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A NOTE ON UNGER'S EDITORIAL HEADING "TVEGGJA POSTOLA SAGA"¹

IT IS WIDELY acknowledged that the prolific Norwegian linguist and editor Carl Richard Unger (1817–1897) broke new ground in editing manuscript-based Icelandic texts with his publication of *Postola sögur* in Christiania (Oslo) in 1874. Many of the same sagas had admittedly been printed earlier by the Icelandic bookseller Þorsteinn Jónsson (1807–1859) in a volume titled *Hér hefjast Tíu Sögur af þeim enum heilögu Guðs Postulum og þínslar vottum*, printed by Viðeyjarprentsmiðja in 1836. But despite the considerable elegance and easy legibility of the Viðey edition, it came to be regarded as inadequate. This was primarily because of its reliance on manuscripts that were *recentiores* and therefore *deteriores* in the scientific parlance of the day. It could not have been otherwise, because the best witnesses to these texts were all in Copenhagen and unavailable to the Icelandic editor.²

- 1 The impetus for this study came from Tiffany Nicole White (personal correspondence, November 30, 2023), who, while translating Unger's texts, observed that there appeared to be little manuscript evidence for Unger's *Tveggja postola saga Philippus ok Jacobs*. She noted, however, that this was difficult to ascertain, as the relevant manuscripts, apart from SÁM 1, were in Copenhagen – with no images online. Tiffany then speculated that “the idea of a tveggja postola saga might have been an editorial choice by Unger.” Having tested and confirmed her suspicion, she encouraged me to publish my findings, which I have now done – thanks to her.
- 2 Þórður Jónsson states in his “Formáli” that the edition is based on an old paper copy of a parchment book. He deduces this from a Latin note (p. 76) in his exemplar, which refers to *membrana Scardensis* (Skarðsbók). There is also a reference to a copy in the collection of Gunnar Pálsson (1714–1791; “in Gunn. P. coll.”). Two manuscripts I know of, ÍB 165 4to (written in Iceland 1778 and sent to Copenhagen 1861) and Acc. 56 (donated to the Arnamagnæan Collection in Copenhagen as late as 2007), have the Latin note and identical headings to those in the edition. Unger, in *Postola sögur*, p. vi, did not know these manuscripts, and he derives the text of the Viðey edition from copies of AM 630 4to, but the order of the sagas may be that of its exemplar, AM 652 4to. More research could explicate the precise relationship between these witnesses.

Since its founding in the late fifteenth century, the University of Copenhagen had been the only academy in the composite monarchy of Denmark–Norway–Iceland and, along with the Royal Library, served as repository for medieval manuscripts and documents from all three countries.³

Viðeyjarprentsmiðja was a relatively new type of printing press in Iceland – secular and enlightened, with a license to publish anything. For over two centuries, the Church’s control of printing and censorship from Copenhagen had made it virtually impossible to print historical manuscript-based texts in Iceland. When this finally became feasible, editors such as Þorsteinn Jónsson were forced to work with paper copies of parchment manuscripts – copies made before the manuscripts were exported – or, more likely, copies of those copies. As a result, the new methods in editorial philology that were being introduced at the University of Copenhagen in the 1830s were of little practical use to Þorsteinn Jónsson. Other Icelanders of his generation, such as Konráð Gíslason (1808–1891) and Jón Sigurðsson (1811–1879), who had the privilege of studying in Copenhagen and working there at the end of their studies, would, over the following decades, use the new paradigms from France and Germany to establish Icelandic editorial philology as an academic field in its own right. Early examples of text-critical editions published by these Icelanders are *Hrafnkels saga* (1839 and 1847), *Snorra Edda I–II* (1848–1852), and *Biskupa sögur I* (1858).

Konráð Gíslason became the first professor of Icelandic philology at the University of Copenhagen, while Jón Sigurðsson worked mainly within the newly established scientific societies that had taken on the task of publishing the vast corpus of unedited Icelandic medieval literature. As a scholar based at the relatively new Kongelige Frederiks Universitet in Christiania, founded in 1811, Carl Richard Unger was not ideally positioned to make full use of the Copenhagen collections. However, when he was awarded a special scholarship to transcribe Icelandic manuscripts, he was able to travel to Denmark and stay in Copenhagen from 1841 to 1843. During the course of his long career, he made many trips to Copenhagen; as far as I am aware, he was the first scholar to learn how to photograph

3 The Danish equestrian university, Sorø Akademi, was closed between 1665 and 1747, a period when absolutism curtailed the influence of noble families. This was also the time when most of the Icelandic manuscripts were exported to Copenhagen by Icelandic scholars who were based there.

manuscripts he needed to consult repeatedly. In preparing his edition of *Postola sögur*, Unger made a special trip to Copenhagen during the winter of 1870/71, this time meticulously sifting through the many relevant manuscripts in the collection of the late Icelandic scholar Árni Magnússon (1663–1730). During Unger's first visit, this great manuscript collection, which the owner had bequeathed to the university, was first housed in the attic space of the Trinity Church, but by 1861, it had moved to the new University Library near the main building.

