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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON STJÓRN AND THE MANUSCRIPT AM 227 FOL

1. THE CODEX AND ITS HISTORY

AM 227 fol is one of the principal manuscript sources for parts I and III of the early Norse-Icelandic biblical translations known collectively as Stjórn, and the handsomest of them all.¹ Although it has not survived the centuries un-

¹ The manuscript has been published in facsimile, *Corpus codicum Islandicorum medii aevi* (CCI) XX, with an introduction by D.A Seip. The only printed edition of Stjórn is *Stjórn* (1862), ed. by C. R. Unger. The Stjórn texts in 227 have never been printed in their entirety. Unger cited variants from them in his critical apparatus but far from exhaustively. Konráð Gíslason was the first editor to publish specimens from 227 (Konráð Gíslason 1846:xii–xiv). He gave extracts from the prologue and the last folio in a very accurate diplomatic transcript, not expanding abbreviations but reproducing the manuscript forms by typographic means.

Unger also printed passages from 227 in order to supply matter missing in 228 (pp. 349⁶–352²⁴, 515¹⁰–517³⁰, 540²⁹–543²⁴, 549¹¹–551²⁹); his transcripts are unnormalised and generally free of error. The first of the passages listed is from a part of 227 written by Hand B, the rest from parts by Hand A, so examples of the orthography of both scribes are available in his edition.

Besides the facsimile reproductions of individual pages or parts of them have also appeared in a number of other publications. The following short list gives a selection of those among them which contain whole pages in facsimile, usually though in a somewhat reduced format: Kr. Kälund, *Palæografisk Atlas. Ny Serie* (1907), nr 15; fol 71v.

Halldór Hermannsson, *Icelandic Illuminated Manuscripts* (CCI VII, 1935), pl. 1: fol 23v (in colour); pl. 16–21; fols. 1v, 33v, 38r, 71v, 88v, 115r; pl. 22–23: parts of fols. 14v and 5r.

Kristján Eldjárn, *Íslensk list frá fyrri öldum* (1957), nr 20; fol 23v (in colour).

Jónas Kristjánsson, *Handritin og fornsögurnar* (1970), p. 33: fol 23v (in colour).

Jónas Kristjánsson, *Handritaspegill* (1993), p. 51: fol 10r (in colour).

Jónas Kristjánsson, *Icelandic Manuscripts. Sagas, History and Art*. (1996), p. 42: fol 10r (in colour), p. 51, fol 87v.

Selma Jónsdóttir, *Lýsingar í Stjórnarhandriti* (1971; also in English: *Illumination in a Manuscript of Stjórn*), colour plates I–VII: fols. 1v, 23v, 33v, 38r, 71v, 88v, 115r; and with illustrations of many individual elements from other pages.

Handritin. Ritgerðir um íslensk miðaldahandrit, sögu þeirra og áhrif (2002). Eds Gísli Sigurðsson & Vésteinn Ólason, p. 60: fol 71v (in colour); also in English: *The Manuscripts of Iceland* (2004), p. 60: fol 71v (in colour).

scathed, it remains one of the finest achievements of fourteenth-century Icelandic book-production.

227 is in large folio, with leaves which now measure 35x27 cm but which were once bigger still. The margins have been trimmed, evidently when it was bound late in the seventeenth century, as we can see from damage suffered by the ornament at the edge of some leaves (fols. 1v, 2v, 23v, 38v, 88v) and similar damage suffered by marginalia (on e.g. 13v and 61v). There is also the evidence of fol 129, a leaf which was cut out of the codex before it was bound (cf. below p. 9). It is 37 cm tall and has outer margins of 5–6 cm compared to the 4–5 cm of those in the bound volume.

The script is large and painstakingly written. Pages are written in two columns, each of 44 lines; chapter-titles are in red, and colours in rich variety appear in the illuminated initials, eight of which are resplendent historiated capitals (fols. 1v, 23v, 33v, 38r, 71v, 83v, 88v, 115r). The art of 227 has been discussed by several scholars, but it has been treated in most detail by Dr Selma Jónsdóttir in her book, *Lýsingar í Stjórnarhandriti*, published in Reykjavík in 1971 (and simultaneously in English, *Illumination in a Manuscript of Stjórn*). She there finds clear evidence of influence on the Stjórn artist from a group of English psalters of the first decades of the fourteenth century.

Lines across the page and column verticals were scored with a stylus; generous margins were left. The vellum, virtually unblemished, was prepared with care. It is obvious that no expense was spared in producing the volume.

We now have 128 leaves. Five of them came into Árni Magnússon's hands after he had obtained the codex itself. Three of them are only fragments (fols. 80–83; 81–82 are remnants of the same leaf, but they were foliated separately in the nineteenth century, which is why we now have a fol 129). The other two, fols. 68 and 129, are complete.

227 was made up of eight-leaf gatherings (though doubt must remain as to the size of the last, cf. below p. 9). Their state of preservation is as follows:

Gathering 1 (fols. 1–7). Folio 7, now a singleton, was originally twinned with another, presumably blank, which did duty as a flyleaf before the present fol 1. This flyleaf has been cut out, but a narrow strip of it remains visible at the spine.

Gathering 2 (fols. 8–11). The outermost and innermost bifolia remain (fols. 8 + 11, 9 + 10); four leaves are lost, two after fol 8 and two after fol 10 (Unger 1862:32–39, 47–54).

Gatherings 3–8 (fols. 12–59). These are complete.

Gathering 9 (fols. 60–65). The outermost bifolium is lost, i.e. one leaf before fol 60 (Unger 1862:245–248) and one after fol 65 (this loss, along with that of the following first leaf of the next gathering, corresponds to Unger 1862:272–278).

Gathering 10 (fols. 66–70). The outermost bifolium is lost, i.e. one leaf before fol 66 and one after fol 70. Another leaf, originally conjoint with fol 68, now a singleton, was lost after fol 67 (Unger 1862:285–289). The lower half of the second column on fol 70v is blank, and there is no writing on fol 71v either, so it is reasonable to think that the lost leaf between them was also left empty. The scribe or his supervisor must have thought it was possible to obtain the middle section of Stjórn for inclusion at this point, though any efforts they made to do so were evidently fruitless; see p. 24 below.

Gathering 11 (fols. 71–78). This remains complete.

Gathering 12 (fols. 79–84). The outermost bifolium (fols. 79 + 84) is intact along with remnants of three of the intervening leaves (fols. 80–83). Three are lost, two after fol 80 (Unger 1862:391–399) and one after fols. 81–82 (Unger 1862:402–405). Fols. 80 and 83 were originally conjoint, while the fragments numbered fols. 81–82 both come from the second leaf of the innermost pair.

Gatherings 13–14 (fols. 85–100). These are complete.

Gathering 15 (fols. 101–106). The innermost bifolium is lost, i.e. two leaves after fol 103 (Unger 1862:493–502).

Gatherings 16–17 (fols. 107–122). These are complete.

Gatherings 18 (fols. 123–128). Two originally conjoint leaves are lost, one after fol 123, the other after fol 127 (Unger 1862:597–602. 622–626).

Gathering 19 (fol 129). This single leaf was removed from the codex before it was bound. Three preceding leaves are missing (Unger 1862:631–644), but it is uncertain how many leaves originally came after it. Text which would take us up to the end of Stjórn III (Unger 1862:649–654) could have been accommodated on little more than a single leaf, so it is possible that this last gathering was only of six folios. It is equally possible however that Stjórn was followed by some

other text (cf. the additional material in AM 226 fol), though we shall never know if it was.

If we assume that there were only six leaves in the last gathering, then 227 originally contained 150 folios, of which 22 (two of them doubtless blank) are no longer extant. Árni Magnússon's later acquisitions, fols. 68, 80–83, and 129, all bear traces of use as book-wrappers, and we can safely presume that the lost leaves were removed to serve a similar purpose. At the bottom of fol 67v Árni Magnússon noted „Desunt . 2. folia“, which after acquiring fol 68 he altered to „Deest .1. fol “. At the bottom of fol 79v he wrote „desunt . 6. folia“, an entry he did not change after fols. 80–83 came into his hands.

Information about the provenance of the leaves acquired by Árni Magnússon after the bound volume came into his possession exists in the case of only one of them. On a slip with fol 129 he noted:

„Þetta hreina blad ur Stjorn var utanum bardar Sögu Snæfellz äss med hendi S' Torfa i Bæ skrifada 1644. hveria Bardar Sögu att hafdi Doctor Olaus Worm. og feck eg bædi það og Bardar Sögu af Chr. Worm 1706“. (This clean leaf from *Stjórn* was round Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss in the hand of the Rev. Torfi of Bær, written in 1644. Dr Ole Worm had owned it, and I got it and Bárðar saga both from Chr. Worm in 1706).

