

BEN ALLPORT

UNEARTHING ST EDMUND

*A Source for Edmund's Martyrdom in Íslendingabók**

AT SOME POINT between 1122 and 1133, the Icelandic scholar Ari *fróði* Þorgilsson penned the oldest known vernacular history of the Icelandic people.¹ *Íslendingabók* represents the birth of Icelandic historiographical tradition, but it did not emerge from a vacuum. It was instead the product of genres, styles, and information which circulated within and outside Iceland before being skilfully synthesized into a single document by the remarkably well-informed Ari *fróði*.² This note suggests a candidate for one of Ari's more elusive sources of information: the so-called "saga" of the martyred King Edmund of East Anglia.

Ari borrows from this source in *Íslendingabók*'s first chapter to date the settlement of Iceland:

Ísland byggðisk fyrst ýr Norvegi á dögum Haralds ens hárfagra, Hálfðanarsonar ens svarta, í þann tíð — at ætlun ok tölur þeira Teits fóstura míns, þess manns es ek kunna spakastan, sonar Ísleifs byskups, ok Þorkels fǫðurbróður míns Gellissonar, es langt munði fram, ok Þórirðar Snorradóttur goða, es bæði vas margspök ok óljúgrfóð, — es Ívarr Ragnarssonr loðbrókar lét drepa Eadmund enn helga Englakonung; en þat vas sjau tegum <vetra> ens níunda hundraðs eptir burð Krists, at því es ritit es í sögu hans.³

* This research was completed with the generous financial support of the Leverhulme Trust. My thanks to Prof. Lesley Abrams, Dr Synnøve Midtbø Myking, Dr Jon Hui, Dr Tom Grant, and my anonymous reviewers for their thoughts and suggestions, and to Jon Wright and Zuzana Stankovitsova for their help with my "ágrip."

1 *Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders; Kristni Saga: The Story of the Conversion*, trans. Siân Grønlie (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006), xiii. The claim that Ari was Iceland's first vernacular historian was made by Snorri Sturluson a century later and has yet to be contradicted; see *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 3 vols., Íslenzk fornrit XXVI–XXVIII (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1941–51), I:5.

2 Hermann Pálsson, "Játmundar saga hins helga," *Skírnir* 132 (1957): 139–51.

3 *Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit I (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968), 4.

Iceland was first settled from Norway in the days of Haraldr Fairhair, son of Hálfðan the Black, at that time — according to the estimate and count of Teitr, son of Bishop Ísleifr, my foster father, the man I know to be wisest; and of Þorkell Gellisson, my paternal uncle, who remembered a long way back; and of Þóríðr, daughter of Snorri *goði*, who was both very wise and well-informed — when Ívarr, son of Ragnarr *loðbrók*, had St Edmund, king of the English, killed; and that was 870 winters after the birth of Christ, according to what is written in his saga.

The martyrdom is referred to on three further occasions throughout the text: the foundation of the Alþing, the conversion to Christianity, and the conclusion.⁴

Ari's imprecise reference to a "saga" of St Edmund has intrigued modern researchers, who have proposed sources ranging from Icelandic oral traditions to Latin *vitae* circulated in tenth- to twelfth-century English manuscripts. It is here suggested that Ari's information came from a witness to one such English manuscript tradition, attested from c. 1100, that combined two texts: Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and Hermannus the Archdeacon's *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*. It is argued that this witness circulated in Iceland during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries and informed subsequent references to the saint's legend.

*

The identification of a possible source is hindered by the parsimony with which Ari drew upon it. The piece of information least ambiguously indebted to the source was the date of 870 for the martyrdom; Ari states directly that Edmund's "saga" provided this date. The passage also names the man responsible for Edmund's death as Ívarr and informs us that he was the son of Ragnarr *loðbrók*. Ari's turn of phrase does not necessitate that either of these pieces of information came from the saga, but it is likely that at least the first of them did.

