

BEN ALLPORT

THE SOURCES, DATING, AND COMPOSITION OF *ÍSLENDINGABÓK*

1 Introduction

Íslendingabók is the oldest known work of Icelandic vernacular history.¹ Its author, Ari fróði Þorgilsson (1067–1148), traced the first 250 years of Icelandic history from the Norse settlement in the late ninth century, documenting significant societal milestones and demonstrating the maturity of the island polity at the height of its autonomy. Ari wove the history of Iceland and its people into the skein of Christian history by dating Icelandic events with reference to those occurring overseas. Icelandic oral authorities were conscientiously interspersed with information from learned written sources that reveal Iceland’s integration into Europe-wide intellectual networks. This article brings an analysis and contextualization of Ari’s sources to the discussion of *Íslendingabók*’s dating and composition.

Ari’s prologue to the surviving text of *Íslendingabók* suggests that an initial version (henceforth *Ísl1*) had been produced and shown to the two Icelandic bishops, Þorlákr Runólfsson of Skálholt (r. 1118–1133) and Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (r. 1122–1145), as well as to the scholar Sæmundr fróði Sigfússon (d. 1133). With their feedback, Ari produced a second version (henceforth *Ísl2*) “ok jókk því es mér varð síðan kunnara ok nú es gerr sagt á þessi en á þeiri” (and I added that which afterwards became better known to me and is now more fully told in this [version] than in the other; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 3). The wording of this prologue has provoked debate about both the dating and composition stages of *Íslendingabók*. The overlapping tenures of the two bishops provide the most widely accepted dating of 1122–1133, but a reference to the twelve-

1 I am indebted to Dr Synnøve Midtbø Myking and Dr Tom Grant for their support and feedback and to my anonymous peer reviewers for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All translations are my own.

year tenure of lawspeaker Goðmundr Þorgeirsson (1123–1134) suggests a date of c. 1134 for the text’s completion. Arguments for and against these datings have often hinged on the later history of the text, which is nevertheless obscured by the text’s preservation in only post-medieval manuscripts.

This article instead asks which information could have “become better known” to Ari between the two stages of composition. Ari’s oral and written sources from within and beyond Iceland are divided into sources that were definitely available to Ari before he wrote *Ísli*, sources that probably were, and those that either probably or definitely were not. In cases of uncertainty, it is considered how and to what extent the relevant data support Ari’s fundamental aim of integrating Icelandic events into universal history.

The following analysis suggests that there is little information that could not have been available to Ari before he wrote his first version. The clearest contenders for information that became “better known” to Ari are a list of deaths sourced from Fulcher of Chartres’s *Historia Hierosolymitana* and the aforementioned reference to Goðmundr Þorgeirsson. Based on these identifications, the article proposes that *Íslendingabók* as we have it could not have been finished before 1125 but was more likely completed at some point between the summer Alþing meetings of 1134 and 1135. Given *Íslendingabók*’s status as Iceland’s oldest surviving history, even this modest re-dating has the potential to transform our understanding of the context in which Icelandic vernacular historiography arose. This analysis also illuminates the composition of *Íslendingabók* as a dynamic process and attests to Iceland’s integration into European intellectual networks of the early twelfth century.

2 The Background of *Íslendingabók*

Íslendingabók is a short history of Iceland from its settlement by the Norse in 870 (according to Ari) up until 1118. The text is an “anthropological” myth of origins (Lindow 1997, 454) that narrates key landmarks marking the development of Icelandic society, including the foundation of the Alþing before 930 and the election of its first Icelandic *lögsögumaðr* (lawspeaker) in that year; the conversion in 1000; the careers of the first

native Icelandic bishops, Ísleifr Gizurarson and Gizurr Ísleifsson; and the codification of the Icelandic laws in the winter of 1117–1118. Genealogies of the earliest Icelandic bishops and of Ari himself are appended to the text as we have it.

The text is the only confirmed surviving work in Ari's oeuvre, although a variety of extant texts have been attributed to him by researchers, including a list of high-born Icelandic priests (Stefán Karlsson 2000, 103; Grønlie 2006, xiii), a world history (Stefán Karlsson 2000, 113–17; Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 82–83), a life of the prominent Icelander Snorri *goði* (d. 1031), and the earliest version of *Landnámabók*, a catalogue of settler narratives and genealogies (Grønlie 2006, xiii). It has also been hypothesized that Ari wrote a history of Norwegian kings (Ellehøj 1965, 34–35; Grønlie 2006, xiii) and a set of annals (Barði Guðmundsson 1936; Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 93). Ari's reputation as a scholar was already established by the mid-1100s, as the contemporary author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* commented upon his "skynsamligu viti" (sagacious wit; *The First Grammatical Treatise* 1972, 208–9). A century later, he was recognized as the father of Icelandic vernacular history by the saga author Snorri Sturluson (*Heimskringla* 1941, 6). He was widely cited or employed as a source in medieval Icelandic works spanning the genres of local, ecclesiastical, and Norwegian history.

Íslendingabók survives in two manuscripts from the mid-seventeenth century – Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 113 a fol. and Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 113 b fol. – both of which were based on a lost exemplar from around 1200. The title of the work as a whole is given as "Schedæ Ara prests fröda" (leaves of Ari *fróði* the priest), implying that the manuscript may have consisted of loose pages (Grønlie 2006, xiv). If so, it is difficult to say whether the appended genealogies were always part of *Íslz* or were attached at a later point in the manuscript's transmission (Hagnell 1938, 86; Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xvi). Furthermore, other possible appendices, such as the enigmatic *konunga ævi* (biographies of kings) to which Ari alludes in his prologue, may have become detached from the tradition during its transmission – if they were ever included in this version at all (see "Composition Phases" below).

