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THE HAND OF REVISION: ABBOT ARNGRÍMR'S REDACTION OF GUÐMUNDAR SAGA BISKUPS¹

BY THE fourteenth century, Icelanders felt comfortable with imported literary works that stylistically and thematically ran counter to the sparse, dramatic prose of native tradition. Concomitantly, the leisurely, often anticlimactic, tone and exuberant phrasing prevalent in learned works of foreign origin came to influence indigenous saga writing. The manneristic, or florid, style of such sagas² influenced Abbot Arngrímr Brandsson (d. 1361),³ as he reworked the vita of Bishop Guðmundr (1161–1237) according to a new literary canon and interpretive mode. He thus ranks among those hagiographers intent on mod-

¹ Guðmundar saga Arasonar eftir Arngrím ábóta Brandsson, in *Byskupa sögur, Hólabyskupar* ed. Guðni Jónsson (Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1953), III, 147–475. The date of composition is between 1343 and Arngrímr's death in 1361. The text follows the edition by Guðbrandr Vigfússon of Holm. 5, fol. in *Byskupa sögur* (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmentafélag, 1878), II, believed to represent an interpolated redaction. See Stefán Karlsson, "Um handrit að Guðmundar sögu bróður Arngríms," *Opuscula*, I (1960), 179–89. The authoritative edition, not yet published, is to include the incomplete text of AM 219, fol. (14. century), the lacunae to be filled from AM 397, 4to (ca. 1700), a manuscript based on AM 219 (in its complete state). For the relationship of extant sagas on Guðmundr and manuscript tradition, see Jørgen Højgaard Jørgensen, *Bispesagaer – Laurentius saga. Studier i Laurentius saga byskups, indledt af overvejelser omkring biskupa sögur som litterær genre* (Odense, 1977), 21–24; Stefán Karlsson, ed., "Inngangur," *Guðmundar sögur biskups I: Ævi Guðmundar biskups, Guðmundar saga A*. Editiones Arnarnagnæanæ Series B, vol. 6 (Kaupmannahöfn: C.A. Reitzel, 1983); Ole Widding, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, L.K. Shook, C.S.B., "The Lives of the Saints in Old Norse Prose. A Handlist," *Medieval Studies* 25 (1963), 312–13.

² Hans Bekker-Nielsen, "Legender–Helgensagaer," *Norrøn Fortællekunst. Kapitler af den norsk-islandske middelalderlitteraturs historie*. By Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Thorkil Damsgaard Olsen, Ole Widding (København: Akademisk Forlag, 1965), p. 120.

³ According to "Annalbrudstykke fra Skálholt (N)" and "Gottskalks Annaler (P)," *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578*, ed. Gustav Storm, (Christiania: Det norske historiske Kildeskriftfond, 1888, repr. 1977), pp. 226, 359, Arngrímr died in 1361 or 1362.

ernising existant texts⁴ rather than among compilers who followed the wording and narration found in previous redactions.

The earliest version of Guðmundr's episcopacy (1202–37) forms part of an integral, if dispersed, part of a prominent Icelandic historical work, Sturla Þórðarson's *Íslendinga saga*.⁵ Dated ca. 1270–80, *Íslendinga saga* is the most noted exponent of historical tradition in the late thirteenth century. As such, *Íslendinga saga* is sober and largely objective, with the subject matter restricted, at least overtly, to *res gestae*. In composing his distinguished opus, *Guðmundar saga biskups*, 'The Life of Bishop Guðmundr,' Arngrímr also respected, to degree historical fact. He placed the narration of events (1185–1237), into a pronounced religious framework that encouraged florid phrasing, the use of typology and analogies drawn from learned, theological works. His presentation was teleological and, as such, reflected a supra-historical viewpoint.⁶

In essence, his historical discourse is akin to that found in *Thómas saga erkibyskups*, 'Saga of Thomas of Becket,' which Arngrímr may have also authored.⁷ More importantly, the archbishop (d. 1170) offered a model that illuminated the sanctity of his protagonist and placed Guðmundr's fate in a universal context.⁸ By drawing upon the

⁴ Robert Bartlett, "Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of Wales," *Speculum* 58 (1983), particularly, pp. 598–99.

⁵ Eds. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, Kristján Eldjárn, in *Sturlunga saga* (Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946), I, 229–534.

⁶ Jean Leclercq, "L'Écriture sainte dans l'hagiographie monastique du haut moyen âge," *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 10 (1963), 122.

⁷ The standard edition is Eiríkr Magnússon, *Thómas saga erkibyskups. A Life of Archbishop Thomas Becket, in Icelandic, with English Translation, Notes and Glossary* (London: Longman & Co., 1875), I. For a discussion of the principal Norwegian and Icelandic manuscripts, see P.G. Foote, "On the Fragmentary Text Concerning St Thomas Becket in Stock. Perg. Fol. Nr. 2," *Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 15 (1961), 403–50. For Arngrímr's authorship, see Magnússon, *Thómas saga erkibyskups*, (1883), II, pp. lx–lxix; Stefán Karlsson, "Icelandic Lives of Thomas à Becket: Questions of Authorship," *Proceedings of the First International Saga Conference, University of Edinburgh* 1971, ed. Peter Foote, Hermann Pálsson, Desmond Slay (London: The Viking Society for Northern Research, 1973), pp. 227–33, 238, 242, including an account of Arngrímr's life.

⁸ See Baudouin de Gaiffier, "Hagiographie et historiographie. Quelques aspects du problème," rpt. in *Recueil d'hagiographie* (Bruxelles, 1977), p. 160, and Beryl Smalley, "Thomas Becket," *The Becket Conflict and the Schools. A Study of Intellectuals in Poli-*

life of an established saint, in this case, one who championed the liberty of the church, Arngrímr followed an established hagiographic pattern. Simultaneously, he reassessed the protracted, fierce battle, still in vivid memory, between church and state. He unabashedly glorified Guðmundr, bishop of Hólar, the diocese in the north, for attacking unremittingly those chieftains who zealously defended their jurisdictional competency and prerogatives against canonical claims.

Still, Arngrímr was bound, to some extent, by strictures imposed by the authoritative text of *Íslendinga saga* that also treated Guðmundr's struggle to uphold ecclesiastical liberty. Arngrímr implicitly, grudgingly and anticlimactically acknowledged this debt toward the end of the saga. In the chapter that follows the report of Guðmundr's death and burial, he noted: "*Hefir þessi sami Sturla skrifat marga merkiliga hluti af herra Guðmundi byskupi*," 'this same Sturla has written many notable matters about Sir Guðmundr, the bishop' (ch. 76, p. 424). This faint and belated praise suggests that Arngrímr felt constrained by, rather than appreciative of, Sturla's authoritative voice.

Arngrímr's mission as advocate was, however, more pressing than strict adherence to historical fact. His task was to compile an official record of his hero's martyrdom in office and saintliness that would convincingly support Guðmundr's candidacy for canonization.⁹ To this

tics (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), pp. 116–17, on the custom of selecting a model to confer greatness on a saintly protagonist. The argumentation either does not include or only touches upon the following references to Thomas: chs. 1, 4, 27, 29, 36, 53, 71, pp. 147, 148, 155, 156, 159–60, 245, 251, 272, 334, 417.

