1301 4to. The latter was described above; it contains the *Aldarfarsbók* and Sigmundur took over as scribe on p. 251. Lbs 1261 4to was written between 1840 and 1870, according to the catalogue of the *Landsbókasafn*,¹⁰⁴ and consists of five loose booklets with lists of students, teachers and appointments of parish priests. The first and fourth booklets were written by Gunnlaugur

101 See Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 443v:26–27.

102 Without an institutionalised framework for research, the Brothers Grimm used letters as a form of scholarly communication and to acquire source materials, see Lothar Bluhm, *Die Brüder Grimm und der Beginn der deutschen Philologie: Eine Studie zu Kommunikation und Wissenschaftsbildung im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, Spolia Beroliensia, vol. 11 (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1997). The parallels to the situation in Iceland, that had hardly any public schools and no university until the nineteenth century, are striking.

103 See Eiríkur Kristinsson, *Skagfirzkar æviskrár: Tímabilið 1890–1910* (Akureyri: Sögufélag Skagfirðinga, 1964), 1:256–57.

104 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns*, 1:486.

alone and Sigmundur took over in the middle of the fifth booklet. For the second and third booklets, however, they alternated as scribes. Some of Sigmundur's scribal activity can be seen as having been instigated by Gunnlaugur and is a sign of his influence, albeit only on a limited scale in this case.

Bishop Steingrímur Jónsson (1769–1845) is perhaps the best known person who benefitted from Gunnlaugur's scribal and research activities today. He studied at the university in Copenhagen and worked as a scribe at the Danish Royal Chancery. From 1805 until 1810 he was the headmaster of the Latin school in Bessastaðir, then he was appointed to a parish and in 1824 he was made bishop of the Skálholt see. Steingrímur held many awards and was also a prominent politician. He is said to have been one of the most knowledgeable men of Icelandic history and genealogy, and there are many manuscripts extant containing his notes, drafts and works.¹⁰⁵ This famous and learned man was in contact with Gunnlaugur and borrowed one of his manuscripts containing information about parishes. In Lbs 180 4to, containing texts that focus on clergymen and parishes, we read “Utdreigid af Blöðum sem Monsr. Gunnlaugur Jónsson á Skuggabjörgum í Skagafyrði liedi mer i Julio 1839” [Excerpted from pages that Mr. Gunnlaugur Jónsson from Skuggabjörg in Skagafjörður lent me in July 1839].¹⁰⁶ On the first 81 leaves the manuscript contains the *Presbyterologia* by Hálfðan Einarsson that Gunnlaugur used for his own description of parishes, followed by Steingrímur's extract of Gunnlaugur's descriptions. Steingrímur copied the descriptions of the agricultural and geological advantages and disadvantages of the parishes and their respective farms, but leaves out information about the tax value of farms and biographical information about vicars. Lbs 1744 8vo is the manuscript in question that Gunnlaugur lent the bishop; Steingrímur noted the following on fol. 166r: “Gunnlaugur Jónsson á Skug(g)abjörgum í Skagafyrði hefir i Julio 1839 ljed mér þessi Blöd – og svo kallada árbók 1000 til 1763 *Steingrímur*” [Gunnlaugur Jónsson from Skuggabjörg in Skagafjörður lent me these pages in July 1839 – and the so-called yearbook

105 See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar avískrár*, 4:348–49; *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafns, Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 1. aukabindi*; and Lárus H. Blöndal, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns: 2. aukabindi*.

106 Lbs 180 4to, fol. 82r:1–3.

1000-1763. Steingrímur]. Unfortunately, it is not clear what work the so-called yearbook might be, but it is most likely one of the annalistic manuscripts. It becomes clear, nonetheless, that Steingrímur took interest in Gunnlaugur's scholarly work and that Gunnlaugur's research was of use to him in his office as bishop and concerning his interest in Iceland's history.

It is of interest that a few years earlier, in 1833, Bishop Steingrímur lent the Rev. Jón Konráðsson from Mælifell a manuscript containing the *Presbyterologium* by Hálfðan Einarsson, which the Rev. Jón returned the following year after he had made a copy. This copy bears now the shelf-mark Lbs 1297 4to and contains a letter that the bishop sent to the Rev. Jón, along with his manuscript. It is possible that the exemplar is the first part of Lbs 180 4to (fols. 1–81) that Steingrímur wrote in 1810–11. The letter proves the ways in which members of Gunnlaugur's scribal network communicated and shared information.