This manuscript of *Bárðar saga* is now AM 490 4to, at the front of which there is a slip, probably cut from an original flyleaf, with the inscription, „Liber Trebonii Jonæ Islandi comparatus Havnæ Anno 1644“. Above and below this Ole Worm inserted: „Historia Barderi Snefelsaas./jam Olai Wormii“. As Árni Magnússon says, the saga is in Torfi Jónsson's hand (though Kålund does not include the identification in his *Arnarnagnæan* catalogue), and it looks as though he also wrote the Latin sentence on the slip at the front. In that case, the word 'comparatus' is best taken to mean that Torfi got the manuscript, presumably from Iceland, in 1644, perhaps sent by Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson (bishop of Skálholt 1639–74). Torfi finished his schooling at Skálholt in 1638, and was in the service of Bishop Brynjólfur from 1640 at the latest. We know, for instance, that he translated the opening of *Ragnars saga* into Latin for the bishop in the winter of 1641–42². It is not

² According to a note by Árni Magnússon at the front of AM 4 fol, where the translation is preserved; see Kålund I 1888:8.

unlikely that Torfi made his copy of *Bárðar saga* in Skálholt, and later got it sent to him in Copenhagen, where he was a student from 1642 to 1646. It seems reasonably certain that he appropriated the 227 leaf in Skálholt in order to provide his *Bárðar saga* with a cover. Since the writing on this fol 129 is not much worn, it had evidently not spent long as a book-jacket.

Other evidence points to the same conclusion. Árni Magnússon got 227 from Bishop Jón Vídalín in 1699 (Kålund 1909: 61–62), and in his own catalogue he says: „Petta volumen hefur fyrrum til heyrt Skalholltz kirkiu“. (This volume previously belonged to the church of Skálholt, *ibid.*:5). Elsewhere he records that the Skálholt inventory made when Þórður Þorláksson succeeded to the bishopric in 1674, included „Partur af Stjórn (x aurar). Er i stóru folio“ (Part of Stjórn [10 aurar]. It is in large folio, *ibid.*:48). The National Archives in Reykjavík (Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands) have the registers (Bps A VII 1) which record details of Skálholt property and its assessed value on transfer to a new bishop. Fols. 113–14 contain a list of the books which Bishop Brynjólfur passed over to Bishop Þórður on 1 April 1674. Nr 22 is „Partur af Stjórn, sem synist eftir hinna bokanna Virðingu x aurar“ (Part of Stjórn; judged by the prices set on the other books is apparently worth 10 aurar). The same source permits us to trace the codex to a still earlier period. It contains a copy of the document transferring the cathedral and its property to Bishop Oddur Einarsson in 1588. Among the books listed we find on fol 147 „Biblia skrifud er þeir kalla Stjórn“ (A manuscript Bible which they call Stjórn). In 1644 Bishop Brynjólfur had a valuation made of „gömlu og onytu Skalhólts Dömkyrkju inventario, burtselfdu af Biskupinum M. Bryniolfi Sveinssyni epter Hofudsmansins tilsögn og atkvæði“ (old and useless property of Skálholt cathedral sold off by the bishop, Mag. Brynjólfur Sveinsson, on the direction and decision of the governor). On fols. 58–60 of the transfer registers we find prices put on „öbrúkanlegum Kälfskins bökum, sumum fünum, flestöllum skornum og skerdtum, öllum gömlum og ä þessum tímum öbrúkanlegum“ (unusable vellum books, some rotten, most of them mutilated and impaired, all of them old and nowadays unserviceable). Nr 50 among them is „Helgra manna blömstra“, valued at one mark. This must be 227, for at the top of fol 1r of the codex we find „heilagra manna blomstra“ written in a hand of the first half of the seventeenth century³, with „virt 1 mork“ added by a later hand, probably at the time of the valuation. There can be no doubt but that this is the same book

³ This title is adopted from the prologue heading in 227, where the book is mistakenly said to be called „heilagra manna blomstr“.

as the one recorded in the transfer document of 1588 and the inventory of 1674. Since most of the old books which Bishop Brynjólfur had valued in 1644 reappear with unaltered prices in the 1674 list, we gather that he had succeeded in disposing of only comparatively few of them. We can presume that the man who made the list did not realise that „Helgra manna blómstra“ was the same book as „Partur af Stjórn“ and so did not keep it at its old price. But the fact that 227 was counted among defective vellum books in 1644 is a firm indication that leaves had already been removed from it. It seems in fact to have been common practice for students in the Skálholt school to pillage old manuscripts for covers for their own books.⁴ That Torfi Jónsson should do the same is not surprising, nor that Bishop Brynjólfur should attach less value even to a volume like 227 when it had suffered such depredation.

Two facts emerge from the above, first that 227 belonged to Skálholt cathedral in 1588, second that it was then called *Stjórn* — this is our earliest record of the name. It may be possible to detect the volume in still older sources. Two Skálholt inventories from 1548 refer to a manuscript Bible in Icelandic: „Íslendzk biblia“ (*DI XI:618*) and „Nauckut af bibliu j Íslenzku“ (*DI XI:652*). The two lists doubtless refer to one and the same book, and it is natural to infer that it was 227.⁵ On the other hand, we have no means of telling how long the codex had then been in Skálholt; we shall return to this problem in section (2) below.

Since the lost leaves of 227 were removed from gatherings here and there in the codex, it appears likely that whatever binding it had was in a perished state already before the time of Bishop Brynjólfur. Bishop Þórður Þorláksson proved a better custodian of the manuscript than his eminent predecessor, inasmuch as it was he who had 227 put into its present binding. Árni Magnússon says (*Kálund 1909:61*), that it was bound „i svart band“ (in a black binding) and it has long been noted that a fair number of other manuscripts are extant in the same sort of binding.⁶ Many of these, e. g. AM 81a fol, AM 351 fol and Sth papp 4:o nr 9, show the same decorative blind stamping as is found on the covers of 227. This binding is certainly from the time of Bishop Þórður.

⁴ Cf. Árni Magnússon's recollection of what Þormóður Torfason, at school in Skálholt just after Torfi Jónsson, told him of the treatment accorded there to AM 234 fol; see *Kálund 1909:6*; Foote 2003:12.*

⁵ Cf. Westergaard-Nielsen 1957:127, though he does not mention 227 in this connection.

⁶ See Seip 1956:8; Holm-Olsen 1961; fullest information in Westergaard-Nielsen 1971:27–29.

None of the marginalia in 227 provides direct evidence of where or with whom it spent its time. At the head of the pages, though less regularly at the start of the manuscript, the appropriate title of the biblical book is entered in what appears to be a sixteenth-century hand; the titles follow the Vulgate in distinguishing four books of Kings but not two of Samuel and two of Kings as in later Bibles. Chapter-numbers have also been entered, perhaps in the same hand, and here and there the beginning or end of a book or chapter is noted (fols. 6rb, 13vb, 58va, 86vb, 88va, 113vb, 124va and vb). On fol 88va we find „Incipit liber Samuel primus“; judged by the „Samuel“ title, this would seem to be the latest entry made in the codex.

A hand from a rather earlier period (fifteenth century) has written some brief marginal notes in Latin relating to the text. Chief among them are:

Fol 5va: „*dignitas hominis triplex*“, with the ordinal numbers „2^w“ and „3^w“ lower down in the margin. — Fol 5vb: „*v modis assimilatur dominus homini*“. — Fol 6ra and rb, 6vb: „*questio*“. — Fol 6va: „*Augustinus*“. — Fol 7r–v: ordinal numbers are put alongside the seven ages of the world. — Fol 13va: „*...um noe adhuc viuente [erant?] de filiis suis sem cham [iaphet] xx^{ti} quatuormilia et c. [sine?] paruulis et mulieribus*“. — Fol 13v, bottom: „*noe erat nongentorum annorum et l*“. — Fols. 33v–35r, 39vb, 40ra, 40vb: „*nota*“. — Fol 36r, top: „*nota hic de talentis*“. — Fol 36rb: „*de hosp[itio]*“. — Fol 38va: „*[no]ta vj priuilegia primogeniti*“. — Fol 41va: „*Jeronimus*“. — Fol 42rb: „*ysidor[us]*“. — Fol 61va: „*[no]ta homicidium [Moy]ses interfecit egyptum*“. — Fol 90va: „*xxx milia*“. — Fol 91va: „*[lxx]^{ia} milia virorum [de] plebe l milia*“. — Fol 93va: „*[ccc m]ilia israel [xxx]^{ia} milia iude*“. — Fol 94rb: „*xxx^{ia} mili[a] vi milia*“. — Fol 94vb: „*xx milia*“.

Annotation in a later hand (sixteenth century) is found as follows:

Fol 4r: „*quatuor elementa*“. — Fol 31va: „*ciclus ad uikt fiordi partur gyllenis þad. er .vj. Lybisker skillingar*“. — Fol 65ra: „*primum signum*“. — Fol 66ra: „*þad er nv palm sunnudagur hia oss*“. — Fol 66rb: „*Skirdags kuelld*“. — Fol 66vb: „*Af frumburdum egiptzkra*“. — Fol 103v, bottom: „*capitulum 30 hic non continetur*“. — Fol 112rb: „*dolosum homicidium*“. — Fol 117vb: „*nemo est enim homo qui non peccet*“. — Fol 120va: „*prophetes Bethel seduxit prophetam dei*“.



AM 227 fol. Stjórn: fol 38r, the historiated initial marks the beginning of Genesis 25:20. (Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir).



AM 227 fol, Stjórn: fol 71v, the beginning of the Book of Joshua.
(Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir).

Fol 120vb: „phana“ (which is translated „hofum“ in the text). — Fol 121rb: „virtuoso“ (which is translated „goða“ in the text).

Finally, Árni Magnússon wrote notes on the number of leaves missing at the bottom of fols. 8v, 10v, 59v, 65v, 67v, 79v, 103v, 123v, 127v. Someone in the nineteenth century, probably Jón Sigurðsson, adds the same kind of note on fol 128v, and on fols. 103v, 123v and 127v references to AM 228 fol as a source from which the missing text can be supplied.

All that the marginal entries tell us is that in its time 227 was in the hands of men familiar with Latin, a fact not likely to astonish anyone.