⁹ On Guðmundr's life and influence, see Régis Boyer, "L'Évêque Gudmundr Arason, Témoin de son temps," *Études Germaniques*, 22 (1967), 427–44; Jón Jóhannesson, "Guðmundur biskup Arason," *Íslendinga saga I. Þjóðveldisöld* (Almenna bókafélagið, 1956), pp. 236–53; Magnús Jónsson, "Guðmundur biskup góði," *Samtíð og saga: nokkrir háskólafrirlestrar*, 1 (1941), 115–34; W.P. Ker, "Gudmund Arason," *Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 5 (1907), particularly pp. 86–93; Björn Sigfússon, "Guðmundar saga biskups Arasonar," *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* (København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1960), V, 542–543, abbreviated hereafter as *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*; Magnús Stefánsson, "Kirkjuvald eflist," *Saga Íslands* (Reykjavík: Sögufélagið, 1975), II, pp. 119–36. E.O.G. Turville-Petre and E.S. Olszewska, trans., *Guðmundar saga biskups góða; The Life of Gudmund the Good, Bishop of Holar* [*Resensbók*] (Coventry, 1942), pp. ix–xxvii. For collections made for his canonization, see *Diplomatarium Islandicum. Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn*, (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenzka bókmentafélag, 1896), III, 205–07 (dated February 2, 1365). For a bibliographic account of

effect, Arngímr dwells on Guðmundr's championship of papal, universalist interests. A comparison of selected passages on Guðmundr's principal adversaries, the chieftains Kolbeinn Tumason (d. 1208)¹⁰ and Sighvatr Sturluson (d. 1238),¹¹ with the respective accounts in Sturla Þórðarson's history will demonstrate this advocacy.¹² The matter on Kolbeinn deals with 1. a typological rebuke that brands Kolbeinn as *Henricus novus*, i.e. as a second Henry II of England (1133–89); 2. Kolbeinn's death and redemption. The discussion of Sighvatr, Guðmundr's arch foe, revolves around Arngímr's puzzling preference for

repeated attempts to canonize Guðmundr, see Magnús Már Lárusson, "Guðmundr inn góði Arason," *Kulturhistorisk leksikon*, V, 538–42. On the process of canonization, see Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: University Press, 1948); Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event 1000–1215* (London: Scholar Press, 1982), pp. 184–91, for the stringent papal standards on canonization introduced by Alexander III (1159–81); Cf. Stephan Kuttner, "La Réserve papale du Droit de Canonisation," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 2. series, 17 (1938), 172–228, who shows, in a closely reasoned argument, that the papal prerogative of canonization was not promulgated by Alexander III, but was codified by his eighth successor, Gregory IX, in 1234, in a collection of decretals, "De reliquiis et veneratione sanctorum." On political consideration by the papacy, see Michael Goodich, "The politics of canonization in the thirteenth century: lay and Mendicant saints," [repr. from *Church History*, 1975], *Saints and their Cults. Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed., introd. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: University Press, 1983), 169–87 and André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers Siècles du Moyen Age d'après les Procès de Canonisation et les Documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981), p. 81, on the disdain of the curia for countries at the geographic periphery of Rome, which might explain the failure to obtain Guðmundr's canonization.

¹⁰ See in particular, Kolbeinn's role in and attitude to Guðmundr's election, chs. 20–22, pp. 212–19; litigation on behalf of Ásbjörn, the Priest, unnamed by Arngímr, ch. 28, pp. 245–48; Kolbeinn's death, chs. 33–35, pp. 259–67; also, Jón Margeirsson, "Ágreiningefni Kolbeins Tumasonar og Guðmundar Arasonar," *Skagfirðingabók*, 14 (1985), pp. 121–44; F. Paasche, "Kolbeinn Tumason," *Norsk biografisk leksikon* 7 (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug, 1929), pp. 531–32.

¹¹ Chs. 35, 47, 53, 58, 61, 65, 67, 70, 77, pp. 266–68, 300, 328, 331, 347–49, 362, 374, 390, 403, 427.

¹² The principal passages discussed in *Íslendinga saga* are in chronological sequence: Guðmundr's election in 1201, his rancorous relations with Kolbeinn after confirmation in 1203 to Kolbeinn's death, September 8, 1208 (chs. 12, 19–21, pp. 238, 243–49); Bishop Guðmundr's dealings with Sturla Sighvatsson in 1228, 1230, and 1231 (chs. 62, 79, 82, pp. 318, 342, 346); the archiepiscopal summons to Sighvatr and Sturla Sighvatsson in 1232, and Sturla's pilgrimage (chs. 88, 90, 92, pp. 360, 361, 363–64).

Sturla Sighvatsson (1199–1238), Sighvatr's most prominent, able and favorite son. Though concerned with historical truth, Arngrímr distorted the record by the use of rhetorical devices, by shifts in emphasis, by inference and by suppression of fact. His purpose was to diminish the stature of Kolbeinn and Sighvatr in order to magnify his hero's role in the ultimate triumph of the church.

Arngrímr's Description of the Conflict: Introduction

Medieval Icelanders were conversant with the life of Thomas of Becket.¹³ The similarities between Thomas of Becket's struggle against Henry II and Guðmundr's battles against a succession of chieftains were accordingly striking.¹⁴ Seizing upon the analogy between Thomas of Becket's conflict with Henry II and Guðmundr's contest with successive chieftains, Arngrímr presents the two saints as companions in suffering and as victims of persecution. Martyrdom in office accompanied their heroic defense of ecclesiastical liberties against secular aggression. In stressing Guðmundr's martyrdom in life, in the manner of a confessor saint, Arngrímr reprises a judgment made by Pope Alexander III (d. 1181) on Thomas' life. Commenting to Herbert of Bosham on the travails of Thomas prior to and during his exile, Alexander III asserted: "Your lord yet liveth in the flesh . . . ; yet while still living he can claim the privilege of martyrdom."¹⁵ Accordingly, Guðmundr's

¹³ For the earliest mention of a saga on Thomas of Becket (1258), see *Porgils saga skarða*, *Sturlunga saga*, II, ch. 75, p. 218. See also the votive offering of whale tusks by Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson (d. 1213) to Thomas of Becket in *Hrafn saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, ed. Guðrún P. Helgadóttir (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), ch. 4, p. 3. See also R.J. Glendinning, "Saints, Sinners, and the Age of the Sturlungs: Two Dreams from *Íslendinga saga*," *Scandinavian Studies*, 38 (1966), pp. 91–92.

¹⁴ The comparison of Guðmundr with Thomas of Becket occurs foremost in Arngrímr's *vita*. *Guðmundar saga A*, ed. Stefán Karlsson, ch. 60, p. 98, shares only one such reference to Thomas of Becket. For Arngrímr's comparisons, see chs. 4, 20, 27, 29, 36, 53, 71; pp. 155, 156, 159–60, 215–16, 245, 251, 272, 334, 411.