Other sources prove, too, that Gunnlaugur was an active part of Iceland's scribal network, not just a passive recipient of texts. The Rev. Páll Erlendsson (1778–1852) farmed and resided at Brúarland, a farm neighbouring Gunnlaugur's home Skuggabjörg. Both he and the farm are often mentioned in Gunnlaugur's diary. The Rev. Páll wrote in a letter dated 3 September 1846 to the *Fornfræðafélag* that Gunnlaugur writes down any verse that he can get hold of and that he at that time had already copied approximately 300 verses in three volumes. Furthermore, the Rev. Páll wrote, Gunnlaugur lends them to others, even for extended periods of time and far and wide.¹⁰⁷

But Gunnlaugur Jónsson was not just a scribe of literary and historical manuscripts, he also wrote letters and other documents for his neighbours. In his diary we can, for example, read that he wrote a letter for a neighbour on 16 December 1830: “for eg út ad Stafsholi ad skrifa bref” [I went to Stafshóll to write letters].¹⁰⁸ Other neighbours used his services, too; on 2 April 1835, for example, “skrifadi eg i Gröf” [I wrote at Gröf].¹⁰⁹ Gunnlaugur even worked for the *sýslumaður* ‘county magistrate’, according

107 An excerpt of the letter is printed in Ögmundur Helgason, “Af sjónum séra Páls Erlendssonar,” *Skagfirðingabók* 24 (1996): 182–84.

108 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 251v:14.

109 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 288v:4.

to a note in his diary on 6 September 1836: “var eg *vid* Sterfbús uppskriftt ä Brúarlandi effter Syslumanns fullmakt” [I registered a probate inventory at Brúarland with authorisation of the county magistrate].¹¹⁰ It seems furthermore possible that Gunnlaugur wrote some entries in the *prestspjónustubók* ‘parish register’ for Hofsbíng between 1830 and 1838, as the handwriting of these entries is very similar to that in Gunnlaugur’s manuscripts.¹¹¹ On 9–10 May 1843 he even notes in his diary that he made entries in the *kirkjubækur* ‘church books’.¹¹² This proves that Gunnlaugur did not just copy manuscripts and compile annals for himself and other (lay) historians, but that his local community and the community’s leaders perceived him as a scribe.

Conclusion

This analysis of Gunnlaugur’s scribal network demonstrates the importance of Hólar. Many of Gunnlaugur’s informants and people who exerted influence on his scribal and historical activities went to the Latin school there. Perhaps the most influential person in this concern, the Rev. Gísli Jónsson from Stærra-Árskógur, was even a teacher there and had access to the see’s library. Much of the material that Gunnlaugur used can be traced back to manuscripts written or owned by the Rev. Gísli and other Hólar graduates. In particular, the information about ordinations, vicars and parishes stands in direct connection with Hólar, which proves that, although Jón Espólín might have inspired others, including Gunnlaugur, to conduct historical research, he was by no means the only or major person to do so, and that the bulk of source texts for historical research is connected with Hólar. This puts the learned centre Hólar and Skagafjörður into a stronger position as an integral and important part of historical research. The bishopric and school of Hólar provided a considerable part of sources for historical research in Iceland, even after the closing of the school – and also

110 Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 299r:9–10.

111 See, for example, the entry under *athugasemdir* ‘notes’ of deaths in the year 1834 in the *prestspjónustubók* ‘parish register’, n.p., kept at the *Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands* under the signature BA/1.

112 See Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 365r:10–11: “skrifadi i kyrkjubækur” [I made entries in the church books] and fol. 365r:13: “endti vid ad skrifa i kyrkju bækur” [I finished with the entries in the church books].

after the closing of the printing press. Learned men who went to school in Hólar or were connected to the place through their work or other ways proved to be important scholars of and lobbyists for historical research. Manuscripts produced in Hólar or by people connected to the place form an important part in the dissemination of this research and learned activities. As such, the geographical component proves to be of importance to the scribal activities and network of Gunnlaugur.

Even though Gunnlaugur might be nearly forgotten today, his entry in *Íslenzkar æviskrár*, one of the most exhaustive biographical work about Icelanders in print, suggests Gunnlaugur's important role and good social status during his lifetime. The majority of the entries are about clergymen and officials, which is perhaps to be expected, as more sources are extant about them, whereas source information or official documents about people without formal education are relatively scarce, at least until the nineteenth century. Although people without formal education constituted the majority of Iceland's population, biographical entries about them are still a minority, which makes them, including Gunnlaugur's, remarkable.

A certain, though vague, influence of the Enlightenment might also be detected; it is perhaps no coincidence that two major historical works that were written during the Enlightenment, *Árbækur Espólins* and Bishop Finnur Jónsson's *Historia ecclesiastica*, share the main topics of Gunnlaugur's historical manuscripts: annals and church history. Although the Enlightenment influenced annalistic writing and medieval historical studies either minimally or, indeed, not at all, interest in economic history increased during that time.¹¹³ Topics such as fishing, haymaking, egg collecting and bird hunting are included in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Icelandic annals, at least those included in the series *Annálar 1400–1800*.¹¹⁴ Entries for medieval times and up until the seventeenth century contain, however, only limited information about these topics. *Skarðsannáll*, *Vallholtsannáll* and *Mælifellsannáll*, to name but a few examples, have rather short and general entries on the catch or haymaking. In later annals, and in entries that were made during the life time of the compiler, especially in detailed entries, there is more such information. *Espihólsannáll* and *Vatnsfjarðarannáll yngsti*, for example, inform regularly