2.1 *Local and Universal History*

Ari's history is regarded as part of a broader twelfth-century effort to assert Icelandic identity and establish Iceland's place within the broader Christian community (Hastrup 1990, 87–88; Lindow 1997, 456, 460, and 462; Hermann 2007, 29; Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 85). At this time, Iceland was an autonomous island polity that lacked a centralized government, instead being governed by the consensus of a collection of *goðar* (chieftains). The island maintained close cultural and economic ties to the kingdom of Norway and its rulers, a fact reflected in the text's frequent allusions to Norwegian regnal chronology and by the appended genealogies, in which Ari integrates his own family history into the legendary ancestry of the Norwegian kings. Generally speaking, Ari seems happy to acknowledge the influence of Norwegian rulers in Icelandic social development (Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 95). Nevertheless, the decisive role is usually given to Icelanders, and the chronologies of the lawspeakers and bishops both begin with their first native-born officeholders (Allport, forthcoming). The text therefore maintains a strong sense of Icelandic self-determinism.

The scope of Ari's history ranges from the local and personal to the universal. On the one hand, Ari placed a strong emphasis on the authority of his oral Icelandic informants, many of whom were connected to him personally (Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 91–94; Grønlie 2006, xiv–xv). These personal connections, along with the information Ari provides about his own life and upbringing, allow us to establish his authorship beyond reasonable doubt.² On the other hand, Ari displays an awareness of contemporary events on the world stage, including references to popes and the

- 2 For a provocative take on Ari's authorship of *Íslendingabók*, see Lukas Rösli (2021, 55, 64–66, and 68–71). Rösli argues convincingly that Ari was constructed as a “catalyst-like ... figure of cultural memory” indelibly linked to Icelandic “scriptogenesis” in medieval and early modern tradition, a fact that modern researchers must bear in mind when considering the extent of Ari's oeuvre. He further argues that an “artefact-related, new philological argumentation about *Íslendingabók* can ... be based only on the [mid-seventeenth-century] manuscripts”; however, this approach and its conclusions seem overly dismissive of the intertextual support for placing the text in a twelfth-century context, which includes not only the clear and detailed description of the text in *Heimskringla* (see “Composition Phases” below), but also stylistic borrowings, derived information, and even large passages cited verbatim in separate traditions with widely varying dates of preservation; see Allport (forthcoming) and “Gerr sagt” below).

deaths of King Baldwin I of Jerusalem and the Byzantine emperor Alexios Komnenos, which appear in a list of death notices (obits) connected to the death of Bishop Gizurr in 1118 (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 25; see “Ari’s Obit List” below).

Such references reveal how Ari benefitted from twelfth-century Iceland’s dynamic intellectual ties to centres of learning in England, France, and Germany, where (as *Íslendingabók* itself tells us) some of Iceland’s most prominent early churchmen were educated. These links are reflected in Ari’s sources, style, and themes (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, 157), although there is no evidence that Ari himself was educated abroad. Rather, *Íslendingabók* is a testament to the well-rounded clerical education an Icelander of his generation could receive.

The prose of *Íslendingabók* adopts aspects of Latin vocabulary and structure and is stylistically closer to Latin chronicles than the sprawling thirteenth-century sagas for which medieval Iceland is best known (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, xxvi; Sverrir Tómasson 1975, 263; Mundal 1994; Stefán Karlsson, 2000, 116). In particular, Ari’s narrative of the early Icelandic bishops recalls the genre of Latin ecclesiastical chronicles known as the *Gesta episcoporum* (Mundal 1994, 64; Gustafsson 2011, 30; Allport, forthcoming), and it is possible that Ari had access to the genre’s most famous representative, Adam of Bremen’s *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum* (Mundal 1994; see “Incarnation Dates” below). He may also have been familiar with the works of Bede (Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xxii–xxiv, with references; Stefán Karlsson 2000; see “Incarnation Dates” below).

Ari used the chronological structure of his text to integrate the fledgling Icelandic community into the flow of universal history. His approach employed chronological information drawn from both home and abroad to serve different structural purposes (Allport, forthcoming; Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 13–90). Meticulously credited oral sources flesh out the narrative of Icelandic events, whereas key social developments are anchored to the progression of universal history with Incarnation dates – the *anno domini* (AD) dates that ostensibly mark the passage of years from the birth of Christ – sourced from non-Icelandic literary traditions. The last of Ari’s dates is 1120, two years after the narrative of Icelandic events ends. These anchor points are the core of Ari’s chronological structure,

but in places he also supplemented these Incarnation dates with references to other non-Icelandic events, creating absolute dating clusters of varying sizes.

In addition, Ari incorporated an “ævi allra lögsögumanna” (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 22) – a running tally of the Icelandic lawspeakers. It was the responsibility of the lawspeaker to recite one third of the laws each summer at the annual summer meeting of the Alþing. *Íslendingabók* notes the name of each lawspeaker from Hrafn Hængsson’s appointment in 930 and records the number of summers they spoke the law. This provides an abstracted chronological framework within which Icelandic events unfold, although it is rarely used to date events to a specific year (Allport, forthcoming). Furthermore, the succession extends beyond the final chronological cluster in 1120. Consequently, Ari’s history of Iceland has three endpoints: the conclusion of Icelandic events with the death of Bishop Gizurr in 1118; the chronological conclusion in 1120, and the end of the lawspeaker succession.

The lawspeaker chronology is only explicitly anchored to Ari’s absolute dating framework at its start, “sex tegum vetra” (sixty years; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 9) after the settlement in 870. In a testament to Ari’s mastery of chronological data, the text’s reference to the death of King Haraldr harðráði “þat sumar, es [Kolbeinn Flosasonr] tók lögsögu” (the summer when [Kolbeinn Flosason] took the lawspeak-ership; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 20) is correctly dated to 1066 when the tally of lawspeakers is calculated from its beginning, although the Incarnation date itself is not mentioned anywhere in the text.