¹⁵ George Greenaway, ed. and transl., *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket, Chancellor of England and Archbishop of Canterbury based on the account of William Fitzstephen his clerk with additions from other contemporary sources*. London: The Folio Society, 1961, p. 95, cited from *Herbert of Bosham, Vita Sancti Thomae*, ed. James Craigie Robertson, in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Longman, 1885), III, pp. 334–35. See also *Thómas saga*, ch. 41, p. 274: "Thómas erkibyskup, . . . lifir enn í líkamanum, en þó krínast hann þegar með píslarvættis

martyrdom in office was sufficient in itself for a claim to sanctity. His stature required no confirmation by martyrdom in death.¹⁶

Arngrímur begins his account of Guðmundr's trial by introducing the theme of wrongful, illegal persecution in a historical and universal setting.¹⁷ The first chapters dwell on the illegal and disruptive opposition of secular princes to the rightful leaders of the Church. First, Arngrímur expounds Frederick Barbarossa's (1123?-1190) responsibility for the papal schism during the pontificate of Alexander III.¹⁸ Then he relates Henry II's intrigues against Thomas of Becket. This historical background, the persecution of legitimate church leaders by secular rulers, elucidates and exonerates the turbulence during Guðmundr's episcopacy. His fearless defense of the liberties and property of the church necessarily led to conflict.¹⁹ The causes of his persecution and of his suffering are hence not bound to a unique political context on a remote and largely unknown island. His tribulations are solely the outgrowth of a wearying conflict periodically faced by the church and its representatives.²⁰

The imperial machinations of Frederick Barbarossa, as described by

fegurð í andanum, "Archbishop Thomas still lives in the flesh, but spiritually, he will be crowned instantly with the glory of a martyr."

¹⁶ See Vauchez, p. 152, on the standard hagiographic device, a vision, to confirm this: A woman, whose soul was led through hell and paradise, was told by the Norse saints, Óláfr, Magnús, and Hallvarðr that Guðmundr's stature was as eminent as that of the [martyred] Thomas of Becket (ch. 4, pp. 156-60). See also *Guðmundar saga A*, chs. 58-60, pp. 92-99. Nevertheless, Arngrímur stresses Guðmundr's sufferings by explicating his threefold martyrdom following the battle of Grímsey in 1222 (ch. 58, p. 347).

¹⁷ Cf. Magnússon, II, pp. lxiv-lxv, who considers this introduction "irrelevant" borrowing.

¹⁸ Ch. 1, pp. 147-48. The image of Frederick Barbarossa as the persecutor of the church is perhaps ultimately derived from *Boso's Life of Alexander III*, intro. Peter Munz, trans. G.M. Ellis (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), pp. 50-51.

¹⁹ Implicit in this description is also a reference to the intellectual battle among canonists of the twelfth century, who were concerned with defining and justifying the papal and imperial, or secular, spheres of political competency. See Friedrich Kempf, "Zur politischen Lehre der früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Kirche," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Kanonistische Abteilung, 47 (1961), 309-10.

²⁰ Ideologically, the struggle appears to be based on the principles proclaimed by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), as recorded in the register. See John Gilchrist, "Gregory VII and the Juristic Sources of His Ideology," *Studia Gratiana* 12 (1967), 4ff and footnote 5, for manuscripts of Gregory's register.

Arngrímr, were at a remove from Icelandic experience. The world of Henry II and of Thomas of Becket was closer, in that the stature, character, association, and political situation of king and archbishop could be related to events in Iceland during the first few decades of the thirteenth century. In order to present this similarity in a suprahistorical, religious dimension, Arngrímr uses a favorite device, typological comparison. Guðmundr was deemed the *novus* Thomas of Becket and Guðmundr's chief enemies, Kolbeinn and Sighvatr, are each thought of, the first explicitly, the second implicitly, as a *novus Henricus*. First, Arngrímr likens the character of Guðmundr's first enemy, Kolbeinn, to that of Henry II. Then he presents a variant that features Kolbeinn as one of Henry's loyal justices, in effect as an embodiment of Henry's will as law (chs. 20, 28, pp. 215–16, 245). The purpose of the variant is to highlight Kolbeinn's lawsuits as a means of secular opposition to canonical law. By extension, the *Henricus novus* theme is carried further, to define the character of Kolbeinn's chieftaincy and, subsequently, to vilify Sighvatr as Guðmundr's hellish foe.

Kolbeinn Tumason

Kolbeinn, a kinsman of Guðmundr and the leading chieftain of the diocese,²¹ was among those who had furthered Guðmundr's candidacy to the see of Hólar (1201).²² Soon after Guðmundr's election and confirmation (1202–1203), relations began to sour, as Guðmundr zealously sought to enforce the liberties of the church. He prosecuted violation of canon law in cases which, according to customary law, were legal.²³

²¹ On Kolbeinn and his kinsmen, see Magnús Jónsson, "Ásbirningar," *Skagfirzk fræði* 1 (1939), 7–184.

²² See Turville-Petre, p. xxii; Arnold Angenendt, "Religiosität und Theologie. Ein spannungsreiches Verhältnis im Mittelalter," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 20–21 (1978–79), 46, discusses the practice of powerful families to attract to and settle on their estates ascetics. This was done in order to secure the gifts of grace these men of God might confer. While this sentiment is not expressed during the election proceedings, it is implicit in a discussion on Kolbeinn's salvation (ch. 30, pp. 253–54).

²³ See Alphonse van Hove, "Droit Justinien et droit canonique depuis le décret de Gratien (1140) jusqu'aux Décrétales de Grégoire IX (1234)," *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen universitatis catholicae in oppido Lovaniensi iam annos XXXV professoris* (Brussel: Éditions Universitaires, 1947), p. 258, for a citation of Gratien's canon 6, Distinction X, an early reference to the precedence of canon law over secular law.

The principle that canon law was to be applied in cases of conflict was not yet accepted,²⁴ particularly not by Kolbeinn, his allies and friends. The wrangling about the precedence of canon law caused much of the bitterness between Guðmundr and chieftains. They correctly viewed the prospect of introducing canon law as superior to customary law as a diminution of their power.

Kolbeinn as the 'novus Henricus'

The analogy is based upon historical facts, Henry II's sponsorship of Thomas of Becket's candidacy as archbishop of Canterbury and upon the wrath he directed toward Thomas during his term in office. Equally important, however, is the disguised secular ambition that had prompted Henry's choice of Thomas, his hope to control, via Thomas, ecclesiastical affairs of the realm. Henry sought, in effect, the dominance of secular law over canon law. Accordingly, Arngrímur introduces the *Henricus novus* theme during the deliberations on Guðmundr's election to the northern see of Skálholt. Kolbeinn backed Guðmundr, his kinsman, against the candidate from the south. Kolbeinn's advocacy was, however, also specious. His attitude was one of deliberate craftiness. From the start, he intended to humiliate Guðmundr and to use him as a tool. This duplicity is, as Arngrímur states, at the heart of the typological theme. What matters is not the difference in status between king and chieftain, but the similarity between their self-serving advocacy and subsequent persecution of the man they had catapulted to high office.

That Arngrímur also intended the *Henricus novus* theme to be an implicit *leitmotif*, is evident in his version and traditional interpretation of an act that, on the surface, merely indicated Kolbeinn's disdain for the episcopal office and its office holder.²⁵ On the evening of the election, at the banquet hosted by Kolbeinn, the tablecloth was ragged. Indeed,

²⁴ A revised version of ecclesiastical law was accepted in principle at the Althing in 1275 under the auspices of the bishop of Skálholt, Árni Þorláksson (1269–98) for his diocese. In Hólar, canon law supplanted the indigenous ecclesiastical code only in 1354. See Jarl Gallén, "Kyrkorätt," *Kulturhistorisk leksikon* 10 (1965), col. 2; Magnús Már Lárusson, "Jurisdiktion – Island," *Kulturhistorisk leksikon* 8 (1963), cols. 42–43; Björn Þorsteinsson, *Íslensk miðaldasaga* (Reykjavík: Sögufélagið, 1978), pp. 204–06.