This gives little data with which to narrow down our search for a feasible source. Furthermore, the surviving record of potential sources is imbalanced; all known texts that refer to St Edmund in the period between

4 Ibid., 9, 18, and 25.

his martyrdom and the composition of *Íslendingabók* were produced in England, predominantly in Latin. The earliest attestation is found in the common stock of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was compiled late in the reign of Alfred the Great, within decades of the martyrdom taking place.⁵ The entry for 870 (actually November 869) observes simply that King Edmund was killed following a battle with a Danish army that had overwintered at Thetford.⁶ Edmund's killers go unnamed, although the F recension of the *Chronicle* identifies them as the Viking leaders "Ingware," an anglicization of ON *Ívarr*, and "Ubba" (ON *Ubbi*). This recension was produced in Canterbury in around 1100, at which point these two names (rendered into Latin as *Hinguar* and *Hubba*) were widely connected with the act.⁷

Conversely, no Old Icelandic narrative of the saint's martyrdom or miracles has survived, although sporadic references to both are found in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelandic traditions. Nevertheless, medieval Icelanders did apparently foster some independent traditions about Edmund, with several families (including Ari's) claiming descent from Vilborg "Ósvaldsdóttur konungs ok Úlfrúnar hinnar óbornu, dóttur Játmundar Englakonungs" (daughter of King Ósvldr and Úlfrún the unborn, daughter of Játmundr, king of the English) in the catalogue of settlers' accounts known as *Landnámabók*.⁸ Lesley Abrams points out that the name Ósvldr (OE *Ospeald*, MdnE *Oswald*) matches that of Edmund's purported successor, a possible puppet of the invaders known only from surviving coinage. She proposes that the survival of Edmund's descendants in Iceland could have preserved details of his martyrdom there.⁹ This apparent reference to the obscure Oswald is intriguing but could also be misleading. Játmundr's presence in the genealogy cannot be traced earlier than the *Sturlubók* recension of *Landnámabók* from c. 1275–80. In addition, neither Ósvldr or Játmundr are referred to as kings before the *Hauksbók*

5 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, trans. Michael Swanton (London: Phoenix, 2000), xxi.

6 *Ibid.*, 70–71.

7 *Ibid.*, xxvii–xxviii and 70, n. 2.

8 *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók*, 49.

9 Lesley Abrams, "Scandinavian Place-Names and Settlement-History: Flegg, Norfolk, and East Anglia in the Viking Age," *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress, Tórshavn, 19–30 July 2001*, eds. Andras Mortensen and Símun V. Arge (Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, 2005), 312–13, n. 4.

recension of 1306–08.¹⁰ Consequently, we cannot know if this genealogical tradition was genuine, was inspired by *Íslendingabók*'s association of Edmund with Iceland's settlement, or some mixture of the two (such as an unrelated Oswald and/or Edmund being conflated with their royal namesakes by creative descendants).

*

These uncertainties prohibit an unassailable identification of Ari's source; however, analysis of the wording and context of the citation allows us to reduce the range of possibilities. In particular, we must interrogate Ari's use of OIcel *saga* to refer to his source. On this point, Alison Finlay suggests that the term "means nothing more specific than 'something said or told' and could apply to any kind of narrative in any language."¹¹ This is a logical extrapolation from the term's wide-ranging and often ambiguous connotations in medieval literature.

For example, the use of the term does not distinguish between written and oral traditions.¹² In Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* from the early thirteenth century, we find references to information both "sögð" (told) and "ritat" (written) in sagas of Úlfr Jarl and Knútr *inn gamli* respectively.¹³ The late-thirteenth-century *Morkinskinna* refers to a "saga" of Haraldr *harðráði* comprising "kvæði ... þau er honum samtíða vǫru um hann kveðin" (poems ... which were recited about him during his lifetime).¹⁴

As the following discussion shows, most researchers who have commented on this issue have supposed that Ari referred to a written tradition. This is supported by the context in which OIcel *saga* appears in *Íslendingabók*: paired with OIcel *ríta* (to write) and juxtaposed with Ari's diligently named oral sources in the text's opening passage.¹⁵ This passage

10 *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók*, lxxv, lxxxii, 48–49 (inc. n. 4), and 312.

11 Alison Finlay, "Chronology, Genealogy and Conversion: The Afterlife of St Edmund in the North," *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. Anthony Bale (York: York Medieval Press, 2009) 47.

12 Robert Kellogg, "What is a Saga?" *Sagnaþing helgað Jónasi Kristjánssyni sjötugum 10. apríl 1994* 2, eds. Gisli Sigurðsson, Guðrún Kvaran, and Sigurgeir Steingrímsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1994), 497.