In Unger's life time, Konráð Gíslason and Jón Sigurðsson were the leading experts on the Arnamagnæan Collection, as it was referred to, and they became the key members of the Arnamagnæan Commission, the board responsible for overseeing the manuscripts. If you were a visiting scholar from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Britain, or elsewhere looking to consult the Icelandic manuscript collections in Copenhagen, they were the scholars you would turn to for guidance and advice. Later in his life, Unger's primary contact within the Icelandic philological community, however, would become the slightly younger scholar Guðbrandur Vigfússon (1827–1889), who began his career as a protégé of Jón Sigurðsson but left Copenhagen in the 1860s to teach Icelandic literature at Oxford.

In Copenhagen, Unger was guided by these men, in the absence of a comprehensive catalogue, to locate and consult the manuscript witnesses to the Icelandic *postola sögur* texts. Notably, *Skarðsbók postulasagna* (now SÁM 1) was not part of the Arnamagnæan Collection and was believed lost at the time, which nevertheless did not prevent Unger from consulting this important manuscript for the transmission of *postola sögur*, as he was able to use a carefully executed copy preserved in three manuscripts (AM 631 4to, AM 636 4to, and AM 628 4to), which Árni Magnússon had commissioned for his collection in the early eighteenth century when the original was still at Skarð Church in Iceland.⁴

Unger's *Postola sögur* of 1874

Prepared under ideal working conditions and informed by the latest philological practice, Unger's edition of *Postola sögur* from 1874 became the standard for this class of Icelandic saga – a status it disappointingly

4 On the exceptional history of *Skarðsbók postulasagna* or *Codex Scardensis*, as it is called in Latin, see Jóhannes Nordal, "Ferill Skarðsbókar," *Gripla XVI* (2005): 51–74.

retains to this day for all but two of them, *Mattheus saga* and *Tómas saga*, owing to the lack of competing new editions.⁵ Its full title is *Postola sögur. Legendariske fortællinger om apostlernes liv, deres kamp for kristendommens udbredelse, samt deres martyrdød. Efter gamle haandskrifter udgivne*. In addition to the twelfth-century Icelandic translations of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, called *postola* or *postula sögur*, which are our primary focus here, the edition includes fragments and separate *passiones*, along with three full sagas of holy persons who were not apostles themselves but whose sagas are closely related to those of the apostles: *Clemens saga*, *Saga af Pilatus*, and *Jons saga baptista*. Characteristic of Unger's approach is his respect for textual variance and his willingness to print more than one version of each saga. Excluding the confusing numerical and alphabetical markings of diverse *postola sögur* printed by Unger, the following titles appear first in the headings and discussion in the introduction and then above the saga texts themselves: *Petrus saga postola*, *Pals saga postola*, *Tveggja postola saga Petrus ok Pals*, *Andreas saga postola*, *Jons saga postola*, *Jacobs saga postola*, *Tveggja postola saga Jons ok Jacobs*, *Thomas saga postola*, *Tveggja postola saga Philippus ok Jacobs*,⁶ *Bartholomeus saga postola*, *Mathias saga postola*, *Tveggja postola saga Simonis ok Jude*, and *Matheus saga postola*.

All in all, Unger presents thirteen sagas of thirteen apostles, roughly in the order in which they appear in *Skarðsbók postulasagna* (p. iii). As is evident from this list, Unger pairs the majority of the apostles (eight out of thirteen) together in four double sagas, each bearing a title in the format TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA X OK Y, where X and Y stand for the names of the respective apostles in the genitive case. Judging by these headings, it would seem that there were two basic types of *postola sögur*, the single apostle-saga and the combined apostle-saga, but pick any manuscript containing a collection of *postula sögur*, and you will immediately run into difficulties trying to reconcile Unger's organization of the sagas in his edition with the reality of the texts in authentic medieval manuscripts.

- 5 Ólafur Halldórsson, ed., *Mattheus saga postula* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1994) and Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, eds. *Frá Sýrlandi til Íslands: Arfur Tómasar postula* (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2007).
- 6 On p. xxvii of the introduction, the editorial heading TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA JONS OK JACOBS is mistakenly repeated instead of the correct heading TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PHILIPPUS OG JACOBS.