²⁵ See also *Guðmundar saga A*, ch. 102, p. 130; *Prestssaga Guðmundar góða*, in *Sturlunga saga*, I, ch. 26, p. 153.

Kolbeinn felt compelled to apologize for the use of a cloth unworthy of the dignity of Guðmundr's office. Guðmundr, however, pointedly referred to the appropriateness of the cloth, as its tears and holes augured the tattered state into which his episcopacy would be plunged. The figurative explanation of what appeared to be fortuitous negligence is thus revealed to be a sign of malice and indicative of his host's future aggression.

In ascribing self-serving and cynical motives to Kolbeinn, Arngrímr reported what was considered to be historical fact. Sturla Þórðarson also mentioned in his brief commentary on the election the widely held belief that Kolbeinn expected the candidate to be a tool in his goal to extend his power over the clergy. The reasoning was that, during Guðmundr's service as priest to Kolbeinn, Guðmundr had shown himself to be a popular and moderate man (ch. 12, p. 238). Still, there is a major difference in presentation. Sturla unequivocally assigns to Kolbeinn the leading role in the election.²⁶ Arngrímr does not. The election proceedings are conducted, according to Arngrímr, in a canonical spirit, as they are dominated by two prominent members of the clergy, the abbot of Þingeyrar and the abbot of Pverá. The deciding factor was, other than the desire to elect a candidate from the north, Guðmundr's spiritual superiority. Seemingly, Kolbeinn has a minor or, rather, an ancillary role, for Guðmundr is elected by all of the people of the Hólar diocese. Nevertheless, Kolbeinn's importance, while suppressed during the narration of events, surfaces twice: once, in the religious dictum that *ofliliga sækir eitt mót góðr vili guðs ok illr vili manns*, 'God's good will and man's evil will often coincide' (ch. 20, p. 213), and, secondly in the vindication of customary Icelandic election procedures. This justification is presented in an exposé of historical precedent during the Carolingian era: As witnessed by Gregory VI on his death bed, Pope Hadrian had sanctioned Charlemagne's right to confirm the bishop elect in Italy itself. In Arngrímr's day, the question

²⁶ On episcopal elections, see Magnús Már Lárusson, "Biskupskjör á Íslandi," *Andvari* 81 (1956), 92-95. See also Klaus Ganzer, "Zur Beschränkung der Bischofswahl auf die Domkapitel in Theorie und Praxis des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung*, 57, 58, (1971, 1972), 22-82, 166-97. See also Jesse L. Byock, "Bishops and Priests," *Medieval Iceland. Society, Sagas, and Power* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), pp. 154-64, for social relations and political status of the church.

of secular influence on episcopal elections was moot. Nonetheless, Pope Gregory VI's pronouncement that a non-canonical election procedure had, at various times, its own merit, served to gloss over the historical fact that at Guðmundr's election canonical procedures had not been observed (ch. 21, pp. 216–18).

The variant to the *Henricus novus* theme occurs in a test case of clerical immunity in 1205. Kolbeinn had cited Ásbjörn, a priest, in a carelessly prepared property suit. The priest sought out Guðmundr and placed himself and his goods under the protection of the bishop. Thereupon Kolbeinn sought to outlaw the priest and to confirm the outlawry at the general assembly.

Arngrímur does not dispute that laymen were entitled to press suit under the law of the land. Nevertheless, during his introductory commentary, by way of counterargument, Arngrímur compares Kolbeinn's actions to those of a justiciary of Henry II. Henry II had used his justices to enforce in local courts the law of the land against encroachments by magnates, including those of the church. Kolbeinn's insistence on the competence of secular jurisdiction and his singleminded determination to prosecute the priest to the full extent of the law provided the underpinning for the comparison. Thus, problems of overlapping judicial competence, similar to those that had plagued Henry's reign, confronted once again Icelandic society.²⁷ Conflict centered on the canonical principles that 1. the church had cognizance in property suits relating to clerics. 2. the *privilegium fori* protected clerics from secular prosecution.²⁸

The comparison, however, may be taken further. During Henry's reign, many clerics felt that ecclesiastical jurisdiction was superior to secular law.²⁹ In Iceland, Guðmundr made himself the spokesman of this view and attempted to enforce the precedence of canon law by the massive use of excommunication. By wielding the weapon of excommunication in his battle, he seemingly emulated Thomas' strategy in

²⁷ Conflict between the church and the laity surfaced first in 1178–79 when Bishop Þorlákr of the southern diocese of Skálholt attempted, unsuccessfully, to abolish patronage churches. See Björn Þorsteinsson, pp. 139–43.

²⁸ For the issues prevailing in England, see Charles Duggan, "The Becket Dispute and the Criminous Clerics," *Canon Law in Medieval England. The Becket Dispute and Decretal Collections*, reprt. IX (Variorum Reprints: London, 1982), 53–72.

²⁹ Greenaway, pp. 15–18.

his contest against Henry.³⁰ To Thomas' murderers, as to Guðmundr's foes, excommunication was a central issue. Even the ideological basis of Thomas' position, his linkage of the Lord's dictum, "I am the truth," to its political exegesis, "the Lord did not say I am *consuetudo*, 'custom,'³¹ is implicit in Guðmundr's defiance of customary law.

Throughout the lengthy litigation, Arngrímr focuses on the righteousness of Guðmundr's cause, which put Guðmundr and his see at risk. Guðmundr proclaimed the illegality of Kolbeinn's suit on the basis of the church's right to property owned by clerics and placed under episcopal protection. Kolbeinn, in turn, attempted to thwart recognition of canonical juristic principles with a series of legal and armed countermoves. At the judicial assembly, Guðmundr appeared with staff and stole, the symbols of jurisdiction and of his office,³² to forbid the sentencing of the priest. When the priest was, nevertheless, outlawed, Guðmundr, assuming legatine power, pronounced minor excommunication on Kolbeinn and his allies on behalf of the church and of the pope. Truculent, Kolbeinn rode to the see with an armed force, to threaten outlawry to any who might help the priest. Guðmundr then forewarned Kolbeinn that he faced major excommunication, unless he submitted himself to the jurisdiction of the church. Eventually, the case was settled, if unsatisfactorily, for Kolbeinn paid only half the fines imposed upon him on the althing. Still, Guðmundr had won a precedent. Reflecting upon this incident, Arngrímr rightly excoriates Kolbeinn for having violated the liberty of the church and the canon on the immunity of clerks by the use of armed force.

³⁰ See *Thómas saga*, chs. 71, 78, pp. 406, 530, for an explication of the causes for excommunication and for the repeated reference by Thomas' murderers to excommunication.

³¹ This interpretation had a long tradition. It was first used in 256 by Libosus of Vaga during the Third Carthaginian Synod in the fight against heresy. For a discussion and bibliographical reference, see Hans Martin Klinkenberg, "Die Theorie der Veränderbarkeit des Rechts im frühen und hohen Mittelalter," *Miscellanea mediaevalia*, 6 (1969), 163.