13 *Heimskringla*, II:284 and III:37.

14 *Morkinskinna*, eds. Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 2 vols., *Íslensk fornrit XXIII–XXIV* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2011), I:5.

15 See quotation above.

establishes Ari's credentials as a historian, highlighting his use of both written and oral authorities. Furthermore, the absolute Incarnation date of 870, the one piece of data concretely attached to the "saga," seems unlikely to have come from vernacular oral tradition, which, as demonstrated by the *Íslendingasögur*, *konungasögur*, and *Íslendingabók* itself, typically dated things through references to coinciding events or relative chronologies such as the reigning Norwegian king or serving lawspeaker.¹⁶ The appearance of an Incarnation date argues for an origin in a learned, ecclesiastical milieu.

The language of the source has proven more controversial. In the 1950s, Hermann Pálsson argued that Ari would not have used Old Icelandic *saga* to refer to a Latin ecclesiastical text such as Abbo's *Passio* or Hermannus's *Miraculis* and must thus have been referring to a hypothetical Old Icelandic "Játmundar saga hins helga" (saga of St Edmund). Hermann believed that this Icelandic saga was used as a source for *Heimskringla* and *Knýtlinga saga* in the thirteenth century and for *Ragnarssona þátr* and *Heilagra manna drápa* in the fourteenth.¹⁷ However, as this is the only time Ari names a probable written source – although we know he drew upon others – there is no empirical basis to assume that he would not use Old Icelandic *saga* in this way.¹⁸ Hermann's assertion that "ósennilegt er, að nokkrum myndi detta í hug að kalla *Passio* sögu" (it is unlikely that anyone would think of calling a *Passio* a "saga") is contradicted by subsequent examples throughout the Old Icelandic corpus.¹⁹ One passage in *Íslendinga saga*, for example, refers to the recitation of "sögur heilagra manna á latínu" (saints' "sagas" in Latin).²⁰

The possibility of an English provenance for the material is encouraged by Ari's use of English/Anglo-Latin orthography to render the saint's name as "Eadmund," rather than Old Icelandic Játmundur, as it appears in *Landnámabók* and most later texts. This provenance was even accepted by Hermann, who suggested that the hypothetical "Játmundar saga" was based on English traditions, mentioning both Abbo's *Passio* and Hermannus's

16 *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók*, 5, 9, 19, and 20.

17 Hermann Pálsson, "Játmundar saga," 143–44.

18 *Book of the Icelanders*, xvii–xx.

19 Hermann Pálsson "Játmundar saga," 143–44.

20 *Íslendinga saga*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, *Sturlunga saga* 2 (Akureyri: Prentverk Odds Björnssonar h.f., 1965), 288.

Miraculis as examples. He proposed that “Játmundar saga” was composed by Ari himself in the early twelfth century, informed by Icelanders (such as Guðlaugr Snorrason *góða*) who had spent time in England.²¹

Hermann’s argument presents a solution for his own, unsupported assertion that Ari would not use Oícel *saga* of an Anglo-Latin text by proposing an uncorroborated stage of transmission that allowed Ari to cite himself while ultimately drawing upon an English source. Nevertheless, the suggestion of an intermediary between the original English source and *Íslendingabók* is valuable. Although there is no decisive evidence that Ari ever left Iceland, many of his contemporaries were educated overseas; he himself alludes to the education of his contemporary Sæmundr *fróði* Sigfússon in “Frakkland” (France/Franconia).²² It is conceivable that a contemporary visitor to England provided a stage of transmission between his English sources and *Íslendingabók*, whether in the form of an Old Icelandic text or an oral report.

Yet the dependent Old Icelandic texts Hermann listed seem to acknowledge the direct influence of an English tradition. The episode which refers to St Edmund in *Heimskringla*, in which the revenant of “Eaðmundr inn helgi” strikes down Sveinn *tjúguskegg*, cites “søgn enskra manna” (stories from English men) as a source.²³ *Heilagra manna drápa* also credits “enskir saungvar” (English poems), and both *Heilagra manna drápa* and *Ragnarssona þáttr* include the name Yngvarr/Ingvarr in their accounts of Edmund.²⁴ This name derives from Anglo-Latin Hinguar. In *Ragnarssona þáttr*, Yngvarr is paired with a brother, Hústó, a misreading of Anglo-Latin Hubba, Hinguar’s fellow Viking.²⁵ The simplest conclusion is that these sources were drawing directly on a (probably) Latin tradition of recognizably English provenance that circulated in Iceland in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Intermediate stages between this tradition and

21 Hermann Pálsson, “Játmundar saga,” 144–46 and 149.

22 *Book of the Icelanders*, xix–xx and 21.