2. THE SCRIBES AND THEIR LOCATION

Two scribes, here called Hands A and B, are represented in 227. Hand A wrote all of fols. 1–59rb and from 90rb to the end, apart from three short inserts by Hand B: fol 14va14–25 (huers – Tilferð), 32rb 25–28 (*ok ad/ra – vlfalldanna*), and 126vb31–37 (-di – þæ myndi). Hand B was also responsible for fols. 59va–90ra. The scribes obviously worked in the same place at the same time.

The scribes were evidently professionals and their hands are found in a number of other manuscripts. Both are represented in fragments of another Stjórn manuscript, AM 229 fol I; and B in a small fragment of a third, NRA 60A. It is conceivable that Hand A was also involved in this third copy, though we do not have the evidence to confirm his collaboration. In 227 Hands A and B each supplied their own chapter rubrics. The large historiated initials are all the work of one artist. Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir has concluded that he also contributed the smaller illuminated initials found on fols. 1–51v, while two other men illuminated the rest, one responsible for the work on fols. 52v–79v, 89r–95r, 104r–119v, 124v–129v, the other for that on fols. 84r–88r, 96r–103v, 119v–123v (1983:68–69, cf. n. 12). There were thus three men engaged in the decoration of the manuscript, and two of them may have been the scribes themselves, though we cannot substantiate that they had a hand in it. It is noteworthy that the division of labour among the illuminators did not correspond to the division into gatherings, except insofar as the initials of the first seven gatherings are the work of the artist of the historiated capitals. The other two took turn and turn about but without tackling a whole quire at a time.

Hand A is known in a good number of other manuscripts, and his characteristics have been discussed by several scholars, in greatest detail by Alfred

Jakobsen.⁷ In *EIM* XIII (1980:11) I gave this list of the manuscripts attributed to him:

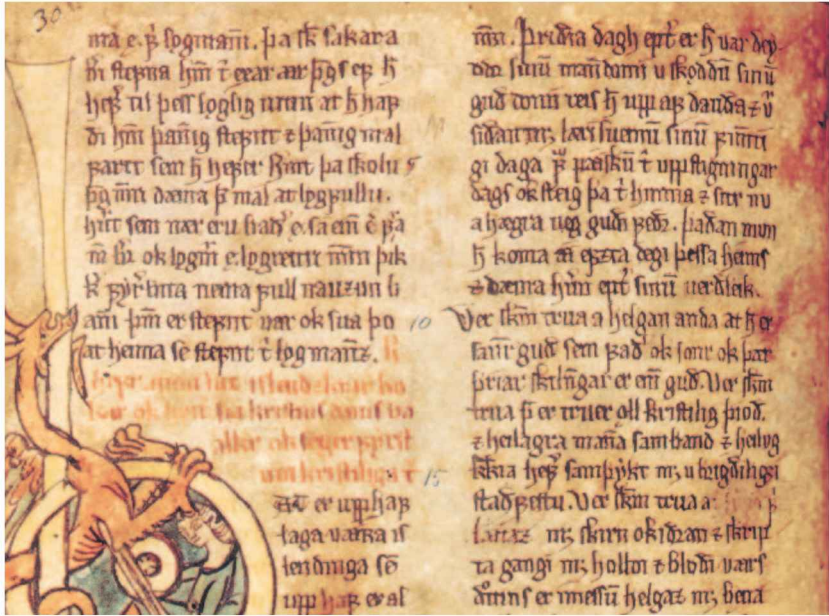
- AM 227 fol, Hand A.
- AM 229 fol I. fols. 1–6, 14–15 (Stjórn).
- AM 127 4to (Hand 2; Jónsbók).
- GKS 3269 a 4to (Jónsbók).
- AM 657 a–b 4to (Hand 3; Clári saga and ævintýri).
- AM 162 a fol β (Egils saga).
- AM 240 fol IV (Maríu saga).
- AM 242 fol (Codex Wormianus).
- AM 667 4to IX (Jóns saga baptista).
- NRA 62 (Karlammagnús saga).
- AM 544 4to, fols. 20r–21r (Völuspá in Hauksbók).

To this list may now be added a leaf of a psalter preserved in the Kammararkiv in Stockholm (Cod fragm Ps 24), written by Hand A and illuminated by the artist of 227 (Stefán Karlsson 1982:320–322; Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir 1983:66–73). The provenance of this leaf is not known but it may well be that the psalter of which it is a remnant was made for export and came early to Norway or, perhaps, direct to Sweden (Stefán Karlsson 1982:321).

It is proper to mention that Alfred Jakobsen has cast doubt on the attribution of Codex Wormianus and the Völuspá in Hauksbók to Hand A; he would prefer to see them as products of the same scribal school (Jakobsen 1965:50; cf. Johansson 1997:159–168). Stefán Karlsson's opinion, on the other hand, is that they are more likely to be the work of Hand A but written in a different period of his career. I return to this problem in section (3) below.

As noted above, Hand B is found in fragments of two more Stjórn manuscripts, AM 229 fol I (fols. 7–13 and 16) and NRA 60A. Stefán Karlsson has further pointed out to me that his hand can be identified in a few more texts. First to mention is AM 657 a–b 4to (Hand 4 there, on fols. 29–74, 98–100). Dr Selma Jónsdóttir had earlier noted, though without elaborating the point, that the hands of both the 227 scribes were to be found in 657 (1971:66), doubtless referring to Hands 3 and 4 in that codex, where Hand 3 is undoubtedly to be identified as our Hand A (cf. the list above). Jonna Louis-

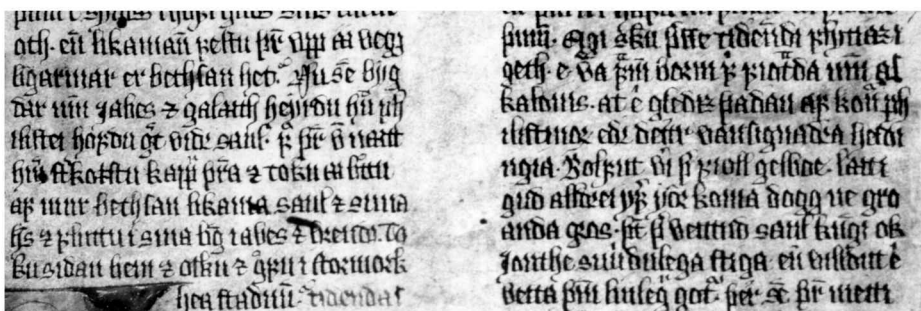
⁷ A. Jakobsen 1965:44–50; see Jakob Benediktsson 1980:10–12. References to the observations of earlier scholars will be found in both these places. See also: Johansson 1997:66–80, 222–228.



A detail of the Ms, GKS 3269 a 4to, Jónsbók 15v, written by Hand A of AM 227 fol.
(Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir).

Jensen expressed some hesitation about accepting the identification of Hand 4 in 657 as our Hand B, and at first sight it may seem rather dubious (1975:263 n. 3). In 657 the scribe begins by displaying certain charter-hand forms which are nowhere to be found in 227; but as the work progresses these features largely disappear and the script becomes more „gothic“ and more like the hand we meet in 227. The individual letter-forms closely resemble those of Hand B in 227, and the script shares most of the features enumerated on p. 22 below as typical of his work. There is a further observation which seems to amount to virtual proof that Hand 4 in 657 and Hand B in 227 are one and the same. In 227, 229 and 657 we meet a peculiar punctuation mark, sometimes used in conjunction with a full point. Above the point the scribe makes a sign which is best described as a figure 8 on its side.⁸ I know of no other examples

⁸ Instances of this sign are found for example at fols. 59vb5, 17, 60ra18, 63vb 24 in 227, and at 66v29, 68r4, 11, 98v13, 18 in 657.



A detail of AM 229 fol, *Stjórn*, Hand B, 13v. (Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir).

of this, and if not unique, it must at least be counted extremely rare and something of an idiosyncrasy on the part of Hand B.

Stefán Karlsson has again pointed out to me that Hand B could have written a passage on fols. 29v–30r in AM 595 a–b 4to (*Rómverja saga*).⁹ The letter-forms show many close similarities but some orthographic features differ. The discrepancies could be accounted for by assuming that this passage was written by Hand B some time before he worked on 227 — the *Rómverja saga* manuscript is certainly the older of the two. It is moreover possible to demonstrate a connection between 595 and 227 inasmuch as the main hand of the former and Hand A of the latter worked together on the *Jónsbók* manuscript, AM 127 4to. It is no great leap to conclude that the passage in question in 595 is indeed in our Hand B. Finally, Stefán Karlsson has drawn my attention to four lines added at the bottom of fol 18v in *Hauksbók*, AM 544 4to,¹⁰ which he suggests are also in Hand B. I find the identification indisputable, and it undeniably strengthens the probability that it was his collaborator, Hand A, who wrote the copy of *Völuspá* in the same manuscript. An additional point to note is that a leaf from a gradual once owned by the church at Höskuldastaðir (AM dipl isl fasc V 12) is illuminated in a style which Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir considers closely related to that of the art-work of 227

⁹ See the facsimile in Jakob Benediktsson (ed.) 1980. *EIM* XIII and pp. 18–19 of the introduction there.

¹⁰ See the facsimile in Jón Helgason (ed.) 1960. *Manuscripta Islandica* 5, and p. xiv of the introduction; Finnur Jónsson (ed.) 1892–1896: cxxiv and 185.