Aware of the potential for misunderstanding, Unger clarifies the status of his editorial headings in the introduction: “Foreløbig bemærkes, at alle Overskrifter i nærværende Udgave med store Bogstaver ere tilsatte af Udgiveren, de med liggende Skrift findes i Haandskrifterne” (p. xvi). A careful reader who examines every instance of Unger’s use of titles of the type TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA X OK Y will notice that they are always printed in capital letters and never in italics, which would indicate their attestation in medieval manuscripts. Occasionally, in the introduction, Unger refers to a “Sammenstøbning” (e.g., p. xxiv) or amalgamation of two apostle-sagas, but he consistently marks his new term, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA, in capital letters as his own editorial creation. With the note, Unger clearly meant to caution his readers against interpreting the term as authentic, though he never elaborates on the implications of his editorial decision. Nor does he, anywhere in his edition, attempt to justify this heading or explain its origin or why he chose to use it. Since the term has been applied by scholars without reservation from then on and we have grown accustomed to viewing it as an authentic medieval term, it is understandable that we might want to verify whether any TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA titles are nevertheless attested in our sources.

Starting with the online *ONP: Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* in Copenhagen (onp.ku.dk), we find no examples of the term in their excerpts from medieval texts, even though the dictionary uses these titles as such to identify the four implied sagas designated by Unger’s headings. Similarly, Emil Olmer, in his *Boksamlingar på Island 1179–1490* (Gothenburg 1902), which is based on book holdings listed in Icelandic *máldagar* (medieval inventories of churches, monasteries, and cathedrals) within the specified period, does not record any such titles.⁷ The same is true, as far as I have been able to ascertain, of the great *máldagar* collections published in the sixteen volumes of the *Diplomatarium Islandicum* (Copenhagen & Reykjavík, 1857–1972).

If we examine each of the sagas in question as edited by Unger in his

7 For the record, it may be added here that Ludvig Larsson (1860–1933) – who in 1885 published the first part of AM 645 4to (c. 1220), a major source of texts for the *Postola sögur*, although familiar with and using Unger’s edition – never discusses his term TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA. See Ludvig Larsson, *Isländska handskriften No 645 4o i Den Arnamagnæanske Samlingen* (Lund: Gleerupska Universitets Bokhandeln, 1885).

Postola sögur, beginning with TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PHILIPPUS OG JACOBS (pp. 735–740), we immediately note that, due to its brevity, this text hardly qualifies as a saga. Moreover, it provides separate accounts of the two apostles, each with its own heading: “Sagan fra Philippo postola” (p. 735) and “Saga Jacobs postola” (p. 737). The common feast day of both apostles, May 1, is mentioned in the short prologue of the first saga (“I dag hölldum ver dyrliga hatið postolum Philippo ok Jacobo”), but we also learn that this day is dedicated to other apostles as well, and not much is said about the two titular apostles in their brief texts.

Unger sourced these texts from AM 630 4to and the *Skarðsbók* postulasagna copy made for Árni Magnússon. He used the former to represent the defective late thirteenth-century manuscript AM 652 4to (only fourteen leaves remain), of which it is a copy, while collating the *Skarðsbók* text with the fragment AM 238 XI fol. for variants. The text redaction of *Philippus saga* and *Jacobs saga* in the AM 238 XI fol. is the same as in *Skarðsbók postulasagna*, where the sagas indeed are clearly separate, each with its own rubric. AM 238 XI fol. consists of two leaves containing the end of *Philippus saga*, all of the very short *Jacobs saga*, and the beginning of an *Inventio Crucis* text.⁸ Where *Jacobs saga* begins in AM 238 XI fol., there is an initial and a barely legible rubric with the title of the saga, “De sancto Jakobo [*sic*] apostolo,” as transcribed by Kålund (Vol. 1, p. 202). A further indication of *Jacobs saga*’s autonomy as a work is that its rubric title closely resembles that of the following *Inventio Crucis* text. In fact, nothing apart from the prologue of *Philippus saga* seems to provide Unger with a reason for inventing his editorial heading.