23 *Heimskringla*, II:14.

24 *Heilagra manna drápa*, ed. Kristen Wolf, *Poetry on Christian Subjects*, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross, *Skaldic Poems of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 7* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 878; *Þáttr af Ragnars sonum*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda 1* (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1950), 298.

25 Hermann Pálsson, “Játmundar saga,” 144; Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, *Vikings in the West: The Legend of Ragnarr Loðbrók and His Sons*, *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia 18* (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2012), 163.

Íslendingabók, such as an Old Icelandic saga which preserved English or Anglo-Latin forms and acknowledged its English sources, should not be disregarded but must remain hypothetical. We must therefore turn to the corpus of Anglo-Latin accounts to seek the ultimate source of Ari's information.

*

The earliest reference to Edmund's martyrdom, the sparse notice in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, is unlikely to be Ari's source, as the phrase "sögu hans" (his saga) implies a narrative devoted specifically to Edmund. By the same token, we can dismiss a derived passage in Asser's ninth-century *Vita Ælfredi* — a biography of King Alfred of Wessex could hardly be described as a saga of Edmund!²⁶

The oldest viable source for Ari's information is therefore the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, penned by the French scholar Abbo of Fleury between 985 and 988 at the East Anglian monastery of Ramsey.²⁷ This elaborate Latin narrative was widely circulated from the late eleventh century and was an antecedent for all subsequent traditions.²⁸ It was the first narrative to link the martyrdom to a Viking leader named Hinguar, but it provides no date for the murderous act. Despite this, the *Passio* was regarded as the most likely source by Konrad Maurer, Einar Ól. Sveinsson — who supposed that Ari's copy simply had the date included — and more recently by Paul Cavill and Alison Finlay.²⁹

Not long after its completion, an Old English summary of the *Passio* was written by Ælfric of Eynsham. Ælfric added little to the tradition but

26 *Asser's Life of Alfred, together with the Annals of Saint Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, ed. William Henry Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 26. Kellogg ("What is a Saga?," 501) discusses the use of "saga" as a literary device to designate stories told within other stories, but Ari's usage (particularly paired with Old Icelandic *rita*) does not fit this narrative context.

27 Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 51.

28 *The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, eds. David Dumville and Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition 17* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), lix.

29 See Svend Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagana* 26 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), 64–65; Paul Cavill, "Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives — and Deaths," *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text*, eds. Roger Kojecký and Andrew Tate (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2013), 91; Finlay, "Chronology," 47.

did note that the events took place in King Alfred's twenty-first year.³⁰ This on its own could not have allowed Ari to reconstruct the date of 870, were he using Ælfric's text.³¹ Alfred's accession is recorded in Icelandic annals (under the wrong year), but neither his age at that point nor his date of birth is specified, so there is no evidence that this information was known in Iceland.³²

In the late 1090s, Hermannus the Archdeacon, a monk based at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds in East Anglia, compiled *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, a list of St Edmund's miracles. The text provides the year of Edmund's martyrdom but does not name his killer. Hermann Pálsson regarded the *Miraculis* as a likely source for his hypothetical "Játmundar saga."³³ Although Svend Ellehøj rejected Hermann's saga hypothesis, he agreed that the *Miraculis* were probably known to Ari.³⁴

A reference to the martyrdom is also found in John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronici*, which was compiled in stages in the early twelfth century. Despite the text's annalistic format, its entry for the martyrdom of St Edmund is strikingly similar to Ari's own turn of phrase: "Eodem anno sanctissimus ac gloriosissimus Orientalium Anglorum rex Eadmundus, ut in sua legitur Passione, ab Inguaro rege paganissimo... martirizatus est" (in the same year the holiest and most glorious Edmund, king of the East Angles, was martyred by Inguar, a most heathen king, as can be read in his passion).³⁵ It is conceivable that Ari or an informant merely copied this reference and did not have access to the passion itself. However, R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk suggest that the main body of the *Chronicon* was compiled between 1128 and 1131.³⁶ *Íslendingabók's* accepted dating to