(1983:70–71). The script of the fragment bears striking resemblance to our Hand B, and there seems every likelihood that he was indeed the scribe.¹¹ The recto side of this gradual leaf was originally left blank, but it was later used to record the Höskuldsstaðir inventory of 1395, a fact which naturally suggests that the gradual was once the property of the church there.

I have elsewhere concluded that Hand A worked in the north of Iceland, (Jakob Benediktsson 1980:11–12) and the evidence for that finding need not be repeated here. I may however add that AM 657 a–b 4to was a book that belonged to the church at Bólstaðarhlíð in Húnaþing, and that, as we have just seen, the gradual leaf in AM dipl isl fasc V 12 belonged to Höskuldsstaðir, another church in the same district. It may further be noted that both the Jónsbók manuscripts in which Hand A appears were in North Iceland around 1500. It is obvious that the scribes of 227 worked in a place where a group of men were busy with book-production and had artists at hand. They supplied a variety of patrons with a variety of books, secular and religious, service-books among them. Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir drew the natural conclusion that the centre where these codexes were produced was one of the more prominent clerical establishments, with the Benedictine house at Þingeyrar her first choice: as noted above, two books in the group belonged to churches, and those churches were both in Húnaþing, the district in which the Þingeyrar monastery was also situated.

To return to 227. It was seen above that the existence of the codex cannot be confidently traced to a date before 1588 — in that year it was in Skálholt. It is clear that it always survived in conditions that made for tolerably decent conservation: the vellum of the leaves that were not separated from the codex is still in comparatively good shape. The marginalia indicate that the volume was in the hands of educated men throughout its career, and it can be presumed that it belonged to a clerical establishment rather than to a series of private owners. On these grounds it is understandable that some scholars have decided that 227 must have been permanently in Skálholt (Seip 1956:8,16; Jakobsen 1965:53), a conclusion we can ultimately neither prove nor disprove. There is on the other hand nothing to show that the codex was made in Skálholt, as some commentators have maintained (cf. Jakob Benediktsson 1980:11). Its origin in North Iceland seems to me manifest, whether it then came to Skálholt bran-new, specifically made for the cathedral, or whether it

¹¹ See Stefán Karlsson (ed.) 1963a:72; 1963b:117–118. Some individual features of letterforms may be noted, „a“, round „s“, and especially „x“ and the *et* sign.

was acquired at some later date. The church at Skálholt burnt down in 1532, and there may have been some attempt to make good whatever damage was done to its library (cf. Stefán Karlsson 1967:57–58). 227 might have come to the cathedral then, transferred from another church or monastery, but we have no evidence to show that this was the case. The possibility that 227 was originally written for the Skálholt establishment is in itself not at all remote, even though the book was made in a monastery in the north of the country. The artists responsible for 227 were indubitably so well known to the churchmen of their time that the bishop of Skálholt or some benefactor could perfectly well have commissioned a magnificent copy of Stjórn from them; or it may have occurred to the producers to invite the Skálholt dignitaries to purchase the volume on completion of their lavish undertaking. The scribes, or the managers of their scriptorium, were evidently in the business of marketing Stjórn manuscripts, since we know of three copies written by these same men, as well as producing other kinds of books for a variety of customers. The notion that 227 was written in Skálholt itself chiefly depends on the conjecture that Jón Halldórsson, bishop of Skálholt 1322–39, brought a copy of Stjórn from Norway to Iceland, and might himself have had a hand in the biblical translation the work contains (Seip 1956:8,16; Jakobsen 1965:110; Astås 1987:71–73, 682). This is pure guesswork, however, and Seip's claim that 227 was copied directly from a Norwegian exemplar has been shown to be equally groundless. It is more likely that there was at least one intermediate copy between 227 and the archetype it shared with AM 226 fol (cf. p. 25 below).

3. ORTHOGRAPHY, SCRIPT AND DATE

As may be expected in the work of active professionals, the orthography of Hands A and B in 227 is comparatively regular. A shows considerably more variation than B, however, and we find the same is true when we compare 227 with other manuscripts attributed to him. These show various deviations from his general practice in 227, though a notable number of his habits remain constant throughout. Since Hand A is represented in so many manuscripts, it is reasonable to think that he enjoyed a long career. His spelling habits could alter in that time, and influence from his exemplars could be another factor in promoting variety. Both A and B have a tendency to „norwegianise“ their orthography. Since similar forms appear in equal measure in works which A

and B undoubtedly copied from Icelandic originals, they provide shaky foundations for any conclusion as to the „nationality“ of their Stjórn exemplar. In fact, their Norwegian-influenced spelling is not at all at odds with the practice of many Icelandic scribes in the fourteenth century (Stefán Karlsson 1978:87–101), and by itself is no indication that they had a Norwegian source in front of them.

The letter-forms of Hand B show various differences from those of Hand A; and B is in some respects more careful and more refined, fonder of hair-stroke adornment for instance. The chief differences between them are:

B always writes a two-storey „a“, while A has both this form and the open-top kind resembling the „a“ of modern print.

A usually makes „ð“ with a bar through the ascender, B with a loop to the right of it.

B writes „ê“ and „ð“, A „ę“ and „q“.

B does not close the upper and lower ends of „s“ as A does; he also uses this letter a good deal more often than A, especially initially.

B most often writes „v“ with a curl up from the left limb, which is then more or less closed over the top of the letter; the result resembles a „b“.

B writes „x“ with a bar through the middle; A has no bar.

B does not write a superscript dot over „y“; A regularly does so.

A good deal has been written on the orthography of Hand A in other manuscripts. The most detailed analysis is by Hugo Gering (1882:xi–xxiii) and Alfred Jakobsen (1965:44–92) with reference to AM 657 a–b 4to and by Finnur Jónsson with reference to Codex Wormianus (1880–1887:li–lxi). Jakobsen has also compared some of Hand A’s characteristic features as they appear in many of the manuscripts attributed to him, including 227. Since this is not the place to give a full account of the orthography of 227, I have done no more than note a number of salient features which distinguish the practice of Hand A from that of Hand B, along with some further characteristics of A observed in other manuscripts.

Scholars have generally assigned the manuscripts written by Hand A to the middle of the fourteenth century or a little later. As said earlier, however, we must certainly credit this scribe with a fair span of professional activity. We face the strong probability that his work was produced in the course of de-

cedes, with the added complication that it is in any case virtually impossible to date a manuscript on palaeographic and orthographic grounds to within a period of much less than half a century. Hand A shows some characteristics which indicate that he established his scribal habits before the middle of the fourteenth century, cf. e.g. his use of the older „a“ form and „e“ and „ø“, his regular use of „ð“ in preterite verb forms as well as elsewhere, and the fact that his spelling shows no sign of the svarabhakti. But from time to time he has forms which are associated rather with the latter part of the fourteenth century: „é“ expressed as „ie“ middle voice endings in -zt, -szt, and -st, and a spelling such as „bersi“ for „bessi“. Other usages are of Norwegian origin: „fv“ for intervocalic „f“, „gh“ for „g“ analogical „v-“ in „vorðit“, and so on. He makes widespread use of the third person singular ending in the first person singular indicative of verbs, both in 227 and in other manuscripts written by him (Jakobsen 1965:76–77). There is some minor variation in the occurrence of a number of these features in Hand A’s other work, and their differentiation might conceivably help towards putting his manuscripts into some kind of chronological order. That would require a far more extensive and detailed study than is possible within the scope of the present article. One point to note however is that there seem to be good grounds for thinking that Codex Wormianus was written before 227. It has been shown that the Fourth Grammatical Treatise in Codex Wormianus was most probably composed in the period 1332–40 (Björn M. Ólsen 1884:xlii–xliv, 250–252), or at least very soon afterwards, and it is clearly not the original that is contained in the codex. This means that Codex Wormianus can hardly have been written before some time in the 1340s. It appears highly probable that it was after that that the scribe worked on 227 and in that case the time-limits for its making are somewhat reduced, since it seems out of the question that it could have been written later than in the third quarter of the fourteenth century. In present circumstances it seems we can do no better than concur in the current general opinion which assigns it to about 1350 or a little later.

4. MANUSCRIPTS OF STJÓRN

The work known as *Stjórn*¹² is a translation of the historical books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to the end of Kings, larded with varying amounts of commentary. It does not represent a single work, but is made up of three parts, differing in form and origin, referred to here as *Stjórn I*, *II* and *III*.

Stjórn I runs from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Exodus 18 (Unger 1862:1–299; 227, fols. 1–70v). According to the prologue, it was compiled at the instance of King Hákon V Magnússon (reigned 1299–1319). The biblical translation is expanded by extensive commentary drawn from numerous authorities, most of it taken from Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* and Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*.

Stjórn II goes from the end of *Stjórn I* to the end of Deuteronomy (Unger 1862:300–349⁵). It is a more or less straight translation of the biblical text, though often substantially abridged; it is virtually free of extraneous matter.

Stjórn III starts with Joshua and goes to the end of Kings (Unger 1862:349⁵–654; 227, fols. 71v–129v). The text is augmented with a certain amount of exegesis, but this is modest in scope compared with that in *Stjórn I* and the authorities from which it is drawn are very rarely named.

These three parts are not preserved in a uniform way in the manuscript sources, and it will be appropriate to give a brief survey of the materials.