Secondly, Unger based his text of TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PETERS OK PÁLS (pp. 283–318) on AM 656 I 4to, fols. 20v–39v. This manuscript treats the saga largely as two separate narratives (*Petrus saga* on fols. 20v–26r and *Páls saga* on fols. 26r–39v). Although several other apostles appear in *Petrus saga* – which begins on fol. 20v with a large ornamental initial P –

8 In Kristian Kålund’s *Katalog over den Arnemagneanske håndskriftsamling*, Vol. 2, 44, the description of the contents of AM 630 4to mistakenly omits “Sagan fra philippo postola” (62r–63r), “Saga Jacobs postola” (63r–64v), and “Saga <Mathias> postola” (64r–68r), subsuming them under a single entry: “Bl. 57v–68r. Sagann af Mattheum postula.” Kålund likely made this error in haste, merging *Mattheus saga* and *Mathias saga* into one text, possibly due to the manuscript heading on fol. 64v, which erroneously identifies the latter as *Mattheus saga*. This mistake has since been carried over into the online catalogue of handrit.is, which was initially based on Kålund’s printed catalogue.

Paul does not appear until twelve pages later (fol. 26v), where his narrative begins with a rubric heading. In *Páls saga*, however, Peter plays an important role, and after Paul's death, we encounter a *passio Petri*, marked with the rubric "Pijning Petrus" (fols. 37v–38v), which jumps back in time to before Paul's execution. This is followed by a final chapter on Paul appearing to Nero to scare him and detailing what happened to the remains of the two apostles (fols. 38v–39v). Thus, there is an attempt in this manuscript to weave Peter into Paul's saga, particularly in their dealings with Nero, though for the most part, the stories of each apostle are narrated separately with distinct chapter headings. As expected, Unger's editorial heading, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA X OK Y, is not found in this manuscript either.

Interestingly, in the separate *Páls saga postola I* and *Páls saga postola II*, printed by Unger on pp. 216–236, based mainly on AM 645 4to, and pp. 236–239, based on AM 234 fol., respectively, the intertwining of Paul's and Peter's fates is also evident. This manner of telling their stories is indeed hard to avoid, given that their legends depict them suffering martyrdom together in Rome. It is therefore unclear why Unger chose to use his editorial heading only for the version in AM 656 I 4to and not for the others.

Thirdly, the edition of Unger's TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA JONS OK JACOBS (pp. 536–711) is based on *Skarðsbók postulasagna*, or rather its copy, AM 636 4to, for the reasons explained above. In this manuscript, the text is introduced after the prologue with the heading "Her hefr upp sögu .ij. postola ok blezaðra bræðra Johannis ok Jacobi" (40v) with a large initial and rubric. Here, at last, we have a medieval attestation of something resembling Unger's editorial headings, although the word order is in reverse, "Saga tveggia postola," and there immediately follows something else of equal importance, "ok blessaðra bræðra" that should not be ignored. All things considered, I find it unlikely that it was this prologue alone that gave Unger grounds for coining these editorial headings. There is certainly a tendency in this very long saga compilation to emphasize the duality of John and James, who were brothers, as seen in the heading "Af brøðrum tveim" (Unger, p. 639; based on AM 651 I 4to, 64v) and in phrases such as "Þessa bæn tveggia bræðra Jacobi ok Johannis skal hann veita" (Unger, p. 553) or "Er hier nu upp maalad ok yfer farid lof og lijferni þessa tveggia bædra guds apostola og hans nainna ættmanna, sem ad voru systrungar

ad skyldsemi vors lausnara, Johannis ewangelista og Jacob hans brodurs, hver ad kallazt Jacob en meiri” (Unger, p. 672; only in AM 236 fol., 42v). However, in every case the numeral *tveggia* qualifies the substantive ‘brothers’ at least as much or more than ‘apostles,’ although indeed they are both. This is significant given that Unger’s term as such is never found in any manuscript sources, as he freely admits. Moreover, the integration of the two sagas only goes so far. In *Skarðsbók postulasagna*, as duly noted in the copy used by Unger, where the narrative of the second bother begins, this is marked by a large initial and rubric, “Her hefz upp Jacobi saga” (Unger, p. 570; AM 636 4to, p. 73).

Finally, Unger’s TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA SIMONIS OK JUDE (pp. 779–789) is edited on the basis of the same manuscripts, AM 630 4to, with reference to a fragment of its original, AM 652 4to, and *Skarðsbók postulasagna*. There are supposedly two redactions of this saga, the other being represented by AM 655 XII–XIII 4to. Here for once we have a saga that by design seems to be a combined saga and is therefore justifiably designated by Unger with a single title, although it is not clear why Unger was not happy to refer to it simply with its authentic title as *Saga Simonis ok Jude apostola*. Why did he feel the need to make up an editorial heading that explicitly pointed out that these apostles were ‘two’ in number? Anyone who saw their names in the title could surely count how many they were. In *Skarðsbók postulasagna*, we find the heading “Her byriaz saga Simonis ok Jude” (89rb; AM 628 4to, 55r), one saga about both apostles, who indeed seem to do everything in tandem, while the second recension, in AM 655 XII–XIII 4to begins “Ver holldum idag hatid hinum helgum postolom Simone oc Juda” (Unger, p. 791; AM 655 XII–XIII, 5v), referring to October 28, which is then immediately compared to the aforementioned feast day of Jacobus, whose brothers they were, and Philippus in the spring (May 1).