30 Finlay, "Chronology," 47.

31 At least one of Ælfric's texts, *De falsis diis*, exists in an Old Norse translation, although the date and circumstances of the translation are unclear. John Frankis, *From Old English to Old Norse: A Study of Old English Texts Translated into Old Norse with an Edition of the English and Norse Versions of Ælfric's De falsis diis* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2016), 31–45.

32 *Íslandske Annaler indtil 1578. Udgivne for det norske historiske Kildeskriftfond*, ed. Gustav Storm (Christiania: Grøndahl & Sons Bogtrykkeri, 1888), 13 and *passim*.

33 Hermann Pálsson, "Játmundar saga," 146.

34 Ellehøj, *Studier*, 65.

35 *The Chronicle of John of Worcester. Volume II: The Annals from 450 to 1066*, eds. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk and trans. Jennifer Bray and P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), xix and 286.

36 *John of Worcester*, xxxiv.

1122–33 thus grants only a very narrow window for the information in the *Chronicon* to have been transmitted to Ari.

Another product of the flourishing literary milieu at Bury St Edmunds is the misleadingly named *Annals of St Neots*. This Latin chronicle borrowed lengthy passages regarding Edmund's martyrdom from Abbo's *Passio* under its entry for 870, thus providing both the year and the attribution of the act to Hinguar.³⁷ In contrast to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, this bloated entry is almost entirely taken up with St Edmund's martyrdom and could plausibly be regarded as the saint's "saga." Furthermore, a subsequent entry identifies Hinguar's father as "Lodebrochus."³⁸ It is the earliest surviving text to suggest that Hinguar and Hubba were brothers, the earliest English text to mention Ragnarr *loðbrók*, and the only contemporary text to contain all the features present in *Íslendingabók*. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe suggests tentatively that this could have been Ari's source based on this compelling alignment of features.³⁹

Unfortunately, the timeframes assigned to the *Annals* and *Íslendingabók* make this identification nearly next to impossible. David Dumville dates the composition of the *Annals* to c. 1120–40 but subsequently notes that the compilers drew in part upon John of Worcester's *Chronicon*. This presumably took place during or after the time when the autograph manuscript of the *Chronicon* (Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 157) was copied into Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 297 at Bury St Edmunds.⁴⁰ Darlington and McGurk's analysis dates this to between 1133 and 1143.⁴¹ Assuming these timeframes are correct, the time required for the information to make its way from England to Iceland effectively disqualifies the *Annals* as Ari's source.

*

As no single text is an obvious candidate, we must consider the possibility that Ari was using some combination of other texts, the most likely being Abbo's *Passio* and Hermannus's *Miraculis*, with Ívarr's connection

37 *The Annals of St Neots*, 56–65.

38 *Ibid.*, 78.

39 Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 185.

40 *Annals of St Neots*, xvi–xix and lx–lxi; Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 82.

41 *John of Worcester*, liii.

to Ragnarr *loðbrók* being derived from elsewhere. On their own, neither tradition can have provided Ari with the necessary information: Abbo is silent on the date, and Hermannus does not name Edmund's killer. Thus far, only Siân Grønlie has suggested that Ari used "some kind of composite version," without further elaboration.⁴²

The most compelling argument for this composite version is the likelihood that, as Tom License points out, Hermannus deliberately penned his list of miracles as an update to the miracles listed in Abbo's *Passio* and intended for the two texts to be read in conjunction.⁴³ Indeed, the *Passio* and the *Miraculis* are bound together in the earliest known manuscript of the latter text (one of the earliest witnesses to the former).⁴⁴ This manuscript, London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii, was composed at Bury St Edmunds around the year 1100, so close to the composition date of Hermannus's text that only copying errors suggest it is not an autograph.⁴⁵ It is feasible that an early copy of this manuscript or of its exemplar made its way to Iceland in the early twelfth century. A link between Bury St Edmunds and Iceland is not inconceivable. In the twelfth century the abbey energetically promoted the cult, which had spread at least as far as Norway by the 1150s.⁴⁶