There are three principal *Stjórn* manuscripts, AM 226, 227 and 228 fol. Only 226 contains all three parts of *Stjórn*, 227 has *I* and *III*. 228 only *III*. In 226 *Stjórn II* is a later addition, made in the latter half of the fifteenth century;¹³ no original provision was made for its inclusion, since in the main body of the codex *Stjórn III* appears as the immediate continuation of *Stjórn I* (Selma Jónsdóttir 1971:56). The situation is rather different in 227. There, as we saw (p. 9 above), the last leaf of gathering 10 and the first page of gathering 11 were left blank, as though the scribe thought it possible to supply the section missing between *Stjórn I* and *III*, whether that was the result of speculation on his part or because he knew that such a text existed. In any

¹² The name is first attested in 1588 (see p. 11 above); its origin is totally obscure.

¹³ The hand of *Stjórn II* is remarkably similar to that of the well known scribe Jón Þorláksson, but probably belongs to a member of the same school rather than Jón himself. On Jón Þorláksson see Ólafur Halldórsson 1971:128–144; Stefán Karlsson 1979:36–43. These contain facsimile examples of his writings; others may be seen in Eggen (ed.) 1968, Gjerløw 1980. See also Andersen 1979:1–35.

case, Stjórn II never found its way into 227, and it remains known to us only in 226 and in copies derived from that codex.

AM 225 fol, written in the first half of the fifteenth century, is a direct copy of 226 but made before Stjórn II was inserted in it. Its value lies in the fact that it provides the text of two leaves of Stjórn III that are now lacking in 226.

Stjórn I is preserved in 226 and 227 and fragmentarily elsewhere. The 226 copy is complete and supplied the basic text in Unger's edition. On the lacunas in 227 see pp. 8–10 above. As noted earlier, the 227 scribes were also responsible for the Stjórn copies represented in the fragments in AM 229 fol I and NRA 60A. Unger used these fragments, though not at all exhaustively, to provide variants and emendations in his edition. The hand of 226 is known in a fair number of other manuscripts which are thought to have been written at or in some association with, the Augustinian monastery at Helgafell in the west of Iceland (Ólafur Halldórsson 1966; Stefán Karlsson 1967:19–21). Stefán Karlsson finds it plausible to assign 226 to c. 1360–70 (1967:21), a little later, that is, than the probable date of 227. 226 may well have been at home in Helgafell; its first known owner was the sheriff and magnate, Eggert Björnsson (1612–81), of Skarð on nearby Skarðsströnd (Ólafur Halldórsson 1966:42–43; Stefán Karlsson 1967:46).

The texts of Stjórn I in 226 and 227 are closely related, but it is unlikely that they were copied from the same exemplar. In the first place, it can be said for certain that the texts of Stjórn III in the two manuscripts are not from the same immediate source; and in the second place, it can be seen from Unger's variants (though they represent only a selection from the total that could be adduced) that the text of 227 is often superior to that of 226 (Seip 1954: 191–193). 226 also omits sentences and even whole chapters which are found in 227 and which we can safely believe were in the original translation (see Unger 1862:7,18,56,67). There are other shorter passages which appear in different positions in the two manuscripts (e.g. Unger 1862:58; cf. 17,76; cf. 78). There is frequent discrepancy in the chapter-titles as well. In contrast to the natural wording of the prologue title in 226 (Unger 1862:1), for example, 227 shows obvious error in saying that the work is called „Heilagra manna blómstr“, the result of misunderstanding the reference halfway through the prologue to the separate work of that name which had also been translated at the behest of King Hákon.

Fols. 1–6 of the fragments in AM 229 fol I are from Stjórn I, fols. 7–16

from Stjórn III. Since these were written by our Hands A and B, it is not surprising to find that their texts are more or less identical to those in 227. Minor variants suggest however that 229 was more likely a copy of the same exemplar as was followed in 227 than a copy of 227 itself.¹⁴ 227 cannot possibly be a copy of 229, since the latter sometimes lacks words present in the former.

NRA 60A is a scrap of vellum in the Norwegian National Archives containing the opening of Stjórn I (printed in Unger 1862:xii) written by Hand B of 227. The text is from the top of the left-hand column on the verso side of a leaf. The recto side of the fragment is blank. It seems that this copy could not have included the prologue since, if it had, its text would have carried over into the right-hand column of that recto side, just as it does in 227 (cf. Selma Jónsdóttir 1971:51) The text on the verso agrees with 227 but has a different title, a fact which suggests, if anything, that the fragment represents a copy not of 227 but rather of a shared exemplar.

AM 228 fol, from the first half of the fourteenth century, is considered to be the oldest manuscript of Stjórn III. Unger took it as his basic text, supplying lacunas from 227 and the concluding chapters from 226. It is certain that neither 226 nor 227 is derived from 228. In 226 the book of Joshua is not translated from the Bible but is an abridged version of the relevant part of *Historia scholastica*.¹⁵ It then continues with a Stjórn III text like that found in 227 and 228, though it is often shortened and to some extent differently phrased. In places where the text remains substantially unaltered, it is closer to 228 than to 227. 227, along with its sister manuscript represented by the 229 fragments, appears to be a remoter relation, but 227–229 can sometimes be seen to preserve a better text than 228–226 inasmuch as they have readings which agree with the Vulgate where the other pair are at variance with it.¹⁶

¹⁴ E.g. Unger: 112 ²⁹ lukti ok hirði mik gud drottinn 226] lukti guð (+227) mik ok hirði 229, 227; — 172 ¹² gipta, 226, 229] gefua 227; — 172 ¹⁹ Jacob 226] iacob 229, iacobi 227; — 359 ⁹.vi. 228, 229] .iiij. 227; — 359¹⁰.vii. (1) 228, .vij ^{da} 229] fiorda 227; — 359¹⁰.vii. (2) 228, 229] .iiij^{ra} 227. The readings from p. 359 given before the square bracket agree with the Vulgate; the roman numerals have been misread in 227.

¹⁵ Printed by Unger (1862) at the foot of pp. 349–364; cf. Fell 1973.

¹⁶ E.g. Unger 1862:384¹ loptusin 228, loptusit 226] blothus .iiij. 227, blothofin .iiij. 229 (Unger emends to „blothusin“ corresponding to „locum idolorum“ in the Vulgate, Judges 3:26); — 496 ^{26–27} faðir þeirra er nefndr Sarphia 228, 226] moder þeirra er nefnd saruia systir dauid 229 (lacuna in 227), cf. the Vulgate, 2 Samuel 2:18; — 497, where the addition from 229 (227 is defective) given in note 3 corresponds to the Vulgate, 2 Samuel 2:9, but is lacking in 228 and 226; the same applies to the addition from 227 given in note 7 on p. 553, which

The following manuscripts, all of them Icelandic, contain matter from Stjórn III:

AM 229 fol I, fols 7–16; fragments of a sister manuscript of 227; cf. above.

AM 229 fol II. Four leaves of a manuscript written about the middle of the fourteenth century. The hand is possibly that of the scribe of Möðruvallabók; it is certainly closely related (Stefán Karlsson 1967:27). The text sometimes has better readings than the other manuscripts¹⁷ and thus appears to belong to a different line of descent.

AM 229 fol III. A single leaf written late in the fourteenth century (Stefán Karlsson 1967:21 n.3). The text is much abridged and offers more variants than those cited by Unger.

NRA 60B. Two bits of a leaf written in double columns about the middle of the fourteenth century or a little later. The text (printed in Unger 1862: xii–xiii) appears to be independent of the other sources but is most closely related to 228.

The manuscripts and fragments so far mentioned were all used by Unger. The following were not.

NRA 60C. Two conjoint fragments from the inner part of a leaf written in two columns by an Icelandic hand probably about the middle of the fourteenth century. The text corresponds to Unger 1862:521–522 and 524–525; it sometimes runs parallel to *AM 229 fol II*.

AM 335 4to. A manuscript from about 1400 (see Page 1960:x–xv). The story of Samson from Stjórn III is found on fols. 11–14, corresponding to Unger 1862:409–420.

Thott 2099 4to. The top half of a leaf from a fifteenth-century manuscript (*DI I*:706; Kålund 1900:352–353), with text corresponding to Unger 1862: 470–71 and 472.

Sth perg 4:o nr 36 I. Two damaged leaves from a fifteenth-century manuscript (Gödel 1897–1900:104; Astås 1970:128–129). The text corresponds to Unger 1862:432–435 and 445–448.

corresponds to the Vulgate, 1 Kings 2:8; —575⁴ ok er sv æigi nefnd 228 (+226)] sv er nefnd germana 227, 229 (cf. the Vulgate, 1 Kings 11:19). More instances could be cited.

¹⁷ E.g. Unger 1862:426³² nagrannar 228, 227] konur 226, nagrañnur 229 II (=vicinae ... mulieres, Vulgate, Ruth 4:17); — 426³⁵ föðvr Amminadab 228, 226] faram fader aminadab 227, f. aram f. aminadap 229 II (= Vulgate, Ruth 4:19); — 461^{20–29} spiot ... sva þungt at skaptið (so 228, 226, 227, skaptla/st 229 II) va. vi. hundrað skillinga (= ipsum ... ferrum hastae, Vulgate, 1 Samuel 17:7).