3 Dating and Composition

Thanks in large part to the late manuscript tradition, the dating and composition phases of *Íslendingabók* have been debated intermittently for the past three centuries (for an overview up to her own time, see Hagnell 1938, 5–26). In many regards the discussion remains inconclusive. Nevertheless, the dating of 1122–1133 is cited almost ubiquitously in historical and philological research that does not deal directly with the issue. This date range is based on information found in the text’s opening, which runs as follows:

Íslendingabók gørða ek fyrst byskupum órum, Þorláki og Katli, ok sýndak bæði þeim ok Sæmundi presti. En með því at þeim líkaði svá at hafa eða þar viðr auka, þá skrifaða ek þessa of et sama far, fyr útan áttartölu ok konunga ævi, ok jókk því es mér varð síðan kunnara ok nú es gerr sagt á þessi en á þeiri. En hvatki es missagt es í frœðum þessum, þá es skylt at hafa þat heldr, es sannara reynisk. (*Íslendingabók; Landnámabók* 1968, 3)

I first made *Íslendingabók* for our bishops, Þorlákr and Ketill, and I showed it both to them and Sæmundr the Priest. And such as it pleased them to keep or expand upon it, I then wrote this along the same lines, without/alongside genealogies and biographies of kings, and I added that which afterwards became better known to me and is now more fully told in this [version] than in the other. And whatever is misstated in these records, one is obliged to hold to that which is reckoned to be more accurate.

From other sources, such as *Hungrvaka* (a collection of episcopal biographies from c. 1200) and the Icelandic annals (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 112–13; *Hungrvaka* 1948, 17 and 19), we can gather that Ketill Þorsteinsson was consecrated bishop of Hólar in 1122, and Bishop Þorlákr Runólfsson of Skálholt died in 1133. This provides a straightforward time frame for the interaction named in the passage, and for most researchers this has been sufficient grounds to support the standard dating.

Jakob Benediktsson (1968, xvii; see also Grønlie 2006, xiv) argues further that *Ísl1* was drawn up shortly after 1120, due to its silence on Icelandic events after 1118, such as the death of Bishop Ketill's predecessor Jón Ögmundarson in 1121. This argument overlooks the possibility that Ari had ideological or chronological reasons for stopping the narrative where he did. Given that Ari had ample opportunity to add a reference to Jón's death either before or after he showed *Ísl1* to Jón's successor, we can assume he had no desire to do so.

Ari's prologue admits only that *Ísl1* was shown to the bishops within the 1122–1133 period. He does not claim to have shown *Ísl2* to the bishops nor even that Þorlákr was alive to see it. Björn Sigfússon's suggestion that

the phrase “byskupum órum” (our bishops) implies that both bishops were alive when Ari wrote his prologue is neither decisive nor particularly convincing (Björn Sigfússon 1944, 38; see “Gerr sagt” below). This semantic argument is counterbalanced by Sverrir Tómasson’s observation that the prologue is not addressed directly to its patrons as is typical of contemporary texts, perhaps indicating that one of them was no longer alive (Sverrir Tómasson 1975, 262).

Conversely, the genealogies that accompany *Íslendingabók* do imply that Þorlákr was alive and in office when they were compiled due to their statement that Þorlákr “nú es byskup í Skálaholti” (is currently bishop in Skálholt; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 26). As Ketill is also said to be in office, we can be certain that these genealogies, at least, were composed between 1122 and 1133. However, as Svend Ellehøj (1965, 35) observed, the relationship between the genealogies and *Ísl2* is unclear. If they originally belonged to *Ísl1*, they could easily have been mechanically copied across to *Ísl2* without being updated at some point after 1133. Alternatively, they may never have been part of *Ísl2*, only being attached to the text later in its transmission history (Hagnell 1938, 86; Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xvi).

In opposition to the 1122–1133 dating hypothesis, a handful of researchers – including Björn M. Ólsen (1885, 349), Konrad Maurer (1891, 65), Eva Hagnell (1938, 58–62), Einar Arnórsson (1942, 29–30), Svend Ellehøj (1965, 35; if lukewarmly), Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (2001, 158–59), and most recently Sverrir Jakobsson (2017, 77) – have preferred a dating of 1134 or later. This is based on the fact that Ari’s list of lawspeakers concludes with the twelve-year tenure of Goðmundr Þorgeirsson, who spoke the law for the last time in 1134 according to Ari’s own chronology and subsequent Icelandic annals (Storm 1888, 113). This would therefore establish the summer meeting of the Alþing in 1134 as the *terminus post quem* for the completion of *Íslendingabók* and would furthermore rob the text of its proposed *terminus ante quem* of 1133.

Defenders of the 1122–1133 dating, including Gustav Storm (1873, 13 n. 1), Finnur Jónsson (1923, 366), Björn Sigfússon (1944, 39), Halldór Hermannsson (1948, 17), Jakob Benediktsson (1968, xviii), and Siân Grønlie (2006, xiv), have argued that the reference to Goðmundr must be a later interpolation, perhaps a marginal comment that was incorporated

into the main text during its transmission. The relevant passage runs as follows:

Úlfheðinn Gunnarssonr ens spaka tók lögsoðu eptir Markús ok hafði níu sumur, þá hafði Bergþórr Hrafnssonr sex, en þá hafði Goðmundr Þorgeirssonr tolf sumur. Et fyrsta sumar, er Bergþórr sagði lög upp, vas nýmæli þat gørt, at lög ór skyldi skrifa á bók. (*Íslendingabók; Landnámabók* 1968, 23)

Úlfheðinn son of Gunnar the wise took the lawspeakership after Markús and had it nine years, then Bergþórr Hrafnsson for six, and then Goðmundr Þorgeirsson had it twelve years. The first year Bergþórr spoke the law, a new decree was made that our laws should be written in a book.