In conclusion, neither the saga texts edited by Unger nor the manuscripts on which his edition is based provide a convincing explanation for why Unger invented his editorial headings and imposed them on the *postola sögur* with such insistence and uniformity. As we have seen, Unger found these texts in the primary sources as sagas of individual apostles, yet he systematically paired them together, assigning each double saga an editorial heading that differs from any rubric attested in the manuscripts. Furthermore, the

sources offer no rationale for why Unger's editorial headings, besides naming the apostles, emphasize their number, two, which seems both self-evident and without meaning, simply reflecting the editor's own arrangement.

The Infelicity of Unger's Editorial Headings

Icelandic saga titles featuring the names of two heroes are quite common, as seen even among sagas of the apostles, such as *Saga Simonis ok Jude*. However, titles like those invented by Unger – *TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA X OK Y*, which both count and name the titular characters – are a complete anomaly among historical titles assigned to Icelandic works. This conclusion is based on surveying titles found in manuscripts and listed alphabetically on the site *handrit.is*. Titles that specify the number of the main characters or heroes of sagas do not also name those characters.

I have found three revealing exceptions, two of which present the characters' names in an explanatory relative clause: *Söguþáttur af þremur bræðrum, er svo hétu Illur, Verri og Vestur* and *Sagan af tveimur öndum Adis og Dahy, sem voru bræður*. The third exception is a humorous title playing on the fact that the three characters, who are father and sons, all share the same very common Icelandic name, *Jón*: *Ævisaga feðganna þriggja síra Jóna í Grundarþingum* and *Sagan af Jónunum þremur*. These titles are late and concern us only indirectly, as examples of what is hardly possible within the convention of assigning titles to Icelandic works. What is relevant here is the structure they share, which may be connected both to the attested titles of *postula sögur* and to Unger's editorial headings.

As in the exceptional titles above, which include both a number and the names of the characters, closely related individuals are more likely to be given a number in Icelandic titles. For instance, Icelandic manuscripts attest to titles with numerals but without names, such as *Fimmbraðrasaga*, *Tveggja elskanda strengleikr*, *Tveggja bræðra elska og tryggð við sitt föðurland*, *Tveggja elskanda ljóð*, *Tveggja feðga ævintýri*, and *Ólímpía og tíu bræður hennar*. Many more examples exist, but these suffice to illustrate the emphasis on familial or romantic bonds, which recalls the brothers and apostles John and James, whose sagas were discussed earlier in relation to Unger's edition. Their being brothers is probably the primary reason for their being referred to as 'two' in medieval sources. This makes sense if we compare

the use of ‘two brothers’ to calling them ‘two fishermen’ – a description that, while also true, is much less significant. If we follow Unger’s example and invent our own titles, *Saga af bræðrum tveim* makes sense, whereas *Saga af tveim(ur) fiskimönnum* – not to mention the unidiomatic *Tveggja fiskimanna saga* – begs the question of “Why two?”

Besides counting characters who are close, the numerals in titles of stories about known collectives often seem integral to the group’s identity, as in *Sjö sofanda saga* (based on Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda Aurea*, 3rd century), *Sjö meistara saga* (from *Dolopathos sive De septem sapientibus*, c. 1200), *Heilagra þriggja konunga saga* (translated from Low German, Holm perg 3 fol.), and *Testamenti patriarkanna tólf* (an early modern translation from Latin of *Testamenta patrum*). If this principle applied to the apostles, their number should be twelve, as confirmed in the title of the medieval poem *Tólf postula kvæði* (AM 713 4to, c. 1550), where their names are not included.

So how did Unger arrive at the editorial heading *TVEGGJA POSTOLA SAGA X OK Y*? I suspect that it relates to the naming of apostolic feast days in medieval Iceland and Norway, particularly the well-attested term *Tveggja postola messa* (á vori/um vorið), which referred specifically to May 1, the Feast of Philip and James. This was the most common usage, though occasionally the names of the two apostles were added for clarification, almost as a gloss for those unfamiliar with the term (DI II, 129; the earliest instance I have found is in *Árnastatúta* from 1275). The term “*Tveggja postola messa Simonis ok Jude*” for October 28 appears late, from the end of the fifteenth century, and only in laymen’s letters. For the Feast of Peter and Paul on June 29, the proper term was “*Pétrsmessa ok Páls*,” though rare instances of the hybrid and catachrestic “*Tveggja postola messa Pétrs ok Páls*” exist, always late and in laymen’s letters. “*Tveggja postola messa*” for John and James is never found, as these apostles did not share a feast day.