AM 617 4to, A vellum written c. 1560–70 by Gísli Jónsson, bishop of Skálholt (Westergaard-Nielsen 1957:55–62). The four books of Kings (1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings) are on fols. 1–81v, the story of Samson on fols. 81v–85r; cf. Unger 1862:427–654, 409–420. The text is not descended from any of the principal medieval manuscripts. A further account of this copy would take us too far afield, but I have discussed it in detail elsewhere (Jakob Benediktsson 1989:38–45). Meanwhile it is self-evident that, since 617 represents a text parallel to those found in the principal manuscripts, it will have to be compared with them in every particular when a new edition of *Stjórn* is undertaken. Nothing is known of the source from which 617 was copied; it does not appear to have been Skálholt property in 1588, cf. pp. 11–12 above.

No soundly based account of the relations between the manuscripts of *Stjórn* III can be given until a detailed comparison of all of them has been made. Such a comparison is hardly to be contemplated except as preparatory to a new edition of *Stjórn*. There is on every count a crying need for such an edition, and it is indeed not far from being a matter of reproach that a start has not already been made.

Lists of the paper manuscripts of *Stjórn* from later centuries can be consulted in the books by Selma Jónsdóttir (1971:47–48) and Ian J. Kirby (1986: 123–126). In general the copies they contain appear to be derived, directly or indirectly, from 226.

5. THE ORIGINS OF STJÓRN

Much has been written and far from unanimous views expressed on the compilation of the three parts of *Stjórn*, their mutual relations, and their date and place of composition.¹⁸ The many problems have been discussed most fully and most recently by Ian J. Kirby, and I refer the reader to his book for further orientation.¹⁹ Here I can touch on only a few matters of central importance.

According to the prologue, *Stjórn I* was put together „on the command and instruction“ („af boðskap ok forsoðn“) of King Hákon Magnússon of Norway (1299–1319). The writer says that the king had earlier had the book called

¹⁸ A detailed survey of earlier writings is in Astås 1987:24–97; Unger’s preface to his edition in 1862; Storm 1886a:83–88, 1886b:244–256; Finnur Jónsson 1923:973–977; Paasche 1957: 490–491; Knirk 1981:156–159; cf. also the articles by Hofmann 1973 and Bagge 1974.

¹⁹ Bible Translation in Old Norse 1986.

„Heilagra manna blómstr“ translated into Norse for reading on Saints’ days. Now Scripture itself, combined with explanatory material, was also to be made available to provide readings for Sundays and other festivals not associated with particular saints. He further says that the translation has been augmented with matter „af öðrum bókum, svá sem af Scholastica historia ok af Speculum historiale, eptir sjálfs hans forsögn saman lesnum ok til lögðum“ (from other books, such as *Historia scholastica* and *Speculum historiale*, collected and adapted as he himself [sc. the king] instructed).

Most of the commentary in *Stjórn I* is taken from the two works named, and red titles in the text indicate where they are laid under contribution.²⁰ There are also extensive additions to the translation which cannot be classed as straightforward exegesis. They include a long section on geography (Unger, 1862:67–100), derived, probably through some intermediate treatise, from *Speculum historiale* and Isidore’s *Etymologiæ* (Jakob Benediktsson 1984:7–11); the story of Asenath (Unger 1862:204–211, 225–227); the account of Moses’s expedition against the Ethiopians (Unger 1862:253–254)²¹; and the testaments of the patriarchs (Unger 1862:239–245; see Seip 1954:191–193). All these latter items are from *Speculum historiale*. Further matter is adopted from other works, including two substantial homilies, both put together from more than one source (Unger 1862:48–53, 141–158).²² There are many other references to named authors but most of them come at second-hand from *Historia scholastica* and *Speculum historiale*; references to St Augustine’s *De Genesi contra Manichæos* (*PL* 34) are probably the chief exception to this general rule.

The Old Testament text itself is only now and then conveyed in a more or less literal translation. It is commonly expanded or paraphrased, with omissions (especially where Scripture repeats itself) and occasional changes of sequence. On the other hand, the compiler of *Stjórn I* includes a good deal of biblical matter which is either omitted or abridged in *Historia scholastica*. Whether he made use of an earlier biblical translation cannot now be told, though it seems probable; cf. pp. 33–34 and 38–39 below.

²⁰ *Historia scholastica* is vol. 198 of J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiæ cursus completus. Series Latina*. I have used the Douai 1624 edition of *Speculum historiale*, republished in facsimile in 1965.

²¹ This text also exists separately in the paper manuscripts BLAdd 11068 (London) and Lbs 457 4to (Reykjavík); cf. Kirby 1986: 54 n.17,124.

²² See Kirby II 1980:84–85, where there is some correction of what is said by Seip 1956:14. A detailed account of the composition of *Stjórn I* is in Astås 1987.

As mentioned above, the author of the prologue says that it was the king's intention that the work should provide lections to explain what lies behind the celebration of Sundays and other festivals devoted not to particular saints but to God Himself („sem eigi er ǫðrum heilögum mǫnnum einkanlega sungit en sjálfum guði“). At the start there are some signs of selection and arrangement on the lines thus laid down. Universal history is presented in customary fashion with division into the world's seven ages (Unger 1862:24–28), and at the end of the first age (Unger 1862:48), the author introduces a homily on lenten observance from Septuagesima. After that begins „annarr þatr þessarar ǫrðar eptir forsoðn ... Hákonar Nóregs konungs ... eptir því sem ǫðrum sunnudegi í nýu vikna fōstu ok þeiri vikunni til heyrir“ (the second part of this work following the instruction ... of Hákon, king of Norway ... according to what is proper for Sexagesima and the week thereafter; Unger 1862:54).²³ Then comes an account of the second age, which ends (Unger 1862:67) before the writer embarks on his long geographical description. When this is finished (Unger 1862:100), there is no sort of preface to what follows and no further mention of the ages of mankind: the third age is in fact still current when *Stjórn I* ends. Later on, however, a homily is introduced (Unger 1862:141–58), which according to its title in 227 was intended for the first Sunday in Lent. After that there is no more reference to division according to the church year, and the arrangement envisaged in the prologue appears now to be totally abandoned.

But there is more than this unfulfilled promise to notice in the prologue. The first part of it consists of a slightly expanded version of the opening of Peter Comestor's prologue to *Historia scholastica*; the second part explains the cause and purpose of the *Stjórn I* undertaking. Here we find some of the *topoi* customary in such preambles; we are told who inspired the commission, and the author excuses his lack of skill and begs the forbearance of good men. On the other hand, we are not told what the extent of the work was intended to be, merely that it opens „at the start of the Scripture“ („af ritningarinnar upphafi“). Finally, there is no formal dedication or address, such as we might reasonably expect to find if the finished work had in fact ever been presented to the king.

Stjórn I ends with Exodus 18 and, as far as we can see, never went any farther. It must be counted unlikely that it was originally intended to stop

²³ This heading is only in 226; there is a lacuna in 227.

there²⁴, and more likely that the work was left unfinished, though for reasons we can only surmise. A plausible conjecture is that it was the death of King Hákon that brought the work to a premature end. That would also explain why the prologue contains no dedication and no statement of the work's intended scope.

This conjecture is supported by a further consideration. If work on the translation and commentary came to a sudden end with the death of King Hákon, we may be assured that no final, revised manuscript of the whole of it ever existed; possibly the idea of completing the project excited little interest in Norwegian court circles. A copy of what there was of *Stjórni* I then came to Iceland — or was it perhaps the compiler's own working copy that travelled across the sea? If we assume circumstances like these, we may be closer to an explanation of the curious fact that there is no Norwegian manuscript of *Stjórni* I, not even a scrap of one, while Norwegian collections preserve fragments of three copies written in Iceland and in all probability made for export and the benefit of Norwegian readers (cf. Sverrir Tómasson 1988:352–355).

Storm (1886b:256) dated *Stjórni* I to about 1310 and he has been followed in this by most other commentators. His date was really no more than a guess at a year that fell tidily in the middle of King Hákon's reign. There is no positive evidence to support it, and the considerations discussed above suggest it is rather too early.

Dr Selma Jónsdóttir (1971:54–56) voiced doubts about the authenticity of the prologue and canvassed the notion that it might have been composed at a later date in order to add to the work's esteem (cf. Sverrir Tómasson 1988:355). This proposal chiefly depended on her belief that the author of *Stjórni* I had possibly made use of a version of *Nikulás saga* composed by the Icelandic, Bergr Sokkason, who in 1322 became prior and in 1325 abbot of the Benedictine house of Munkaþverá. It has however been shown that the resemblance between these works is due to the fact that their authors made independent use of the same source-material (Jakob Benediktsson 1984:7–11). Other scholars have noted elements in the language of *Stjórni* I which they

²⁴ Selma Jónsdóttir (1971:56–57) pointed out that the geographical description in *Stjórni* I (Unger 1862:73) refers to the city of Susa „er getit verðr í sögu Hester af konunginum Assuero“ (cf. Esther 1:1–2), and that this clause is not found in *Speculum historiale* which is otherwise the author's source. But we cannot be certain that this means that he expected to carry the work on so far.

argue point to the work's Norwegian origin,²⁵ but virtually all their observations concern individual words and we have as yet no detailed study of the work's diction and syntax. Mention should however be made of the work of Peter Hallberg, who has drawn attention to a number of similarities between the style and vocabulary of *Stjórn I* and those of works attributed to Bergur Sokkason or his „school“ (1973:346–353). But without further research it hardly seems possible to draw firm conclusions. In itself it is not at all unlikely that Icelandic and Norwegian authors of the early fourteenth century shared the same stylistic ideals, but that is not a subject to pursue in the present context.