Hermannus's *Miraculis* were almost certainly known in Iceland in the following century. As mentioned previously, an episode in *Heimskringla* recounts that Sveinn *tjúguskegg* was killed by Edmund's revenant "sem inn helgi Merkúriús drap Júlíanúm níðing" (as St Mercurius killed Julian the Apostate).⁴⁷ This story first appears in the *Miraculis*, which notes that Edmund "æquiparatur Mercurio martyri ulciscenti injuriarum blasfemias apostatæ Juliani" (becomes equal to Mercurius the Martyr avenging Julian

42 *Book of the Icelanders*, 16, n. 12.

43 *Miracles of St Edmund: Herman the Archdeacon and Goscelin of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. Tom License (Oxford: University Press, 2014), lv.

44 *Annals of St Neots*, lix.

45 *Ibid.*, xci; Helmet Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 296.

46 Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 380; Tore Nyberg, *Monasticism in North-Western Europe, 800–1200* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 144.

47 *Heimskringla*, II:14.

the Apostate's blasphemies of injustice).⁴⁸ Although Edmund's act of divine justice is found in other English texts (notably John of Worcester's *Chronicon*), the comparison with St Mercurius is unique to the *Miraculis* and the Icelandic texts.⁴⁹ Conversely, the knowledge of Hinguar and Hubba found in subsequent Icelandic texts cannot have derived from the *Miraculis* but could have been sourced from a manuscript which paired Hermannus's text with Abbo's *Passio*.

*

From whence, then, did Ari derive his knowledge of Ívarr's parentage? Rowe suggests that this information may already have been associated with Norse legends of Ragnarr *loðbrók* by Ari's time. As she points out, Ari's casual reference to Ragnarr assumes that the name was familiar to his audience. Furthermore, Ari derived his own family line from a different son of Ragnarr in the genealogy attached to *Íslendingabók*; indeed Ragnarr became a major progenitor of Scandinavian royal dynasties and Icelandic noble families in the thirteenth century.⁵⁰

Ari's knowledge of vernacular traditions is indicated by his use of the Norse form Ívarr. This is comparable to a reference to "Ywar, filius Lothpardi, quem ferunt ossibus caruisse" (Ywar, son of Lothpardus, who was said to lack bones) in the *Chronicon Roskildense*, compiled in Denmark in 1137/38.⁵¹ This is the first attestation of Ívarr's nickname, *beinlaus*, and is likely to reflect Norse tradition.⁵² Furthermore, the chronicler distinguishes between Ywar and another son, Ingvar, who was sourced from a reference to "Inguar, filius Lodparchi" in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, the earliest source to express this relationship.⁵³ The chronicler did not recognize that Inguar was an Anglicized form of Ívarr and so listed it alongside the name familiar from Norse legend.

48 Hermannus. *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi, Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed. Thomas Arnold, 3 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), I:36.

49 John of Worcester, 476–77.

50 *Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*, 28; Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 158 and 181–82.

51 *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi ex codicibus denuo recensuit I*, ed. M. Cl. Gertz (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1917–18), 16.

52 Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 89–90 and 160.

53 *Magistri Adam Bremensis: Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. Bernhard Schmeidler (Hannover and Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1917), 23; Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 69, 89–90, and 160.

Else Mundal argues that Ari himself may have had access to Adam's *Gesta*.⁵⁴ If so, he would have known of Adam's pairing of Inguar and Lodparchi and could thus have deduced a connection between Hinguar, the slayer of St Edmund in Abbo's *Passio*, and Ívarr, the son of Ragnarr *loðbrók* he knew from Norse tradition. Ari was undoubtedly rare among Norse scholars in reconciling the names Hinguar and Ívarr, but *Íslendingabók* itself is proof that either he or a hypothetical intermediary made this connection.⁵⁵

*

Ari *fróði* seems to have drawn upon a manuscript containing both Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and Hermannus the Archdeacon's *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi* to date the martyrdom of King Edmund of East Anglia and thus the settlement of Iceland. It was this text, a *passio* updated with additional miracles, that Ari referred to as a saga. That the manuscript was based in Iceland is indicated by the sporadic use of its contents by Icelandic scholars over the next two centuries.