Thus, Icelanders knew only one “*Tveggja postola messa*,” May 1, as shown by the fact that this feast name was properly used without specifying the apostles involved. This shorthand only made sense because no other feast could properly be referred to in this way. While this was the ideal, idiosyncratic terms may have begun confusing laymen in the late Middle Ages, as they used them to date charters in the absence of a fully developed system for denoting days of the year. Laymen often struggled to master this complex system.

Ultimately, the seemingly arbitrary specification of 'two' apostles in "*Tveggja postola messa*" is probably best understood as a shorthand for the full name, which people were expected to know: "*Philippus messa ok Jacobs postola*." Indeed, if the names Philip and James were given, there was no need to call it feast "*Tveggja postola messa*," nor would it make sense to use the term about other apostles' feasts. For the shorthand to work, it had to refer to one specific feast day.⁹ Nevertheless, the proper usage was not always respected; by the late 1400s a second "*Tveggja postola messa*" is occasionally found, this one for Simon and Jude, on October 28, but this required the addition of a tag, "á haust" or some such.

There is no comparable term to "*Tveggja postola messa*" in Ecclesiastical Latin, nor do any Latin hagiographical titles translate into Icelandic as "*Tveggja postola saga*." It is important to note this because the feast days in question were celebrated by the whole Church of Rome, and the texts of the Icelandic *postola sögur* are almost without exception direct translations from identifiable Medieval Latin hagiographical sources. While Latin accounts of Saints Peter and Paul, usually focusing on their martyrdom, were sometimes combined into a single narrative (as were those of Saints Simon and Jude), such combined texts would typically be

9 The numeral in "*Tveggja postola messa*" may prompt readers to wonder if it carries any specific liturgical significance, perhaps indicating a variation in the structure or complexity of the liturgical office. For example, it could conceivably suggest a more elaborate service compared to "*Eins postola messa*" – though such a term is not attested. In Bishop Auðunn of Hólar's 1318 collection of *máldagar*, particularly in the *máldagi* of "Tiarnar kyrckia," we find the stipulation: "þar skal prestur vera og syngia huorn dag helgan til Grundar. oc fylgia madur til tueggja postula messu. xij. messur j holltt" (DI II, 457). As in other Icelandic sources, the number of apostolic feast days is twelve, and only one of these could properly be described as "*tueggja postula messa*." Therefore, I propose that "*tueggja*" in "*tueggja postula messa*" here is either corrupt or an excentric way of rendering *duplex festum apostoli*, as all twelve apostolic feast days could probably be celebrated as *duplex* feasts. The terminology of *simplex*, *semiduplex*, and *duplex* in medieval Roman liturgy pertains to the structure of both the Divine Office (daily prayers) and the Mass. It aligns with the terms *Missa cum sex lectionibus* (Ice. *Sex lesa messa*) and *Missa cum duodecim lectionibus* (Ice. *Tólf lesa messa*), which refer to the number of scriptural readings, interspersed with responsories and hymns, during the Mass. The simpler *Six Lessons Mass* was typically reserved for minor feast days or weekday observances. By contrast, the more elaborate *Twelve Lessons Mass* was celebrated on major feast days, honoring important saints such as the Apostles, the Virgin Mary, or key moments in the liturgical calendar such as Christmas or Easter. Within this established framework, the apostolic feast days had a designated place, making it difficult to attribute any liturgical significance to a specifically Icelandic term such as "*Tveggja postola messa*."

referred to as *Acta Sanctorum Petri et Pauli* (BHL 6657–6659) or *Passio Sanctorum Simonis et Judæ* (BHL 7749–7751). There would be no reason to state that they were two.

So why transfer the shorthand name for the Feast of Philip and James to the saga of the same apostles? The situation with *postola sögur* titles is categorically different from that of the feast days. The short form for feast days served a practical purpose, structuring the Christian year and offering clear and memorable designations for over one hundred feasts, including twelve for the apostles. Saint Peter and Saint Paul shared three feast days (June 29, February 22, and November 18); Saint Philip and Saint James the Less had their *Tveggja postola messa* (May 1); and Saint Simon and Saint Jude shared theirs on October 28.