³² See the reference to the *[S]tola iusticie* in NKS 133f. fol., dated the middle or last half of the thirteenth century, ed. Helge Fæhn, *Manuale Norvegicum (Presta handbók) ex tribus codicibus saec. XII-XIV apographis ab Oluf Kolsrud confectis usus* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1962), p. 110. Bengt Stolt, "Liturgisk dräkt: Stola," *Kulturhistorisk leksikon* 10 (1965), col. 635, points out that the stole signifies symbolically Christ (*Math.* 11:29). Cf. Ludwig Eisenhofer, *Handbuch der Katholischen Liturgik*, 2nd. ed. (Freiburg:

Surprisingly, Arngrímr followed, if expansively, Sturla's account.³³ Sturla's stark narrative implicitly champions Guðmundr's cause. Without comment, Sturla recounts that 1. Guðmundr appeared at the assembly with staff and stole; 2. Guðmundr prohibited secular judgment in the case, under threat of excommunication; 3. Kolbeinn ultimately yielded to the bishop the right of self-judgment, thereby signifying his *a priori* acceptance of the penance and fines that Guðmundr might impose. One detail, however, indicates that Guðmundr may have had, from a moral viewpoint and according to secular law, the better cause. By reporting that some people considered Kolbeinn's claim on the property illegal, Sturla implies that this was a specious act of litigation inspired by greed.

Sturla, in this case, appears to side with Guðmundr. The recital of continued intransigence and overbearance, of misunderstandings and outrages committed by both parties, records the impotence of men of good will to effect a lasting settlement. Guðmundr disregarded the sanctions imposed upon outlaws, as he sought to expand or, rather, defend his right to jurisdiction in cases involving 'criminous clerks' and property placed under the protection of the church. Kolbeinn continued to combat Guðmundr's arrogation of jurisdictional power, thereby abrogating agreements reached and violating canon law. From Arngrímr's viewpoint, Kolbeinn's actions would incite divine intervention. Indeed, Kolbeinn's violent defense of his secular rights, his march on and attack of the episcopal see (1208), would lead, among signs of divine wrath and mercy, to his defeat, death and redemption.³⁴

Kolbeinn's Redemption: The Case of the Gratuitous Skaldic Stanza

In medieval thought, sanctity manifested itself in charity. This virtue was mandatory also for as vengeful and intractable a saint as Guðmundr proved to be. Arngrímr expends much thought on Guðmundr's charitable acts and on his pronounced sense of justice that under-

Herder & Co, 1933) II, 453-57, who describes the stole solely as insignia of each of the three degrees of ordination.

³³ See Margeirsson, pp. 137-39, for arguments that both contestants might have used the case.

³⁴ On the defeat and death of Kolbeinn on account of his unjust cause, see *Hrafn*s

girded his charity.³⁵ Sturla Þórðarson relates few examples of Guðmundr's charity, other than of almsgiving, despite an account that is sympathetic, poignant, if at times critical of his father's close friend. One such striking occasion arose in 1208, at Kolbeinn Tumason's death. At Kolbeinn's request, Guðmundr allowed him to receive the last rites. Thus Kolbeinn died reconciled with Guðmundr and with the church. For all the trials suffered, Guðmundr's compassion for his dying kinsman and attacker, was all the more effulgent.

The magnanimity Guðmundr evinced can be gauged only by an examination of the scene leading to Kolbeinn's death. Once again, Kolbeinn had marched on the see, this time on a holy day, the second feast day of Mary, to whom Hólar was consecrated. Despite the sanctity of the day, Kolbeinn proved obdurate toward pleas of mercy, suggestions for settling differences and toward a request to allow the bishop to depart with his men. The *superbia* that informed the intent and subsequently the execution of the attack was made manifest in a heavenly sign. On the eve of the battle at Víðiness, as all bells were ringing, Kolbeinn and his men failed to hear the call to the faithful. Still, *Íslendinga saga* omits a detail, significant to Arngrímur, that at this moment Kolbeinn extemporaneously composed a poem to Mary (ch. 33, p. 261).

In the *vita*, the poem has a dual function. It testifies to Kolbeinn's supplication for redemption and represents a posthumous testimonial to the recidivism he was subject to. The poem was, in part, the spiritual basis for Guðmundr's extension of mercy to his dying adversary.³⁶ Using a literary device analogous to the poem, Guðmundr directs a prayer to Jesus and Mary on Kolbeinn's behalf. Guðmundr interceded for Kolbeinn, the religious poet ("*Dróttinn minn ok sankta María,*

saga Sveinbjarnarsonar, B-redaktionen, ed. Annette Hasle, Editiones Arnarnagnæanae, Series B. Nr. 25 (København: Munksgaard, 1967), p. 37.

³⁵ See Wilhelm Heizmann, "Arngríms Guðmundar saga, Maríu saga and Gregors Moralia in Iob," *Opuscula* 8 (1985), 189-91, who discusses a passage in which Guðmundr's compassion for and chastisement of sinners is likened to an episode in the life of Saint Dunstan of Canterbury (ch. 27, pp. 242-45).

³⁶ See Hennig Brinkmann, "Voraussetzungen und Struktur religiöser Lyrik im Mittelalter," *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 3 (1966), 39, who, in discussing religious poetry, in particular hymns, considers religious poems as answers to God's address. Man can only respond to God, not address Him.

hjálpstu skáldi þínu, “My Lord and Saint Mary, save your skald”³⁷ by entreating Jesus and the Mother of Mercy to illuminate Kolbeinn and to guide him to the right path. Of significance is that, prior to the absolution, Kolbeinn had regained his consciousness (he had been struck down by a stone), a sign that he recovered from the spiritual blindness that had governed his acts.

That Guðmundr’s intercessory prayer was for Kolbeinn’s redemption is palpable in the drawn-out death scene. With Guðmundr’s promptings, Kolbeinn repented his sins against the bishop, pledged to accept the judgment of the church and vowed to abandon his way of life.³⁸ The poem was the first probe of Kolbeinn’s spiritual state. The second was Kolbeinn’s deep remorse. Less directly, but forcefully, Arngrímr also suggests that even the *prima causa* of Kolbeinn’s remorse was Guðmundr’s spiritual state. Referring to a widely held opinion, Arngrímr asserts that the stone, which hit Kolbeinn, was none other than the bishop’s innocence that was cast in an act of divine retribution (ch. 35. p. 264). The evidence for this conviction was the fact that no one confessed to or was seen to have hurled the stone. Unstated but implicit is the scriptural dictum that “the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made” (*Rom. 1, 20*).³⁹

There is no intercession in *Íslendinga saga*, since none was needed. Kolbeinn never lost consciousness and swore to settle his differences with Guðmundr. Two questions arise. Did Sturla know this poem and did he attribute its composition to Kolbeinn’s final attack on Hólar? If,

³⁷ Ch. 34, pp. 263–64; See also B. Poschmann, *Pénitence et onction des malades*, *Histoire des dogmes* IV,3 (Paris: 1966), p. 139.