Jakob Benediktsson (1968, xviii) argues that Goðmundr's appearance in the passage is incongruous, as the reference to events during Bergþórr's tenure in the following sentence would more smoothly follow on from his appearance in the list. This slight incongruity is hardly enough on its own to conclude that this was a later addition – particularly as Ari is guilty of similar inconsistencies elsewhere in *Íslendingabók* (Einar Arnórsson 1942, 30). Yet some support for the interpolation hypothesis is offered by the absence of Goðmundr from passages in the thirteenth-century texts *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þátr* that copy closely from this part of *Íslendingabók* (see “Gerr sagt” below). Nevertheless, Sverrir Jakobsson (2017, 77 n. 2) points out that Goðmundr makes little sense as a later interpolation, given that he was the only lawspeaker added.

We will return to Goðmundr, but it must be reiterated that even without him the wording of the prologue does not offer a *terminus ante quem* for the text as we have it, despite Þorlákkr's death in 1133 regularly being employed as one in academic discourse. From the prologue alone, we can only deduce the timeframe of an interaction that occurred in the middle of the composition process. Due to their use of the present-tense, the genealogies – with all the attendant uncertainties about their relationship to the main text – are the only part of *Íslendingabók* as we have it that can concretely be dated to

1122–1133. They have consequently played a central role in the discussion of *Íslendingabók*'s composition phases, to which we now turn.

3.1 Composition Phases

Ari's prologue makes it clear that he worked on *Íslendingabók* in two phases. *Ísl1* was shown to the bishops and Sæmundr and thereafter updated to form *Ísl2*. But did both of these versions circulate after Ari's time, or was *Ísl1* simply a draft that was discarded, having served its purpose? Johan Schreiner (1927, 64) fervently espoused the latter view: "min opfatning ndvendigvis m bli at det aldri har foreligget to 'Isleendingabekr' av Are Frode" (my view must necessarily be that there have never been two "*Íslendingaboks*" by Ari fri). Sverrir Tmasson (1975, 262–68) echoes these sentiments and suggests that Ari's statements must be interpreted within the context of medieval learned conventions of modesty.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that neither Schreiner nor Sverrir Tmasson doubt that *Ísl1* did exist in some form, if only as a draft that was later discarded. The observance of literary conventions does not imply that Ari's meeting with the bishops never took place, and doubting him on this matter would throw the veracity of his entire account into question, potentially invalidating *Íslendingabok* as an historical source.

The primary argument that *Ísl1* did circulate is that Snorri Sturluson's prologue to the kings' saga compilation *Heimskringla*, written around a century later, describes a version of *Íslendingabok* that differs slightly from our surviving copy. Could this prologue preserve a trace of *Ísl1*? Snorri states that Ari:

ritai ... mest í upphafi sinnar bokar fr Íslands bygg ok laga-
setning, san fr lgsgumnnum, hversu lengi hverr hafi sagt, ok
hafi þat aratal fyrst til þess, er kristni kom á Ísland, en san allt til
sinna daga. Hann tk þar ok vi mrg nnur demi, bi konunga
ævi í Nregi ok Danmrku ok sv á Englandi ea enn strtendi,
er grzk hfu hér á landi. ... Hann ritai, sem hann sjlfr segir, ævi
Nregskonunga eptir sgu Odds Kolssonar, Hallssonar af Su,
en Oddr nam at Þorgeiri afrskoll, þeim manni, er vitr var ok
sv gamall, at hann bj þ á Niarnesi, er Hkon jarl inn rki var
drepinn. (*Heimskringla* 1941, 5–6)

Wrote mostly in the beginning of his book about Iceland's settlement and the establishment of the laws, then about the lawspeakers – how long each had spoken [the laws] – and related the count of years first up to when Christianity came to Iceland and afterwards all the way up to his own days. He also included many other matters, both biographies of kings in Norway and Denmark and also in England and the great events which had happened here in this land. ... He wrote, as he himself says, biographies of the Norwegian kings based on the account of Oddr, son of Kolr Hallsson of Síða, and which Oddr got from Þorgeirr *afráðskollr*, a man who was wise and so old that he lived in Niðarnes when Jarl Hákon *inn ríki* was killed.

Most of this description clearly aligns with *Íslendingabók* as we have it. However, the references to Oddr Kolsson and Þorgeirr *afráðskollr*'s accounts of the Norwegian kings are lacking from the version we have. Despite this, the citation is strongly reminiscent of Ari's treatment of his oral sources in *Íslendingabók*, on top of which Oddr was Ari's cousin, fitting his tendency to cite family members and acquaintances (Sverrir Jakobsson 2017, 92–94). This and some other references that expand upon information in Ari's text may indicate that Snorri was working from the older version of *Íslendingabók* (Turville-Petre, 1953, 93–94; Jakob Benediktsson 1968, x).

Central to the discussion of the older *Íslendingabók*'s contents is Ari's ambiguous statement that he wrote *Íslz* “fyr útan áttartölu ok konunga ævi” (without/alongside genealogies and the biographies of kings (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 3); Although Johan Schreiner (1927, 65) and Else Mundal (1984), among others, have argued that Ari appended the genealogies and regnal chronology to *Íslz* or else regarded them as independent texts, most researchers interpret “fyr útan” to mean that Ari removed these items from his history following his meeting with the bishops. According to this reading, the genealogies now present in the manuscript must have become re-attached to *Íslz* at a later stage if these indeed are the “áttartölu” Ari described (Hagnell 1938, 86).