Stjórn II differs from both *Stjórn I* and *Stjórn III* in being a more or less straight translation of the biblical text, considerably abridged, it is true, but very rarely eked out with comment, and then only of the most modest kind. It has been suggested that a few additions can be traced to *Historia scholastica* (see Seip 1957:15; Kirby 1986:56–60), but the text itself contains no reference at all to any extraneous source.

Opinions have differed on the age of *Stjórn II*. Unger thought it was thirteenth-century work, Storm that it was made in Iceland, probably in the fourteenth century, specifically to fill the gap between *Stjórn I* and *Stjórn III*. Seip conjectured that *Stjórn II* in 226 was a copy of a fourteenth-century Norwegian manuscript, which was itself ultimately derived from a twelfth-century Norwegian original (Unger 1862:v; Storm 1886b:253; Seip 1957:11,15). Kirby has drawn attention to various small errors in 226 which he thinks are best explained as misreadings of forms in a manuscript written in the first part of the thirteenth century. His chief evidence is provided by a few instances where the scribe writes „i“ for „ok“ or „ok“ for „i“ (Unger 1862:308³⁰, 311⁸, 343²³). The confusion must imply that the „ok“ nota in the exemplar had no cross-bar, and unbarred forms are a feature of some Icelandic hands of the first half of the thirteenth century (Hreinn Benediktsson 1968: pl.15 and 16). Kirby thinks that other errors in 226, which result from misreading „c“ as „t“ and „r“ as „c“, point in the same direction (1986:5–7). Naturally, it does not follow as a matter of course that 226 was copied directly from such an ancient exemplar: the errors in question could be carried over from some intermediate transcript. It must equally be said that the evidence itself is far from compelling, and it is perhaps only the confusion of „r“ and „c“ which can be lent

²⁵ See Unger 1862:v; Storm 1886b:252; Seip 1957:15–17; Jakobsen 1965:92–111.

any diagnostic significance. Against the other points it can be observed that an unbarred „j“-shaped nota for „ok“ is known in fourteenth-century manuscripts (e.g. in Hauksbók and Möðruvallabók), and that examples of confusion of „c“ and „t“ are legion.

On the other hand, the style and phraseology of Stjórn II point firmly to the thirteenth century as its date of origin, and some of its word-forms seem to argue an exemplar of some antiquity, e.g. *mælag* 323²⁰, *heyrdag* 323²⁴, *byggvir* 343²⁹, *styrkia* 326³² (adj., sg. acc. fem.), *littad* (= *líttat*) 336³⁶. A full survey cannot be attempted here, but I may cite a few examples which indicate at least a relatively early date for the original Stjórn II. Expressions with an archaic ring are found, such as „*hlutum æ kasta. huert huergi skal eiga*“, 347⁴, and „*huatki er skadi ma at verða*“ 303²⁵. The word „*auðræði*“ which occurs twice (345^{15,38}), enjoyed some popularity in Icelandic religious writings of the first half of the thirteenth century, but after that it appears to have fallen almost completely out of fashion (Foote 1963:62–76). Another rarity is „*skelmisdrep*“ (= *pestilentia* in the Vulgate), which also occurs twice (326³¹, 344⁷). The dictionaries have only one other instance of the word, in *Tómas saga erkibyskups*, but it there occurs in text derived from the early Life of St Thomas which Bergur Gunnsteinsson translated from a lost Latin source about 1200 or not long afterwards²⁶.

A last point to note is that Storm singled out the word „*rétir*“ (= *caulae* in the Vulgate, Unger 1862:341²⁴, 343¹⁷) as a distinctively Icelandic term (1886b: 253). It is admittedly also found in Stjórn I (171¹¹), but there it might conceivably stem from the use of an older translation. (On the other hand, the same word was, and is, used in the Faroes, and it may not have been quite as foreign to knowledgeable Norwegians as Storm believed.)

Examples such as these cannot of course clinch the matter, but they lend considerable support to the view that Stjórn II should be counted a translation made in the first half of the thirteenth century and probably in Iceland rather than in Norway. Seip (1957:15), it is true, maintained that a Norwegian original can be detected behind Stjórn II, but his one piece of evidence is the erroneous „*frykr*“ for „*fnykr*“ (323²⁶), which can hardly be counted sufficient to justify his conclusion. His ideas about the date of origin of the Stjórn II translation will be discussed below.

On all counts it must seem most probable that the earliest biblical transla-

²⁶ Unger 1869:537²⁴; Eiríkur Magnússon II 1883:274²⁴. — On the different recensions see Foote 1961:403–50; Stefán Karlsson 1973:212–243.

tion into Norse-Icelandic was essentially a plain version of Scripture without commentary. In that case, it must have resembled Stjórn II, and it is natural to conclude in consequence that this text represents the remains of such early work. It must have covered at least the Pentateuch (cf. the concluding words of Stjórn II, Unger 1862:349), and it may quite possibly have extended, like Stjórn III, to the end of Kings. Later redactors introduced commentary, first of the kind found in Stjórn III and finally on the grand scale found in Stjórn I. Seip (1957:18) seems to have held a similar view of development on these lines, and Kirby (1986:62) has produced further arguments in its favour, pointing i.a. to the following passage to show that the author of Stjórn III made use of an older translation:

Þetta hús var smíðat með meira vitrleik ok vísdóm margháttaðra lista ok háleitra hagleik, segir sá er sǫgunni hefir snúit til sinnar tungu af látínu, en mín fáfræði kunni skilja eða skýra (Unger 1862:564¹⁴⁻¹⁷). (This house was built with greater ingenuity and understanding of many and varied arts and with sublimer skill than my ignorance can comprehend or describe, says the man who turned this account from Latin into his native tongue.)

It does indeed seem natural to take this as a reference by the Stjórn III author to an earlier translation, and probably then to a version like that found in Stjórn II. If this was so, it follows that Stjórn II must originally have reached to the end of the books of Kings.

Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* was finished in the 1170s and gained papal approbation in 1215. If extra matter in Stjórn II can be safely attributed to this source, it can hardly have been introduced by an Icelandic writer before the thirteenth century was under way. Seip on the other hand maintained that the oldest Norse biblical translation was made before about 1150 (1957:17), but his arguments are too tenuous to be convincing. A few correspondences between readings in Stjórn and others in texts of acknowledged twelfth-century date are inadequate evidence on which to base his claim that the Pentateuch was translated so early. There is comparable fragility in the arguments of other scholars who have seen connections between Stjórn and *Sverris saga* and have therefore been inclined to date the earliest biblical translation to King Sverrir's reign (1184–1202).²⁷ The soundest conclusion we can reach at

²⁷ See the works by Paasche 1957 and Knirk 1981.

present appears to be that *Stjórn II* represents the remains of the oldest Norse-Icelandic translation of Scripture now known to us, and that this translation cannot be dated with any certainty to a period earlier than the first half of the thirteenth century. This of course is not to deny the possibility that translation from the historical books of the Bible had been undertaken before that time: but demonstrating that it was is beyond our powers and probably always will be.

Stjórn III is largely a rendering of the biblical text, often abridged and to some extent paraphrased, with the style adapted to convey a more „saga-like“ narrative. Explanatory material is sometimes brought in from the books of Chronicles. Short elucidatory passages are also introduced from other sources, but reference to these by name is comparatively rare. Chief among them are *Imago mundi* and *Speculum ecclesiae* by Honorius Augustodunensis (*PL* 172), Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*, and the *Liber exceptionum* by Richard of St Victor.²⁸ Honorius’s works are sometimes referred to by name, those by Peter Comestor and Richard never. There are occasional references to Jerome as the author of the Vulgate and even as the source of some of the comment in the Bible itself. If we assume that the author of *Stjórn III* was making use of a vernacular version like *Stjórn II*, then these additions must clearly be put down to his account. We cannot on the other hand tell how far he may have altered the biblical text itself, since there is no overlap between *Stjórn II* and *Stjórn III*.

It can be considered virtually certain that the version represented by *Stjórn III* originally included the Pentateuch: there is nothing to be said in favour of the notion that such a work began with Joshua. Guðbrandur Vigfússon (1863: 142), and Storm after him, observed that the late fourteenth-century fragment in AM 238 fol XIX has a text from Genesis which resembles *Stjórn III* in style; and Kirby has pressed the resemblance further.²⁹ In the passage preserved in the fragment the biblical text is treated in the same way as in *Stjórn III*, and it includes comment drawn from Honorius (*Imago mundi*) and from *Elucidarius*. Part of the same Genesis text is also found in AM 764 4to (Kirby 1986:70; cf. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2000:74–78; 97–114). Another fragment,

²⁸ See Storm 1886b:249; Bekker-Nielsen 1968:34–35. The *Liber exceptionum* was earlier thought to be the work of Hugh of St Victor (*PL* 175); cf. Fell 1973:118–139; cf. Kirby 1986: 62.

²⁹ See Storm 1886b:248 (he prints part of the text); Kirby 1986:69–71, and Appendix C (where the text is printed pp. 134–141).

Sth perg fol nr 12 IV,³⁰ is a single leaf from the fifteenth century containing text from Exodus 4:19–7:16. It is straight translation for the most part but with some abridgment and paraphrase (cf. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2000:107–109). Unger thought this came closest in manner to Stjórn II, but Storm and Kirby count it from the same workshop as Stjórn III. Seip on the other hand refused to believe it has any connection with Stjórn at all (Unger 1862:v–vi; Storm 1886b:248; Seip 1957:13). There seems most to be said for the view of Storm and Kirby.