Firstly, in a medieval context, a title like “Tveggja postola saga,” were it attested, which it is not, could only be an alternative title for *Jacobs saga ok Philippi*. However, there was no need for such a title, and it is nowhere attested. What is attested, albeit in early modern manuscripts – specifically the same late copy that was bookseller Þorsteinn Jónsson’s source for his 1936 edition of *postola sögur* – is the title *Saga þeirra tveggja postola, Jacobs ens minna og Philippi*. This title clearly references *Tveggja postola messa*, since the saga concerns the same apostles, ‘of those apostles’ (*þeirra tveggja postola*), namely ‘of James the Lesser and Philippus.’ This title makes sense, and its formation is fundamentally different from Unger’s *Tveggja postola saga Jacobs (ens minna) ok Philippi*, which as we have seen breaks the conventions of Icelandic titles and does not make sense.

Finally, we have a possible explanation for why Unger decided upon his editorial headings. Unger may have believed that he was following Icelandic (and probably Norwegian) tradition, even if such a tradition is nowhere attested, that there was not just one “Tveggja postola messa” but many, and that for each of these feast days there must have been a corresponding saga. In the nineteenth century, scholars had a tendency to assign great value to folkloric and late traditions, which were thought to represent medieval or even older customs. The problem with his respect for Icelandic traditions is that Unger misunderstood the semantics of Þorsteinn Jónsson’s title *Saga þeirra tveggja postola, Jacobs ens minna og Philippi* and then compounded his error by generalizing it to create four combined sagas based on his flawed model.

It is almost certain that Unger, when transcribing the *postola sögur* manuscripts in the Copenhagen collections, or possibly from his own photographic representations back in Oslo, relied on collating his manuscripts – especially the fundamental copy in AM 630 4to – with the printed text of the Viðey edition as an aid to reading the text. Using older printed texts for comparison was and still is common practice in preparing philological editions. Nevertheless, the late copy to which Þórður Jónsson had access when preparing the Viðey edition was probably derived from a copy of an existing manuscript, AM 630 4to, and therefore did not have independent value for constituting the text.

Unger's misunderstanding of the 1836 edition influenced his *Postola sögur* edition far beyond the editorial headings. The concept of the four combined sagas of apostles serves as a major organizational principle in his edition, yet this structure makes no sense from the standpoint of modern textual criticism. Þórður Jónsson, with his keen awareness of the language, grasped the semantic implications of the title *Saga þeirra tveggja postola, Jacobs ens minna og Philippi*, which was not his but came from the manuscript he was using as source for the text. Thus, he cannot be held responsible for Unger's error. Unger, lacking Þórður's feeling for the language, even if he was extremely competent in Icelandic for a non-native user, is not really to blame either, except for his overconfidence in understanding Icelandic. The edition was printed in Oslo, and it is unlikely that Unger consulted the Icelandic experts in Copenhagen before publication.

The Reception of Unger's Editorial Headings

Despite Unger's disclosure to his readers that all the capitalized headings in his edition, and by implication those of *Postola sögur* too, are not attested titles in medieval manuscripts, Old Norse scholars appear from the start to have accepted them as authentic, as evidenced by their immediate and widespread use. This state of affairs can primarily be blamed on Kristian Kålund (1844–1919) and his two-volume *Katalog over den Arnemagnæanske håndskriftsamling*, published in Copenhagen from 1889 to 1894.

Unger's term *Tveggja postola saga X ok Y* is of course not found in the handwritten catalogues of Árni Magnússon, his amanuensis Jón Ólafsson (1705–1779), or the aforementioned Jón Sigurðsson, on which Kålund's

catalogue is based. And it does not occur in Volume 1 of Kålund's catalogue. However, in Volume 2, published five years later, we find among the listed contents of AM 628 4to, AM 652 4to, AM 655 XII–XIII 4to, and AM 656 I–II 4to a *Tveggja postula saga Simonis ok Jude*. Similarly, in the contents of AM 632 4to, AM 636 4to, AM 650 a 4to, AM 651 I 4to, and AM 653 a 4to, there is listed a *Tveggja postula saga Jóns ok Jakobs*. Lastly, among the contents of AM 656 I–II 4to, a *Tveggja postula saga Pétrs ok Páls* is found.

Additionally, at the end of Volume 2, page 769, a correction is added regarding the entries for AM 628 4to and AM 667 V 4to that establishes a general rule for *postola sögur* across the catalogue, including Volume 1: *Philippus saga postola* should be read as *Philippus saga ok Jakobs postola tveggja*, a collective title that, on the model of *Postola sögur*, Kålund regrets that he did not use consistently for the two separate titles of *Philippus saga postola* and *Jakobs saga postola* (*Alfei f.*). Clearly, Kålund adopted these four combined titles from Unger's *Postola sögur*, without realizing that they were meant only as editorial headings. Unlike Unger, Kålund applies them without reservation to the contents of all manuscripts preserving *postola sögur*, thus making them seem medieval and fully authentic.