If “fyr útan” is read as “without”, Snorri's references to “konunga ævi í Nóregi ok Danmörku ok svá á Englandi” (the biographies of kings in Norway and Denmark and also in England) would seem to indicate

knowledge of *ÍslI*. His wording – “Hann tók þar ... við” ([Ari] included) – implies that the royal biographies were attached in some way to Ari’s book, either as a separate text or as part of the narrative. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the details in Snorri’s prologue that are absent from *Íslendingabók* are largely connected to the Norwegian kings. These include a reference to the relationship between King Óláfr and Hallr Þórarinnsson, who raised Ari from the age of seven (*Heimskringla* 1941, 7). It is at the very least a significant coincidence that Snorri displays knowledge of the same subject matter that Ari singles out in his prologue and that is now absent from *Íslendingabók*, however “fyr útan” is understood. Nevertheless, without further manuscript witnesses to Ari’s work, we cannot say for certain that some or all the additional details found in Snorri’s work were not introduced by intermediate traditions and/or taken from other texts within Ari’s oeuvre.

Although it is probable that *Íslendingabók* had at least two composition phases, it is ultimately impossible to draw concrete conclusions about whether *ÍslI* was circulated independently or was substantially different to the surviving work. The quantity of information somewhat wistfully attributed to *ÍslI* by researchers such as Konrad Maurer (1891) would make it both far longer and wholly different in character (Turville-Petre 1953, 100; Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xii), which is not the sense one gains from Snorri’s synopsis (assuming he was using *ÍslI*). Ari himself does not claim to have cut anything besides (debatably) the “áttartölu ok konunga ævi”. Research that seeks to clarify these matters has often drawn discussion away from the tangible version of *Íslendingabók* that we have and into the realm of speculation. Rather than trying to reconstruct the different versions from later citations of Ari’s work, I take my starting point in the text we have available to us.

4 “Því es mér varð síðan kunnara”

Besides his comments about the bishops and the enigmatic reference to “áttartölu ok konunga ævi”, Ari also writes in his prologue that “jókk því es mér varð síðan kunnara ok nú es gerr sagt á þessi en á þeirri” (I added that which afterwards became better known to me and is now more fully told in this [version] than in the other; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968,

3). We must therefore turn to Ari's sources and the dates at which they could have become available to him. If clear candidates for information that "became better known" to Ari can be identified, we may reach a firmer conclusion about the date of the text as we have it and gain an insight into the process of composition.

Suggestions for these expansions have been made before. Halldór Hermannsson (1930, 40) felt that the chapter on the conversion might have been expanded, although Jakob Benediktsson (1968, xvii) pointed out that this information is unlikely to have become known to Ari at a later stage, given that his main sources for this section of the text were long dead. Jakob Benediktsson's view has until now been the final word on the topic:

Ekki verður sagt með nokkurri vissu hvað það var sem Ari jók við í yngri gerð Íslendingabókar, og ágizkanir um það efni eru haldlitlar. ... Satt að segja verður við það að kannast að um þetta efni verður aldrei neitt sannað, og ein getgátan er naumast annarri betri. (Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xvii)

It cannot be said with any certainty what it was that Ari added to the younger version of *Íslendingabók*, and the guesswork on that topic is poorly supported. ... In truth, we have to recognize that on this subject nothing will ever be proven, and one guess is hardly better than another.

The analysis offered in this article accepts this challenge, albeit aided in part by a source identified since Jakob Benediktsson produced his edition of *Íslendingabók*: Fulcher of Chartres's *Historia Hierosolymitana*.

For the purposes of analysis, it is practical to break Ari's sources down into two distinct categories: external written sources and local knowledge, the latter primarily comprising oral sources and Ari's own memories – his recollections begin in 1074, when he was seven (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 20). Ari himself introduces us to these two strands of authority in the opening chapter of *Íslendingabók* (Allport 2021, 61; Rösli 2021, 67), in which he employs both to produce the date of Iceland's settlement in 870:

Ísland byggðisk fyrst ýr Norvegi á dögum Haralds ens hárfagra, Hálfðanarsonar ens svarta, í þann tíð – *at ætlun ok tǫlu þeira Teits fósttra míns, þess manns es ek kunna spakastan, sonar Ísleifs byskups, ok Þorkels fǫðurbróður míns Gellissonar, es langt mundi fram, ok Þóriðar Snorradóttur goða, es bæði vas margspök ok óljúgfróð*, – es Ívarr Ragnarssonr loðbrókar lét drepa Eadmund enn helga Englakonung; en þat vas sjau tegum ens níunda hundraðs eptir burð Krists, *at því es ritit es í sögu hans*. (*Íslendingabók; Landnámabók* 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 Þóriðr, 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*. (emphasis mine)

As this passage indicates, Ari was diligent in establishing the authority of his oral sources, giving character references and tracing chains of informants back to the periods in question. Nevertheless, Ari did not identify all his local sources, as some passages dealing with Icelandic events have no attribution. In particular, Ari includes a great deal of genealogical material without commenting on his sources. As Ari is credited with authorship of the earliest version of *Landnámabók* (Grønlie 2006, xiii), it is possible that he had compiled these genealogies personally from family traditions too numerous to mention.

Íslendingabók repeatedly demonstrates knowledge of the regnal chronology of Norwegian kings. Ari's reference to *konunga ævi* (biographies of kings) implies that he himself had compiled a comprehensive account of the Norwegian royal succession, although the level of biographical detail this text offered is heavily debated (Hagnell 1938, 130–36; Ellehøj 1965, 48–53; Mundal 1984). This information is also likely to derive from oral sources, such as the account of Oddr Kolsson to which Snorri Sturluson alludes in his prologue.

Ari does not acknowledge any written sources beyond the “saga” of St Edmund mentioned in the paragraph above, although he had clearly obtained Incarnation (*anno domini*) dates, information about reigning popes, and a series of Christendom-wide death notices (obits) from written traditions. The identification of his non-local sources is therefore more speculative. However, as the following overview shows, the written sources that have most often been proposed were, with one notable exception, composed decades before *Íslendingabók* and in theory had ample time to make their way across the North Atlantic to become available to the Icelandic scholar.