Ari's use of the *Passio/Miraculis*, the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, and perhaps even more far-flung sources, such as Fulcher of Chartres's *Historia Hierosolymitana*, demonstrate the impressive connectivity of the Icelandic scholarly milieu at the birth of its vernacular historiographical tradition.⁵⁶ This is underscored by *Íslendingabók*'s parallels with contemporary texts, such as the *Annals of St Neots* and *Chronicon Roskildense*, which reveal the extent to which Ari was abreast of developing trends in both East Anglia and Denmark, integrated into networks of intellectual exchange. Icelandic scholars need not be regarded solely as passive recipients in such networks; scholarly connections facilitate the flow of ideas in both directions, as references to Icelandic scholarship in Scandinavian Latin texts reveal.⁵⁷ Thus, although the *Annals of St Neots* are unlikely to have been Ari's source, we should keep our minds open to the reverse: that Icelandic traditions such

54 Else Mundal, "Íslendingabók vurdert som bispestolskrønike," *Alvísmál* 3 (1994): 63–72; Ellehøj, *Studier*, 66–67.

55 Rowe, *Vikings in the West*, 185.

56 Poul Skårup, "Ari frodes dødsliste for året 1118," *Opuscula* 6 (1979): 21–22.

57 Such as the reference to the Icelandic "numerum annorum" (enumeration of years) in *Theodrici Monachi: Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, ed. Gustav Storm, *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ: Latinske kildekrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen* (Kristiania: A. W. Brøgger, 1880), 6.

as *Íslendingabók* informed the *Annals* on topics such as Ívarr/Hinguar's parentage.

The opening of *Íslendingabók* is not just a display of Ari's scholarly credentials but also a précis of his intent to marry Icelandic oral tradition to Latin learned writings and express them in his own vernacular. His use of the "saga" of Edmund was one feature of this process, the success of which ripples across the corpus of Old Icelandic historiography.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPTS

British Library, London

MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii

Bodleian Library, Oxford

MS Bodley 297

Corpus Christi College Library, Oxford

MS 157

PRIMARY SOURCES

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, trans. by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix, 2000.

The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti, ed. by David Dumville and Michael Lapidge. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* 17. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985.

Asser's Life of Alfred, together with the Annals of Saint Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser, ed. by William Henry Stevenson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

The Chronicle of John of Worcester. Volume II: The Annals from 450 to 1066, ed. by R. R. Darlington, and P. McGurk. Trans. by Jennifer Bray and P. McGurk. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Heilagra manna drápa, ed. by Kristen Wolf. *Poetry on Christian Subjects*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross. *Skaldic Poems of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* 7. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007, 872–90.

Heimskringla, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson. 3 vols. Íslenzk fornrit XXVI–XXVIII. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1941–51.

Hermannus. De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi, Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey, ed. by Thomas Arnold. 3 vols. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890, I:26–92.

Íslandske Annaler indtil 1578. Udgivne for det norske historiske Kildeskriftfond, ed. by Gustav Storm. Christiania: Grøndahl & Sons Bogtrykkeri, 1888.

Íslendingabók; Landnámabók, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson. Íslenzk fornrit I. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968.

- Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders; Kristni Saga: The Story of the Conversion*, trans. by Siân Grønlie. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006.
- Íslendinga saga*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson. *Sturlunga saga* 2. Akureyri: Prentverk Odds Björnssonar h.f., 1965, 1–512.
- Magistri Adam Bremensis: Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum*, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler. Hannover and Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1917.
- Miracles of St Edmund: Herman the Archdeacon and Goscelin of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. by Tom License. Oxford: University Press, 2014.
- Morkinskinna*, ed. by Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson. 2 vols. Íslenzk fornrit XXIII–XXIV. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2011.
- Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi ex codicibus denovo recensuit I*, ed. by M. Cl. Gertz. Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1917–18.
- Theodrici Monachi: Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, ed. by Gustav Storm. *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae: Latinske kildekrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*. Kristiania: A. W. Brøgger, 1880, 1–68.
- Þáttur af Ragnars sonum*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson. *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* 1. Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1950, 287–303.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abrams, Lesley. “Scandinavian Place-Names and Settlement-History: Flegg, Norfolk, and East Anglia in the Viking Age.” *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress, Tórshavn, 19–30 July 2001*, ed. by Andras Mortensen and Símun V. Arge. Tórshavn: Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, 2005, 307–22.
- Cavill, Paul. “Anglo-Saxon Saints’ Lives — and Deaths.” *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text*, ed. by Roger Kojecký and Andrew Tate. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, 79–93.
- Ellethøj, Svend. *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*. Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 26. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965.
- Finlay, Alison. “Chronology, Genealogy and Conversion: The Afterlife of St Edmund in the North.” *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. by Anthony Bale. York: York Medieval Press, 2009, 45–62.
- Frankis, John. *From Old English to Old Norse: A Study of Old English Texts Translated into Old Norse with an Edition of the English and Norse Versions of Ælfric’s De falsis diis*. Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2016.
- Gneuss, Helmet and Michael Lapidge. *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts Written or Owned in England up to 1100*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.