113 See Ingi Sigurðsson, "Sagnfræði," 267 and 259.

114 See Hannes Þorsteinsson et al., *Annálar 1400–1800*.

on the catch and haymaking, and differentiate between regions in Iceland: for the year 1777 the catch was good, particularly in Flatey, and haymaking was poor in the West and South, according to *Espihólsannáll*.¹¹⁵ But even the only annalistic writer who structures his entries with headings like Gunnlaugur does – Tómas Tómasson in his *Djáknaannáll* – does not have the catch and haymaking under a separate heading. It is not clear where Gunnlaugur got the idea from to use *aflabrögð* ‘catch’ as a heading.¹¹⁶ It is therefore possible that Gunnlaugur wrote annals according to century-long traditions in his home region despite the Enlightenment, but that the agricultural-economical category of catch and farming in Gunnlaugur’s diary and annals is perhaps inspired or strengthened by trends of the Enlightenment that eventually reached the lower strata of society. Additional expressions of some of the Enlightenment’s characteristics could be Gunnlaugur’s optimism concerning history and his wish to enlighten his contemporaries.

Gunnlaugur’s scribal activities seem to be motivated by personal, temporal and geographical factors. The aftermath of Enlightenment, together with the personal influence of the Hólar teachers Halldór *kon- rektor* Hjálmarsson and the Rev. Gísli Jónsson from Stærri-Árskógur, might have sparked Gunnlaugur’s interest in historical research. This study sheds more light on how the Enlightenment eventually reached and influenced the lower strata of Icelandic society at a time that is usually connected with later historical developments. It gives additional insights into the lives of common people and shows specific sides of Iceland’s scholarly and cultural past. By focusing on the activities and networks of a farmer without formal education, this study contributes toward a clearer and more complete picture of Icelandic culture. This article has furthermore shown that Gunnlaugur was not a passive member of Iceland’s scribal network, but that he was an active participant who shared his manuscript material and scribal abilities with both his local community and scribal network. It has also been shown that this scribal and scholarly network was deeply interconnected and consisted of both

115 See Jón Jóhannesson, Þorhallur Vilmundarson, and Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, eds., *Annálar 1400–1800* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1955–87), 5:159–60.

116 He might have been inspired by *Eptirmæli atjándu aldar* by Magnús Stephensen, which he also mentions as one of his sources in JS 334 4to 2, pp. 3–4.

officials and laymen. It ought to be stated, though, that this study does not present Gunnlaugur's scribal network *in extenso*, but illuminates it with significant examples. This means that several prominent members are not mentioned, such as Gísli Konráðsson (1787–1877), whom Gunnlaugur also mentions in his diary.¹¹⁷ Other members of the network are perhaps not even discovered yet and wait for further research.

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Rask 49

¹¹⁷ Gunnlaugur wrote him a letter on 10 February 1841, see Lbs 1588 8vo, fol. 342v:12. It is also possible that they met, for example during the fishing seasons, which they both spent on Reykjanes.

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EFNISÁGRIP

Bóndinn, skrifarinn og alþýðufræðimaðurinn Gunnlaugur Jónsson frá Skuggabjörgum og skrifaratengsl hans

Lykilorð: Skrifaratengsl, alþýðufræðimenn, annálar, handritarannsóknir, upplýsingin.

Greinin kannar skrifaratengsl og umhverfi Gunnlaugs Jónssonar á Skuggabjörgum (1786–1866). Hann var bóndi, skrifari og alþýðufræðimaður sem lítið er vitað um í dag utan þess að hann er höfundur *Aldarfarsbókar*, annála úr sögu Íslands frá 1801 til 1866. Eftir hann liggur fjöldi handrita sem hefur að geyma skáldskap í lausu og bundnu máli, svo og texta um söguleg efni. Þessi handrit og þá einkum dagbók hans (Lbs 1588 8vo), sem hann hélt frá 1801 til 1854, sýnir að hann var hluti af stóru neti skrifara og fræðimanna, lærðra og leikra, á norðanverðu Íslandi. Hann var virkur þátttakandi í þessu samstarfi þar sem hann deildi skrifum sínum með öðrum. Þeir sem mest áhrif virðast hafa haft á starfsemi hans eru sr. Gísli Jónsson á Stærri-Árskógi og aðrir lærðir menn. Sjálfur hefur Gunnlaugur verið í tengslum við – meðal annarra – Steingrím Jónsson biskup og þar með getað haft áhrif á hans fræðistörf, því vitað er að hann lánaði Steingrími handrit sem hafði að geyma hagnýtar upplýsingar frá nokkrum sóknum á Norðurlandi (Lbs 1744 8vo). Alþýðufræðimaðurinn Daði Nielsson er annað dæmi um fræðimann sem var í sambandi við Gunnlaug og fékk frá honum upplýsingar. Jafnframt þessu starfaði Gunnlaugur sem skrifari í sinni heimabyggð og vann að skriftum fyrir sýslumann. Þegar á heildina er lítið má segja að Gunnlaugur hafi annars vegar verið undir áhrifum frá upplýsingunni, þar sem hann hefur bjartsýna söguskoðun og sýnir áhuga á að uppfræða samtímamenn sína með sagnfræðiathugunum, og hins vegar frá hinum lærðum straumum sem bárust frá Hólum og Skagafirði. Þessi grein veitir innsýn í líf alþýðufólks á 19. öld og breiðar mynd okkar af íslensku menningu.

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