Strong intellectual ties to European centres of learning were rapidly developed after Iceland’s conversion at the beginning of the eleventh century. A succession of foreign (mostly English, Norman, and German) bishops, whom Ari lists perfunctorily in *Íslendingabók* (*Íslendingabók; Landnámabók* 1968, 18), were followed by native churchmen who travelled overseas for education and consecration. There were thus many opportunities for books to be transported to Iceland, and the import of books is likely to have played a key role in the development of Iceland’s Christian establishment. Although certainty is impossible, we can weigh the balance of probabilities and locate Ari’s literary sources within this learned context. We must also consider their literary and structural functions within *Íslendingabók* itself to gain a sense of their importance to the narrative.

4.1 Incarnation Dates

Íslendingabók names four Incarnation dates. Each is associated with a specific piece of non-Icelandic information that becomes an intermediary between the Incarnation date and an Icelandic event (see Allport, forthcoming). In order of appearance, they are 870, the death of St Edmund of East Anglia; 1000, the death of Óláfr Tryggvason; 604, the death of Pope Gregory the Great (in the second year of Emperor Phocas’s reign); and 1120, which is noted to be “aldamót” (the confluence of two ages – i.e. lunar cycles). The nineteen-year lunar cycle was of key importance for determining the date of Easter (a complex mathematical process known as *computus*) in Roman Catholic tradition. Together, these dates comprise Ari’s absolute chronological framework, his primary means of connecting Icelandic events into the progression of world history. The settlement of

Iceland is dated to the year of St Edmund's martyrdom and the conversion to the year that Óláfr fell in battle, whereas 604 and 1120 appear in the chronological conclusion of the text.

The martyrdom of St Edmund of East Anglia in 870 is the only piece of information in *Íslendingabók* for which Ari cites a written source – a mysterious “saga”.³ As I have previously argued in *Gripla* (Allport 2021; see also Skårup 1979, 19 and Grønlie 2006, 16 n. 12), the tradition referred to was most likely a composite of Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and Hermannus the Archdeacon's *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, the latter of which was known to Icelandic saga authors in the thirteenth-century. These texts are found bound together in a manuscript of c. 1100 (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii) – only a few years after Hermannus completed his work – and it is likely that the pairing reflects Hermannus's intent in composing *De miraculis* (Allport 2021, 66). There is therefore a generous timeframe of over twenty years for the knowledge of the tradition to have made its way to Iceland in order to be in *Ísl1*.

Ari derived the knowledge that Iceland was settled in the year of Edmund's martyrdom from his foster father Teitr Ísleifsson, who died in 1110 (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 111) – long before *Ísl1* was completed. We can therefore be confident that the martyrdom itself – date or no date – was already mentioned in *Ísl1*. What is more, the date of the martyrdom is altogether too integral to Ari's framing of Icelandic history as we have it to be a late addition. Snorri observes that Ari “hafði þat áratál fyrst til þess, er kristni kom á Ísland, en síðan allt til sinna daga” (related the count of years first up to when Christianity came to Iceland and afterwards all the way up to his own days; *Heimskringla* 1941, 5). Sure enough, Ari calculates the number of years since Edmund's death (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 18 and 25) at both the conversion in 1000 and the conclusion of the text in 1120. If Snorri used *Ísl1*, then this would seem to confirm that the date of the martyrdom was always present. Regardless of whether Snorri used *Ísl1* or *Ísl2*, both the start of the lawspeaker succession in 930 and the chronological conclusion in the text we have – respectively 60 and 250 years after Edmund's death – seem dependent upon this dating being present from the start. Without it, *Íslendingabók*'s chronological structure unravels.

3 By modern reckoning, Edmund died in November 869. Medieval English and Icelandic sources placed the New Year in September (Ólafía Einarasdóttir 1964, 107–26).

Ari's date of 1000 for the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason has most often been attributed to Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, which was completed by 1076 (Schmeidler 1917, lxvi; Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 22–23; Ellehøj 1965, 78; Mundal 1994). This is based on Adam's statement that “interea millesimus ab incarnatione Domini annus feliciter impletus est” (meanwhile, the thousandth year since the Lord's Incarnation was happily concluded; Adam Bremensis 1917, 101) some lines after a reference to Óláfr's death.

Jakob Benediktsson points out (1968, xxiii–xxv) that it is not clear that Adam used this passage to date Óláfr's death, although Ari might still have interpreted it in this way. Nevertheless, Jakob Benediktsson's claim that Ari attributed the date to Sæmundr *fróði* is incorrect. Ari only credits Sæmundr for the knowledge that Óláfr died in the year that Iceland was converted, just as he credits Teitr Ísleifsson for saying that Iceland was settled in the year St Edmund died but attributes the date 870 to the saint's “saga”.

Despite Jakob Benediktsson's objections, it is likely that Adam's work formed a stylistic model for *Íslendingabók*. Else Mundal (1994, 66–69) draws attention to repeated thematic parallels between the two. *Íslendingabók* has a strong affinity with the *gesta episcoporum* (deeds of the bishops), the genre of ecclesiastical history to which the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* belongs (Mundal 1994, 64; Allport, forthcoming).⁴ Both the *Gesta* and *Íslendingabók* consistently provide a cluster of information at the death of each bishop, such as the length of their tenure, their age at consecration and death, and their place of burial.

There is no concrete evidence that the *Gesta Hammaburgensis* was known in Iceland before the fourteenth century, but Iceland was part of the church province of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen up until 1103, when it was incorporated into the newly formed archbishopric of Lund (Grønlie 2006, xxii). Adam of Bremen himself notes that Ísleifr Gizurarson, the first Icelandic bishop, was consecrated by Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen. Although Ari remains silent on the matter, *Hungrvaka* confirms Adam's narrative. It is reasonable to speculate, as Mundal (1994, 66) does, that the *Gesta* would have made its way to Iceland

4 Jonas Wellendorf (2011, 125–27) has also suggested that *Hungrvaka*, which more clearly conforms to the genre of *gesta episcoporum*, was influenced by the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*.

when the latter was still part of the church province of Hamburg-Bremen – in other words, between 1076 and 1103.