Kålund's approach was subsequently adopted by the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* in Copenhagen (now online at onp.ku.dk), on which work began in 1939, and later by the online manuscript catalogue *handrit.is*, which was initially based on Kålund's catalogue, and eventually by others. The *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, a key reference tool for normalized saga titles and manuscript contents, incorporated Unger's four instances of *Tveggja postula saga X ok Y*, likely drawn directly from *Postola sögur*, with the added validation of Kålund's acceptance. Unger's editorial headings were normalized according to the dictionary's standardized medieval spelling, rendering them as *Tveggja postula saga Pétrs ok Páls*, *Tveggja postula saga Jóns ok Jakobs (hins eldra)*, *Tveggja postula saga Filippuss ok Jakobs (hins yngra)*, and *Tveggja postula saga Símons ok Júðass*. Even if presented with medieval spelling, Unger's headings have neither sense nor authenticity.

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SUMMARY

A Note on Unger’s Editorial Heading “Tveggja Postola Saga”

Keywords: Medieval Icelandic translations of *Virtutes Apostolorum*, manuscript rubrics, editorial headings, feast days of saints

In his edition of *Postola sögur* (Christiania 1874), the prolific Norwegian editor of Icelandic sagas Carl Richard Unger (1817–1897) created four similar editorial headings to combine as many pairs of Old Icelandic translations from Latin of the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*: TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PETERS OK PALS, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA JONS OK JACOBS, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PHILIPPUS OG JACOBS, and TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA SIMONIS OK JUDE. In his introduction, Unger notes that all headings printed in capital letters are his own inventions, while italicized headings are attested in the manuscripts on which the edition is based. The four headings mentioned above are consistently printed in capital letters. The author of this article examines the status of these titles in more detail, confirming that, as Unger indicated, these editorial headings are never attested in manuscripts but were invented specifically for this edition, likely based on the analogy of the feast-day name ‘Tveggja postola messa,’ which refers to May 1, honoring the apostles Philippus and Jacobus. The article further argues that the widespread adoption of these titles by modern scholars is likely due to Kristian Kålund, the author of the manuscript catalogue of the Arnamagnæan Collection, who incorporated Unger’s editorial headings without explanation and used them as titles when listing the contents of manuscripts.

ÁGRIP

Athugasemd við fyrirsögnina “Tveggja Postola Saga” í *Postola sögum* Ungers

Efnisorð: postula sögur, Tveggja postola saga, Carl Richard Unger, titlar helgisagna, útgáfusaga, íslensk handrit í Kaupmannahöfn

Í útgáfu sinni á *Postola sögum* (Christiania 1874) setti hinn afkastamikli útgefandi íslenskra fornsagna, Norðmaðurinn Carl Richard Unger (1817–1897), fjórar sams konar fyrirsagnir yfir jafnmörg pör forníslenskra þýðinga úr latínu af *Apókryfum postulasögum*: TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PETERS OK PALS, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA JONS OK JACOBS, TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA PHILIPPUS OG JACOBS og TVEGGIA POSTOLA SAGA SIMONIS OK JUDE. Í inngangi sínum segir Unger að allar fyrirsagnir í útgáfunni sem prentaðar séu með hástöfum séu hans eigin tilbúningur en skáletraðar fyrirsagnir og titlar komi úr handritunum sem textar útgáfunnar séu grundvallaðir á. Ofangreindar fyrirsagnir eru allar prentaðar með hástöfum í útgáfunni. Höfundur greinarinnar athugar nánar stöðu slíkra fyrirsagna í útgáfunni og staðfestir að þær koma hvergi fyrir í handritum, eins og Unger bendir á, heldur eru búnar til gagnert fyrir þessa útgáfu og þá líklega með heiti messudagsins „Tveggja postola messa,“ hinn 1. maí, í huga en dagurinn var helgaður Pilippusi og Jacobi postulum. Enn fremur er almenn notkun þessara tilbúnu yfirskrifta Ungers meðal síðari fræðimanna rakin til Kristians Kålund (1844–1919), höfundar handritaskrárinnar *Katalog over den Arnemagnæanske håndskriftsamling*, sem án athugasemda tók upp fyrirsagnir Ungers og notaði þær í lýsingum sínum á innihaldi handrita.

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