³⁸ Arngrímr’s description confirms with practice. Extreme unction was administered only after confession. See Rouet de Journel, “La liturgie des sacrements en particulier, chapitre IV. – La pénitence; la discipline depuis le XIII^e siècle,” in *Liturgia, Encyclopedie populaire des connaissances liturgiques*, ed. l’Abbé R. Aigrain (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1947), ch. 5, p. 728.

³⁹ The same thought is expressed in “Sermo de sancta Maria,” *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok* Cod. AM 619 4^o, ed. Gustav Indrebø (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1931), p. 132, lines 1–4. Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments. The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University Press, 1977), pp. 219–20, cites an analogue in William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, ed. Richard Howlett, Rolls Series 82 (London, 1884–1885), pp. 329–30, that refers to the sudden death of Frederick Barbarossa as “atonement for his past sins.” See also *Guðmundar saga Arasonar*, ch. 7, p. 169, accord-

indeed, Kolbeinn composed the poem, Sturla presumably knew it. Still, it is unlikely that he would have attributed the poem's birth to Kolbeinn's last attack on the see.⁴⁰ Sturla's account of the incident bespeaks Kolbeinn's *superbia*, his dogged persistence in forcing Guðmundr's army to battle. In this context, the poem with its protestation of religious humility, even of servility, would appear incongruous and sacrilegious. To Sturla, Kolbeinn's true state of mind and, concomitantly, divine censure were manifest to all, as he failed to hear the cathedral bells summoning the faithful.⁴¹ Guðmundr's permission that Kolbeinn be granted the last rites was thus a true act of mercy, independent of any other acts either by Guðmundr or by Kolbeinn.

Kolbeinn died in peace with the church. Arngrímr exploits this fact by inflating Sturla's terse wording and by supplying a gratuitous poem. The bloated scene illustrates Guðmundr's saintliness in two ways. Guðmundr had led a notorious sinner to repentance, a requirement verbalized by Honorius III in the case of William of York (canonized 1227).⁴² More importantly, Guðmundr's conduct was consonant with the saint's established image as a spiritual leader full of mercy and justice.⁴³ This image had been carefully prepared. That mercy had to be merited was a principle articulated in a prefatory chapter (ch. 7, p. 169). Men with hearts of stone could be turned to God only if they evinced contrition and turned from a life of sin. Analogously, Guðmundr had pronounced a *sentencia*, *Anima justi*, as he landed in Iceland after his consecration as bishop (ch. 25, pp. 238). The *sentencia*,

ing to which God often granted Gudmundr the ability to turn petrified hearts to remorse.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the poem and for a more likely occasion for its composition (1206), see Hermann Pálsson, "Skáldið á Víðimýri," *Tólfta öldin. Ættir um menn og málefni* (Reykjavík: Jón Helgason, 1970), 11–20. See also Bjarni Einarsson, "Kolbeinn Tumason og hómiliubókin," *Maukastella færð Jónasi Kristjánssyni fimmtugum* (Reykjavík, [1974]), 10–11.

⁴¹ For the twofold signification of the ringing of the bells, see "Sermo ad populum," *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok*, p. 71. It signifies, on the one hand, Christ exhorting the faithful to attend church to glorify Him and to secure salvation and, on the other hand, the trumpet blast calling for repentance.

⁴² August Potthast, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, nr. 7551, p. 650. cited by Michael Goodich, p. 182.

⁴³ See Ward, pp. 185–86, for the requirements for canonization: proven virtues, merits and authenticated miracles.

unfortunately abbreviated, may have been by Solomon. If so, Guðmundr announced in effect that he would exercise justice in the conviction that the source of wisdom was justice.⁴⁴ Kolbeinn's death scene thus portrays Guðmundr as a merciful and just spiritual shepherd who retrieved an errant lamb at the edge of the precipice. Kolbeinn was redeemed because Guðmundr was justified in interceding for him. The saint had recognized, in the poem, Kolbeinn's readiness for conversion and had elicited Kolbeinn's expression of remorse. The historic fact of Kolbeinn's reconciliation with the church had become ancillary to the staging of a higher truth: a spectacular display of Guðmundr's sovereign exercise of pastoral duties.⁴⁵

Sighvatr as Guðmundr's Foe

Sighvatr's prominence, longevity, and seemingly continuous struggle against Guðmundr account for Arngrím's portrayal of Sighvatr as the archenemy. In *Íslendinga saga*, Sighvatr is not the most relentless among Guðmundr's adversaries. There is only one episode in which he treated Guðmundr harshly. In a 1222 raid, to exact blood revenge on Guðmundr's armed retainers for the slaying of his son Tumi, Sighvatr ordered Guðmundr to be brought by force on board his ship. While

⁴⁴ See Hans Walther, *Proverbia, Sententiaeque Latinitatis mediæ ac recentioris ævi, Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in alphabetischer Anordnung*. New Series, II, 7, ed. Paul Gerhardt Schmidt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), p. xvi: *Anima justi sedes est sapientie* [Florence, BN Magl. Cl, 1, 7F, 13 f 5v]. Leclercq, p. 109, comments on the false attribution of this saying to the Bible. The saying is, in reality, a maxim of the patristic tradition. See also Ian J. Kirby, *Biblical Quotation in Old Icelandic-Norwegian Religious Literature*, (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1980), II, p. 80, on the loose quotations of Biblical passages in Arngrím's work. Therefore, Arngrím might have referred to *Sap. 3.1, iustorum autem animae in manu Dei sunt*, in *Novae Concordantiae Bibliorum Sacrorum Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, Critice Editam*, ed. Bonifatius Fischer OSB (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1977), I, col. 331.

⁴⁵ Thus Arngrím's *vita* is also structured, at least in part, by the device of gradational opposition proper to the Latin *vita*. See Charles F. Altman, "Two Types of Opposition and the Structure of Latin Saints' Lives," *Medievalia et Humanistica. Studies in Medieval & Renaissance Culture*, N.S. 6 (1975), 1-11. See Gerhild Scholz Williams, "Der Tod als Text und Zeichen in der mittelalterlichen Literatur," *Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke (Leuven University Press, 1983), p. 135, on the interpretative function of death scenes.

still in Sighvatr's custody, prior to his expulsion to Norway, Guðmundr suffered physical abuse (chs. 44, 45, p. 293). These were serious transgressions, as evidenced by the strong wording of Canon 15 of the Second Lateran Council in 1139.⁴⁶ Still Sighvatr's treatment of Guðmundr was mild⁴⁷ compared to the manhandling Guðmundr had previously endured in 1218 and 1219, as a prisoner of Sighvatr's ally, Arnórr Tumason (ca. 1184–1221). Arngrímr, however, resorts to a variety of literary means to vilify Sighvatr. One of these is Arngrímr's surprisingly benign assessment of Sighvatr's son, Sturla. Arngrímr forwards the baffling notion that Sturla Sighvatsson was a more ethical man than Sighvatr (ch. 67, p. 390). According to *Íslendinga saga*, there is no basis for this judgment. With the exception of his battles against Bishop Guðmundr, Sighvatr showed unusual restraint in using force and violence in the furtherance or defense of his interests. His son evinced none of this reluctance. Sturla was ruthless in his pursuit of power, particularly after his return in 1235 from a mandated penitential pilgrimage to Rome (1232)⁴⁸ and from secret negotiations with the Norwegian king, Hákon Hákonarson (1217–1262). Arngrímr's bias rests on flimsy or subjective grounds, on a specious foreshortening of recurrent events⁴⁹ and on a rigid, canonical interpretation of Sturla's pilgrimage to Rome.