The narrative role played by Óláfr's death in 1000 is comparable to that of Edmund in 870. The death, along with Iceland's conversion to Christianity, represents the structural and chronological centrepiece of Ari's historical narrative, taking on typological significance as Iceland's "coming of Christ" moment (Hermann 2007, 22–28; 2010, 149–51). The absence of an Incarnation date at this point in *Ísl1*, where it would make most sense to ground Icelandic events in the absolute progression of universal history, is difficult to reconcile with the interest in chronology Ari demonstrates in the final version of *Íslendingabók*.

It is even possible that the narrative of conversion was constructed around this date. Harald Gustafsson (2011, 25–33) notes that *Íslendingabók* is the earliest source to place the conversion at the turn of the millennium and argues that Ari's account must be regarded critically due to its late date. Adam of Bremen's reference to Ísleifr's consecration is the earliest near-contemporary corroboration of the Icelanders' conversion (Gustafsson 2011, 29). If we accept Gustafsson's argumentation and allow the possibility that Ari and his contemporaries were responsible for crafting an idealized narrative that placed Iceland's conversion moment in 1000, then we can suppose that the date must have been of central importance from the outset.

The date of Gregory the Great's death in 604 most likely derives from the writings of the Venerable Bede (d. 735), with Ellehøj considering the reference to Phocas to be particularly diagnostic (Ellehøj 1965, 76–77; Stefán Karlsson 2000; but see Louis-Jensen 1976 for an alternative view). The influence (direct or indirect) of Bede's approach to chronology is evident in Ari's use of *anno domini* dates, a system pioneered by Dionysus Exiguus (d. c. 544) but popularized by Bede and not yet ubiquitous by Ari's time (Jakob Benediktsson 1968, xxix). The Icelander also shared Bede's interest in time reckoning (as seen in *De temporum ratione*, Bede's treatise on *computus*), devoting the fourth chapter of *Íslendingabók* to the Icelandic reckoning of the year's length. Bede's influence on *Íslendingabók* is so fundamental that it is likely Ari had access to his works when he wrote *Ísl1*.

Ari cites his final Incarnation date, 1120, as the confluence of two lunar

cycles (the boundary falling between 1120 and 1121), although the date is presented as Ari's own calculation based on the intervals from each of the preceding Incarnation dates. The year was most likely derived from an Easter table, a commonplace liturgical aid that stated the date of Easter in each year based on the nineteen-year lunar cycle. Easter tables are likely to have been transported to Iceland by any number of early churchmen. It is therefore uncontroversial to suggest that Ari's familiarity with lunar cycles was derived from an Easter table at some point prior to his completion of *ÍslI*. An Icelandic Easter table is preserved in Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 732 a VII 4to, and begins with the new cycle in 1121, consequently being dated to some point during that cycle (1121–1139). This makes it possible that this very table was Ari's source (Stefán Karlsson 2000, 103).

Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (2001, 148–60) argues that 1120 was not the original conclusion to *ÍslI*, but that Ari excised material relating to the years 1119–1121 (including the death of Jón Ögmundarson) in response to changing political circumstances. He posits that the shared presence of material relating to these years in *Hungrvaka* and *Kristni saga* reveals their use of *ÍslI*, although an expanded version of *Ísl2* or some other intermediary is equally possible.

Given the fundamental role the Incarnation date places in the chronological structure of the text, it is unlikely that *ÍslI*'s narrative of Icelandic events extended beyond 1120. The advantages of using round numbers when making calculations in Roman numerals (Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 44–50), the aesthetically pleasing intervals since the deaths of St Edmund and Óláfr (250 and 120 years, respectively), and the convenient end of the lunar cycle all make the case for this being the original chronological conclusion to Ari's text. The narrative conclusion in 1118 with the codification of the Icelandic laws and the death of Gizurr, who was the first bishop of the new diocese of Skálholt and had introduced tithing, are in keeping with Ari's focus on societal landmarks and make a fitting end to his history.

Furthermore, 1121 was a somewhat tense year in which the escalating feud of two chieftains, Hafliði Másson and Þorgils Oddason, resulted in a confrontation of over two thousand men at the Alþing before a settlement was ultimately reached (*Kristni saga* 2003, 46). Ellehøj (1965, 82) speculated that this event directly inspired the writing of *Íslendingabók* (see also

Lindow 1997, 460; Hjalti Hugason 2000, 107; and Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, 156–57). Although this interpretation finds no support in the text itself, Ellehøj is certainly right that it suited Ari's vision of Iceland as a mature and unified polity to end his history before these events took place.

None of the proposed sources for Ari's Incarnation dates can be proven to have been in Iceland before he wrote *ÍslI*. Yet despite their diverse origins, these dates support one another within the structure of the history, making the absence of any one of them hard to reconcile. Taken together, they represent the thematic opening, midpoint, and culmination of the history, distilling a broader Christian typology that is typical of medieval "national" histories (Hermann 2007, 22–28; 2010, 149–51). If *ÍslI* did not include these dates, then it must have been an altogether different work. If they were absent, we must also account for the improbable coincidence that Ari would stumble upon a set of dates for events already in his text that so perfectly complemented his existing framework for Icelandic history.

4.2 Ari's Obit List and Fulcher of Chartres

Íslendingabók's announcement of Bishop Gizurr Ísleifsson's death in 1118 is accompanied by a list of notable deaths (obits) from throughout Christendom:

Á því ári enu sama obiit Pascalus secundus páfi fyrr enn Gizurr byskup ok Baldvini Jórsalakonungr ok Arnaldus patriarcha í Hierúsalem ok Philippus Sviakonungr, en síðarr et sama sumar Alexíus Grikkjakonungr; þá hafði hann átta vetr ens fjórða tegar setit at stóli í Miklagarði. (*Íslendingabók; Landnámabók* 1968, 25)

In that same year Pope Paschal II died before Bishop Gizurr, as did Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, and Arnaldus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Philip, king of the Swedes, and later the same summer Alexios, king of the Greeks; he had then sat on the throne in Miklagarðr for thirty-eight years.