- Gransden, Antonia. *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Hermann Pálsson. "Játmundar saga hins helga." *Skírnir* 132 (1957): 139–51.
- Kellogg, Robert. "What is a Saga?" *Sagnaþing helgað Jónasi Kristjánssyni sjötugum 10. apríl 1994* 2, ed. by Gísli Sigurðsson, Guðrún Kvaran, and Sigurgeir Steingrímsson. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1994, 497–503.
- Mundal, Else. "Íslendingabók vurdert som bispestolskrønike." *Alvissmál* 3 (1994): 63–72.
- Nyberg, Tore. *Monasticism in North-Western Europe, 800–1200*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Rowe, Elizabeth Ashman. *Vikings in the West: The Legend of Ragnar Loðbrók and His Sons*. *Studia Mediaevalia* 18. Vienna: Fassbaender, 2012.
- Skårup, Poul. "Ari frodes dødsliste for året 1118." *Opuscula* 6 (1979): 18–22.

ÁGRIP

Afhjúpun heilags Játmundar. Heimild fyrir píslarvætti Játmundar í *Íslendingabók*

Efnisorð: *Íslendingabók*, Abbo af Fleury, Hermannus erkidjákni, Bury St Edmunds, heimildir

Samkvæmt *Íslendingabók* Ara fróða byggðist Ísland fyrst úr Noregi árið 870, er „Ívarr Ragnarssonr loðbrókar lét drepa Eadmund enn helga Englakonung“. Upplýsingar um píslar dauða Eadmundar segist Ari hafa fengið frá dularfullri „sögu hans“, en lengi hefur verið umdeilt um hvaða texta sé að ræða. Þessi grein tekur til umfjöllunar hinar ýmsu kenningar sem hafa verið lagðar fram af fræðimönnum í tímans rás og kemst að þeirri niðurstöðu að líklegasti möguleikinn sé samsetning tveggja texta, *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* eftir Abbo af Fleury og *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi* eftir Hermannus erkidjákna. Þessir tveir textar voru bundnir saman í a.m.k. einu handriti frá byrjun 12. aldar. Hér eru færð rök fyrir því að svipað handrit gæti hafa verið í umferð á Íslandi og haft áhrif á fleiri texta sem samdir voru á næstu tveimur öldum.

SUMMARY

Unearthing St Edmund. A Source for Edmund's Martyrdom in *Íslendingabók*

Keywords: *Íslendingabók*, Abbo of Fleury, Hermannus the Archdeacon, Bury St Edmunds, sources

In Ari fróði Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, the settlement of Iceland is said to have first begun from Norway in 870, the year that "Ívarr, son of Ragnar loðbrók, had St Edmund, king of the English, killed." He attributes his knowledge of the date

of this martyrdom to a mysterious “saga” of St Edmund, the identity of which has long been debated. This note considers the various alternatives put forth by previous researchers and concludes that the most likely candidate for this saga is in fact a composite of two texts, Abbo of Fleury’s *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and Hermannus the Archdeacon’s *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*. These texts are known to have been bound together in at least one manuscript from the early twelfth century. It is argued that a similar manuscript may have circulated in Iceland and was used to inform several other Old Icelandic texts composed over the following two centuries.

Ben Allport
Universitetet i Bergen
Institutt for lingvistiske, litterære og estetiske studier
Postboks 7805
NO-5020 Bergen
Benjamin.Allport@uib.no