⁴⁶ *Item placuit, ut si quis suadente diabolo hujus sacrilegii reatum incurrit, quod in clericum vel monachum violentas manus injecerit, anathematis vinculo subjaceat . . .*, ed. Charles-Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les Documents originaux*, trans., annotated Dom. H. Leclercq, 2nd. ed. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912), V, Pt. 1, pp. 729–30.

⁴⁷ Cf. Arngrímr's allegations that Guðmundr's skeleton bears witness to the savage treatment he suffered and that books record the breaking of three ribs (chs. 58, 77, pp. 348, 427) might be dated to his imprisonment in 1218 and 1219.

⁴⁸ Marlene Ciklamini, "Sturla Sighvatsson's Chieftaincy. A Moral Probe," *Sturlustefna. Ráðstefna haldin á sjö alda ártíð Sturlu Þórðarsonar sagnaritara 1984*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988), pp. 234–35. See also D.U. Berlière, "Les Pèlerinages judiciaires au Moyen Age," *Revue Bénédictine*, 7 (1890), 522–23; Cyrille Vogel, "Le Pèlerinage pénitentiel," *Pellegrinaggi e culto dei santi in Europa fino alla Ia crociata 8–11 ottobre 1961* (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1963), 39–92.

⁴⁹ For the practice of subordinating historical truth to hagiographic truth, see Klaus Schreiner, "Zum Wahrheitsverständnis im Heiligen- und Reliquienwesen des Mittelalters," *Saeculum, Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte*, 17 (1966), 143. Still, Arngrímr's omission of historical fact might also be due to his choice of the second of the two rhetor-

What, then, was the foundation for Arngrímur's judgment? On a superficial level, the appraisal might rest on a matter Abbot Arngrímur deemed significant: Sturla's conciliation with Bishop Guðmundr in 1228, a few years before Sturla departed for Norway to answer a summons from the Archbishop of Trondheim (ch. 67, p. 388). In *Íslendinga saga*, there are two additional meetings between Sturla and Guðmundr, one in 1230 and one in 1231 (chs. 62, 79, 82, pp. 318, 341, 346). Arngrímur foreshortens this historical record. He relates only the first meeting and substitutes for one of the two others a gift of provisions from Sturla for Guðmundr's retinue of the poor (ch. 67, pp. 389-90). This falsification leads smoothly to his exegesis of Sturla's pilgrimage and, accordingly, to the assumption that Sturla was in fact an obedient and worthy son of the church.

Since Arngrímur neglects to mention the meetings in 1230 and in 1231, the description of the accord in 1228 in both *Íslendinga saga* and in the *vita* assumes significance. Both agree essentially on the outlines leading to a reconciliation. They report that 1. Sighvatr Sturluson had warned Guðmundr against and had effectively prevented him from returning to his see; 2. Bishop Guðmundr and his retinue had spent the winter as guests of Þórðr Sturluson; 3. Synchronously, Þórðr was the aggrieved party in a family feud and entered into a settlement; 4. Intermediaries linked the bishop's freedom of movement to the reconciliation; 5. Sturla Sighvatsson and the bishop subsequently ratified this agreement. The accounts differ, however, in explicitness when it comes to detailing the circumstances of the accord. They also differ in identifying Þórðr Sturluson's adversary in the lawsuit to be settled. In *Íslendinga saga*, this is clearly Sturla Sighvatsson, for he had mounted an attack on Þórðr in a pique about losing control over the family *goð-orð*. Arngrímur substitutes Sighvatr as the main foe and elaborates upon this notion. According to Arngrímur, Þórðr is as distressed about Guð-

ical principles which governed the representation of reality, as quoted by Schreiner, p. 140, ft. 42, from Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (München: Max Hueber, 1960), p. 558: "Eine Realität der Umwelt . . . kann in zwei Ganzheitsgraden abgebildet werden: entweder in exakter, jedes Detail nachbildender genauer Vollständigkeit ganz entsprechend der Realität selbst . . . oder in raffend-akzentuierender Ganzheit. . . in der das Detail nicht so sehr der Realität verpflichtet ist, als vielmehr eine Funktion der Ganzheit ist."

mundr's banishment from the see as he is about the sufferings inflicted upon himself by Sighvatr. For these reasons, Þórðr demands, as a precondition to a reconciliation with Sighvatr, that Guðmundr be allowed to return to his see. In *Íslendinga saga*, there is none of this. Without explication, the stipulation about Guðmundr's return is linked to an arbitration agreement. The wording thus allows the inference that Þórðr and his party proposed and that Sturla, with the consent of Sighvatr, agreed to allow Guðmundr to proceed to his see (ch. 62, p. 318).

Thus Arngrímr fudges the record by substituting Sighvatr as Þórðr's main adversary in the suit. He also embellishes the long-range results of the accord. He alleges that, from this time on, Sturla was steadfast in his friendship with Guðmundr (ch. 67, pp. 388–90). Nothing was further from the truth. In the two subsequent meetings recorded by *Íslendinga saga*, Guðmundr was again denied access to his see. In the second meeting in 1230, there was the risk of conflict. Solely an agreement, concluded again through the good offices of Þórðr Sturluson, precluded a clash of arms. Also this compact allowed Guðmundr to pass through Sturla's domain to his see and included specific allowances for provisions on the journey. This was an agreement between chieftains on the bishop's behalf. Not a single word attests to Guðmundr's participation. The third occasion demonstrated Guðmundr's impotence in the face of force. Sturla Sighvatsson, his brother Kolbeinn, and his cousin Órækja Snorrason, drove off the army of paupers accompanying Guðmundr, but allowed him to return to his see (*Íslendinga saga*, chs. 79, 82, pp. 342, 346). A year later, in 1232, when Archbishop Sigurðr (1231–52) summoned both Sturla and Sighvatr to account for their hostility toward Guðmundr, there was still no sign that Sturla had effected more than a momentary conciliation with Guðmundr (ch. 88, p. 360).

The decision to send Sturla not only in his own cause, but also as representative of his father, was, Arngrímr implied, uncanonical. An impersonal verb in *Íslendinga saga* allows Sturla Þórðarson to avoid moral comment on the decision: *En þat réðst af, at Sturla skyldi fara fyrir þá báða ok leysa mál þeira beggja . . .* 'and this was decided that Sturla should represent them both and receive absolution for both' (ch. 88, p. 360). Abbot Arngrímr changed this wording. He blamed Sighvatr squarely: *staðfestir Sighvatr ráð, at Sturla, son hans, skal fara*

ok svara fyrir þá báða ok taka lausn fyrir beggia hönd, Sighvatr decided that Sturla, his son, should go, be accountable for, and receive absolution for both of them (ch. 70, p. 402).