A last fragment to mention is AM 1056 4to IV, from the first half of the fourteenth century, containing material from 1 Samuel.³¹ As Kirby has shown, this is not a first-hand translation of Scripture or derived from Stjórn III but represents a rendering of *Historia scholastica* (see Kirby 1986:104–105).

Unger and Storm and a good many other scholars reckoned that Stjórn III represented the oldest translation, though it had possibly been subject to some revision after about the middle of the thirteenth century. As we decided above, however, a sounder verdict is that Stjórn II constitutes the remains of the earliest Norse-Icelandic version. It was long believed that a chronological limit was set for the Stjórn III translation by its relation to *Konungs skuggsjá*, because Storm (1860:83–88), who was the first to compare the two works, had concluded that biblical passages in *Konungs skuggsjá* were indubitably borrowed from a Stjórn III text. There is no doubt of a literary connection between them, and Storm's conclusion was generally accepted. Recently however it has been challenged, independently of each other, by Dietrich Hofmann (1973:1–40) and Sverre Bagge (1974:163–202), whose findings are diametrically opposed to those of Storm; according to them, the biblical passages are original in *Konungs skuggsjá* and were utilised by the author of Stjórn III. The passages in question are in a single section in *Konungs skuggsjá* (Holm-Olsen 1945:107–21) but they do not occur there in biblical order and in Stjórn III they are naturally dispersed to their original contexts (Hofmann 1973:2–3). Reference should be made to Hofmann and Bagge for their detailed arguments, but a main plank in their reasoning is that the corresponding passages in *Konungs skuggsjá* and Stjórn III are often not plain biblical translation but texts which have been adapted in their vernacular version to suit the ideas

³⁰ Printed by Unger 1862:v–vii, and Kirby 1986:142–145 (Appendix C).

³¹ First printed in 1865 by O. Nielsen:261–262; more accurately in Kirby 1986:146–149 (Appendix C). Cf. also Astås 1970:131–137.

which the author of *Konungs skuggsjá* wished to propound. Since it is hard to believe that the author of *Stjórn III* had any original interest in purveying ideas of that kind, it must be concluded that it was he who was indebted to *Konungs skuggsjá* and not the reverse. As far as I know, there has been no discussion of this most recent explanation of the relations between the two works except by Kirby in Appendix H of his 1986 book. He there criticises a number of the points made by Hofmann and Bagge and holds fast to the old view that *Stjórn III* is the source and the author of *Konungs skuggsjá* the borrower.

I shall make no attempt to settle the controversy, though we can be certain that the last word on the subject has not yet been said. It may be noted, for example, that neither Hofmann nor Bagge takes the possibility into account that *Stjórn III* was based on an older translation which might itself have been available to the author of *Konungs skuggsjá*. Hofmann also draws attention to the fact that in the passages the two works have in common there are numerous readings in the *Stjórn III* text which agree with some particular Icelandic copies of *Konungs skuggsjá*, whose place in the stemma is far removed from the Norwegian so-called „main“ manuscript (see Hofmann 1973:24 et seq.). Hofmann's observations clearly show the need for fresh investigation of both *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Stjórn* manuscripts before any firm conclusions can be reached.³² Hofmann suggests that the readings peculiar to Icelandic copies of *Konungs skuggsjá* might stem from the first draft of the work, while the corresponding variant passages in the Norwegian „main“ manuscript are the result of authorial revision. Such a theory necessarily implies that both *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Stjórn III* were produced in the same period. In propounding this solution Hofmann resuscitates the old notion that the author of *Stjórn III* was, or could be, Brandr Jónsson, abbot of the Austin house of Þykkvabær from 1247, who was consecrated bishop of Hólar in 1263 and died in the following year (Hofmann 1973:14–17, 38).

Konungs skuggsjá cannot be dated with complete certainty but there is a broad consensus in favour of assigning it to c. 1250–60 (see Bagge 1974:195 with references). Brandr Jónsson's last visit to Norway was in 1262–63, on the occasion of his consecration as bishop. We know of no voyages he may have made in the 1250s, but there is no mention of him in Icelandic accounts

³² Holm-Olsen discusses and partly accepts Hofmann's conclusions in the introduction of his facsimile edition of AM 243 a fol, the most important of the Icelandic copies of *Konungs skuggsjá*, see Holm-Olsen 1987:12–17.

of the years 1255–1257 and 1258–1261 (Hofmann 1973:16), and it is conceivable, though entirely conjectural, that he spent some of that time in Norway. The reason for attributing *Stjórn III* to Brandr in the first place is a statement at the end of *Gyðinga saga* in 226 (Guðmundur Þorláksson 1881:101; Wolf 1995: 219), which says that he had translated that book from Latin into Norse, „ok svá Alexandro magno, eptir boði virðuligs herra, herra Magnúsar kónigs, sonar Hákonar kónigs gamla“ (and also Alexander the Great, at the command of the worthy lord, the Lord King Magnús, son of King Hákon the Old). Guðbrandur Vigfússon argued in favour of the view, by then almost traditional, that Brandr had also translated *Stjórn* (1863:131–151; cf. Wolf 1995:lxxxiii–lxxxvii), but it was strongly opposed by Storm (1886b:246–251) and most scholars have rejected it since. Seip (1957:17) countenanced it as a possibility, however, and Hofmann and Kirby have subsequently returned to it. In 1961 Einar Ól. Sveinsson showed that in its examples of alliteration of *h*- with *hl*-, *hn*-, *hr*- *Stjórn III* bore the marks of Icelandic authorship, a fact which has been found to lend some support to the attribution to Brandr Jónsson (1961:17–32). It will of course never be possible to demonstrate that he was the only Icelander who might be considered a candidate for the title of translator of *Stjórn*, though no other name has so far been put forward. There were probably a good many Icelandic literati in the thirteenth century, but there are very few we can identify.

The chief conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that in all probability, and without prejudice to the question of priority, *Stjórn III* and *Konungs skuggsjá* are contemporary in origin. The links between the two works and various pointers in *Stjórn III* to Norwegian historical events show that the translation must have been undertaken in Norway, even though an Icelander may have been engaged on it. It would be natural enough for it then to be written up by Norwegian scribes, and even if translated by an Icelander, the first clean copy could well have been in a Norwegian hand. These circumstances would explain those features of the language of 228, the oldest of the Icelandic manuscripts, which some scholars have been prepared to classify as Norwegian.³³

With suitable reservation on various points that remain obscure, we may summarise the general development of Norse-Icelandic translation of the historical books of the Bible in the following way:

³³ See Hofmann 1973:21–23, though most of his examples are of dubious worth and prove very little.

A translation with very little or no commentary was made in the first half of the thirteenth century. We have a remnant of it in Stjórn II.

That translation was revised and augmented with further explanatory matter probably in the 1250s. This version is represented by Stjórn III and the Genesis fragments in AM 238 fol XIX and AM 764 4to.

In the last years of the reign of King Hákon V Magnússon a new version was begun with comment introduced on a much larger scale than hitherto. It was never completed. We know it as Stjórn I. We may infer that the author made use of an older translation of the kind found in Stjórn III, but we do not have the direct evidence to prove that he did so.³⁴

Translated by Peter Foote

Editorial note

This article by the late Jakob Benediktsson was originally composed as part of a bilingual introduction to a facsimile edition of the manuscript AM 227 fol which was meant to have been published in 1990 in the Arnarnagnaean Series *Íslensk miðaldahandrit (Manuscripta Islandica Medii Aevi)*. Unfortunately this edition did not appear. A section of the introduction dealing with the manuscript's illuminations and art was to have been written by Selma Jónsdóttir but her death in 1987 meant that the plan could not be realised. The editors of *Gripla* thought this introduction deserved to be published on its own and it appears above in a slightly abridged form; some recent references have been added.

³⁴ For assistance and support which have eased my task in many ways I owe warm thanks to Jónas Kristjánsson and members of his staff at the Arnarnagnaean Institute in Iceland. I am most particularly indebted to Stefán Karlsson and Ólafur Halldórsson. Stefán read a draft of my introduction and made many suggestions for improvement; and both he and Ólafur have been indefatigable in solving many of the problems I put to them and in discussing a good many others whose solution still lies in the dim and distant future.

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Í fyrsta kafla greinarinnar er fjallað rækilega um varðveislu handritsins AM 227 fol, því lýst og sagt frá kveraskiptingu og helstu einkennum. Ferill handritsins uns það komst í hendur Árna Magnússonar er rakinn og gerð er grein fyrir þeim rithöndum (A og B) sem það hafa skrifað, lýst er helstu skriftareinkennum og sagt frá hugsanlegum ritunarstað/ritstofu og þeim handritum sem líklega eru rituð af sömu mönnum. Höfundur telur líklegt að handritið hafi verið skrifað og lýst í einni og sömu ritstofu og telur sennilegast að hún hafi verið á Þingeyrum í Húnaþingi. Tveir síðustu kaflar greinarinnar snúast um biblufýðingar þær sem kallaðar hafa verið Stjórn og raktar eru kenningar fræðimanna um samband og aldur nokkurra þeirra handrita sem hafa að geyma ritningartexta. Loks er svo fjallað um samsetningu Stjórnar, uppruna þýðingarinnar, kenningar um þýðanda, hvernig þýtt er og á hvern hátt textinn er í sumum handritanna aukinn með lærdum útskýringum sem oftast er fenginn úr þekktum lærdómsritum miðalda eins og t.d. *Historia scholastica* eftir Petrus Comestor (d. 1179) eða *Speculum historiale* eftir Vincent frá Beauvais (d.1264).