Subsequent phrasing suggests that Sighvatr flouted the ecclesiastical principle that man should be accountable for his own sins only.⁵⁰ Sturla's mission on behalf of his father was *ipso facto* in vain. *Íslendinga saga* restricts the description of Sturla's penance in Rome to his multiple and public humiliation, to his heroic bearing, to the pity of the onlookers, and to the achievement of his goal, absolution for himself and for Sighvatr Sturluson (ch. 92, p. 364).⁵¹ Arngrímr, conversely, reports the partial failure of Sturla's mission while stressing his steadfastness. Sturla stood unflinching. He endured the physical pain of the multiple floggings and the silent response of the church to his valiant, but unrewarded attempt to shoulder penance for his father. Still, Arngrímr speaks only of the silence of the church, not of a rejection of the petition. For his purpose, this inference of rejection is pivotal. He explicates the silence of the church by a reference not to the canon in question, but to its substance: *sýndist ómöguligt, at sá, sem aldrei beiddist lausnar og eigi fann sekt í sjálfum sér, mætti leysast í annarligri persónu*, 'it seemed impossible that he, who never asked for absolution and who never atoned for his transgression, should be absolved via a representative' (ch. 70, p. 403). Did, then, Abbot Arngrímr gainsay his authority, Sturla Þórðarson? Not directly. There was apparently no document to prove Sighvatr's absolution. The church was silent. But by an inference, Sturla Þórðarson's unequivocal statement on Sighvatr's absolution stands corrected: "*sýndist ómöguligt*" 'it seemed impossible that . . . !' Despite the good offices of his son, Sighvatr would stand unredeemed, an infidel in the embrace of the devil.⁵²

⁵⁰ Cf. R.P.M.J. Rouet de Journel, S.J., p. 727. See also Stephan Kuttner, *Kanonistische Schuldlehre von Gratian bis auf die Dekretalen Gregors IX. Systematisch auf Grund der handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt*, Studi e Testi Nr. 64 (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1935), pp. 69–70, for dispensation from penitential pilgrimages to Rome, as mandated by canon 15, Second Lateran Council (promulgated by Alexander III).

⁵¹ "Annales regii," in *Íslandske Annaler*, pp. 129, 130, to the years 1231–35, 1235–1240, report that, following the reconciliation of both father and son with Bishop Guðmundr, Sturla returned from Rome with absolution for his father. The author is believed to have been an acquaintance of Sturla Þórðarson.

⁵² Erik Vandvik, "Gåter i Kongespegelen," in *Studier over Konungs Skuggsia*, ed. Mattias Tveitane (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), pp. 64–65, discusses an analogue

Conclusion

According to hagiographic conventions, Arngrímr was not bound to rules governing historical truth. That he felt, nevertheless, an obligation to follow the outlines of *Íslendinga saga*, was due to the respect and to the authority the chronicle enjoyed.⁵³ In part the succinct, if at times summary, style of *Íslendinga saga* also lent itself to embellishment. Thus details and elaborations could be supplied in the interest of a higher truth. In part, of course, he subscribed to hagiographic practice in condensing a series of events. Compared to the theological substance or import of the events,⁵⁴ the temporal and geographic frame was inconsequential. He further imposed the contemporary viewpoint on Guðmundr's divisive struggle for recognition of the church's liberty. This conflict had been glorius rather than grievous. The posthumous success of Guðmundr's mission was an effulgent sign of his sainthood, as was his character. Guðmundr had a modern cast of mind. He was indeed vengeful, but also just and merciful.⁵⁵ Thus events in the *vita* are not considered secular happenings, but are imbued with and interpreted according to prevailing ecclesiastical thinking.⁵⁶

in which an opponent of King Sverrir (1152–1202), an archbishop, is likened, contrary to contemporary iconography, to Lucifer. See also Abbot Odo of Ourscamp's missive to Thomas of Becket, in which Henry II is stigmatized as "your Satan," quoted by Smalley, "The Martyr," p. 192. Arngrímr indirectly calls Sighvatr a heretic, a term synonymous with the devil's offspring in ch. 67, p. 390.

⁵³ See also Jørgen Højgaard Jørgensen, "Hagiography and the Icelandic Bishop Sagas," *Peritia, Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, I (1982), 16, on comparable use of political, ecclesiastical modes of thought in the B-redaction of the *vita* on Saint Þorlákr of Skálholt (1178–93). This version was written probably after 1222 and is preserved in AM 382 4to, ca. 1325. For manuscripts and dating, see P.G. Foote, "Bischofs-saga," *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), III, 41. Possibly, Arngrímr knew of attempts by critics and writers of hagiography to formulate standards for differentiating between historical fact and fiction, as discussed by Klaus Schreiner, "Discrimen veri ac falsi. Ansätze und Formen der Kritik in der Heiligen- und Reliquienverehrung des Mittelalters," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 48 (1966), 1–53.

⁵⁴ See Schreiner, p. 137.

⁵⁵ See Ward, for the evolution of the saint's image from vengeful to merciful.

⁵⁶ See Friedrich Lotter, "Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse aus hagiographischen Quellen," *Historische Zeitschrift* 229 (1979), 314, 356, for the re-

Clearly, Arngrímur's elaborations and compressions were kept within the historical framework provided by *Íslendinga saga*. Contradictions arose because of emphasis, a shift from historical truth to theological truth. This necessitated a change in narrative mode. *Íslendinga saga* conveys meaning implicitly, by the use of copious detail. The *vita* relies on explication, elaboration, and compression to inform secular life with theological significance. Concomitantly, Arngrímur creates an image of a saint that conformed to contemporary requirements for canonization.⁵⁷ Historiography was both used and modified to explicate divine truth.

ÁGRIP

Pegar Arngrímur Brandsson ábóti samdi sögu sína af Guðmundi biskupi Arasyni um miðja 14. öld var hann að semja helgirit og var tilgangur þess að styrkja að því að Guðmundur yrði tekinn í tölu heilagra. Túlkar greinarhöfundur svo að helsta fyrirmynd Guðmundar sögu Arngríms hafi verið saga Tómasar erkibiskups af Kantaraborg (d. 1170) og Guðmundur góði Arason komi fram sem nýr Tómas og aðalandstæðingar hans, Kolbeinn Tumason og Sighvatur Sturluson, samsvari Henriki II Englandskonungi, erkióvini Tómasar.

Eins og Henrik II réð Kolbeinn biskupskjöri og hugðust báðir stjórna mál-efnum kirkjunnar með tilstyrk skjólstæðinga sinna. Sundurþykki varð brátt milli Kolbeins og Guðmundar biskups og í Víðinesbardaga (1208) særðist Kolbeinn en náði prestsfundi og dó sáttur við kirkjuna.

Annar meginandstæðingur Guðmundar biskups var Sighvatur Sturluson og fegrar Arngrímur ekki samskipti hans við Guðmund biskup. Í greininni er það talið gagnstætt kirkjulögum að Sturla tók lausn fyrir sig og Sighvat, föður sinn.

Þótt Arngrímur væri að semja helgisögu áleit hann sig bundinn af sagnfræði Íslendinga sögu Sturlu Þórðarsonar.

Í ritgerðinni eru margar tilvísanir í rit um Guðmund Arason og þróun mál-efna kirkjunnar á þessum tímum.

flection in hagiography of changing intellectual and spiritual perceptions; also Michel Sot, *Gesta episcoporum. Gesta Abbatum. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*, fasc. 37 (Brepols: Turnhout-Belgium, 1981), pp. 55, 56.

⁵⁷ See also Fritz Paul, "Historiographische und hagiographische Tendenzen in isländischen Bischofsviten des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts," *Skandinavistik*, 9 (1979), 43.