Poul Skårup (1979, 21) suggested that Ari's source for these strikingly eastern-centric deaths was the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, also known as

the *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, an account of the First Crusade written in the Holy Land by the Frankish priest Fulcher of Chartres in the early decades of the twelfth century. Four of these names appear in the same order in a passage in the *Historia*, in which the observation of a mysterious celestial phenomenon in December of 1117 is interpreted as a harbinger of death:

Subsequenter enim mortui sunt: Paschalis papa mense Ianuario, Balduinus, rex Hierosolymorum, mense Aprili, necnon uxor eius in Sicilia, quam dereliquerat. Hierosolymis etiam patriarcha Arnulfus, imperator quoque Constantinopolitanus Alexis et alii quamplures proceres in mundo. (Fulcheri Carnotensis 1913, 608)

For subsequently these died: Pope Paschal in January; Baldwin, king of the people of Jerusalem, in April; and also his wife in Sicily, whom he had forsaken. Also in Jerusalem, the patriarch Arnulf; also the emperor of Constantinople, Alexios, and several other nobles throughout the world.

The date of 1118 follows shortly afterwards. If this was Ari's source, he would thus have known that this was the same year that Gizurr died, although he chose not to incorporate the Incarnation date itself.

Fulcher of Chartres began his history of the First Crusade in around 1101 and updated it intermittently until 1127 (Fulcher of Chartres 1973, 19–24). Like his contemporary Ari, Fulcher became well known as an historian within his own lifetime, with references to the scholar appearing in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* and the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis, among other texts (Fulcher of Chartres 1973, 5–6) – although none of these sources reproduced the list of obits for 1118.

Indeed, a thorough search of contemporary European chronicles has failed to reveal any other tradition that names each of Paschal, Baldwin, Arnulf, and Alexios together. Europe-centric chronicles such as Orderic's *Historia* (*The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* 1978, 132–33 and 184–89), usually mention Paschal but combine his obit with others about which Ari is silent, such as Queen Matilda of England, Count William of Evreux, and Count Robert of Meulan. References to the deaths of

Baldwin and Alexios can sometimes be found elsewhere in these texts but without the Incarnation date. Crusader chronicles, such as Albert of Aachen's *Historia Hierosolymitanae expeditionis* (Albert of Aachen 2007, 868–75), note Baldwin and Arnulf's deaths (often without an Incarnation date) but do not mention Paschal or Alexios.

Nevertheless, there are several incongruences between *Íslendingabók* and the *Historia*. Ari introduces the obscure figure of “Philippus Svíakonungr” (Philip, king of the Swedes), for example. Nothing besides his inclusion in this passage supports Ólafía Einarsdóttir and Poul Skårup's suggestion that he died in the Holy Land (Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 35; Skårup 1979, 20). The next sources to refer to Philip are Swedish king-lists from the thirteenth century (Skårup 1979, 20). It is possible his appearance reflects an interpolation in Ari's exemplar, but it is perhaps more likely – given the Icelandic interest in Scandinavian regnal chronologies – that Ari learned of his death from an oral report. Philip, at least, might already have been connected to Gizurr's death in *Ísl.*

Ari correctly notes that Arnulf died before Gizurr's death on 28 May, whereas Alexios died “siðar et sama sumar” (later the same summer; Jakob Benediktsson 1968, 25), but there is nothing in the *Historia*'s text to indicate when either of these individuals died, nor the length of Alexios's reign. Additionally, Ari uses the Latin word “obiit” (died) in his passage, whereas Fulcher says “mortui sunt” (are dead). Given Ari's use of Latinisms elsewhere, this could simply reflect his use of a verb more appropriate to his passage, rather than deriving from his source. Considering the otherwise unparalleled correspondence between the passages in Ari and Fulcher's texts, these additional details most likely indicate that Ari had access to an annotated version of the *Historia* or an expanded and/or reformatted intermediary that has not survived.

Neither Skårup nor those who have cited his arguments have fully explored the implications his identification has for the dating of *Íslendingabók*: namely, that Ari could not possibly have had access to this source, or any derivative of it, before 1125 at the absolute earliest. Surviving manuscript witnesses indicate that the earliest circulated recension of the *Historia* to contain the 1118 obits concluded with the capture of Tyre in 1124 by Venetian crusaders, an event which Fulcher dates to 7 July (Fulcher of Chartres 1973, 23 and 47; Skårup 1979, 21). In other words, no version

of the *Historia* containing the 1118 obits is known to have circulated prior to the summer of 1124.

We must then allow time for this information to make its way to Iceland. To pinpoint the most generous *terminus post quem* for Ari's use of this material, we must consider the (highly unlikely) scenario that Fulcher's text was transported directly to Iceland following its completion shortly after the fall of Tyre. The best indication of the length of the journey from Jerusalem to Iceland is given by the text *Leiðarvísir*. Composed in the thirteenth century in the form we know it, this itinerary purports to narrate the pilgrimage of a twelfth-century Icelandic abbot called Nikulás (Marani 2012, 42–47). By *Leiðarvísir*'s reckoning, a journey beginning in Jerusalem in mid-July could not have reached the shores of the North Atlantic before, at the earliest, the end of October (*Alfræði íslenzk* 1908, 12–13 and 23).⁵ By this point, the autumn seas would be too rough for the voyage to Iceland to be made. As the thirteenth-century Norwegian treatise *Konungs skuggsjá* puts it: “varla se siðarR til hættende yfir hof at fara en íþænn tima er inn gengr andværðr octobæR” (one should not venture to cross the seas any later than the start of the season beginning in October; *Konungs skuggsjá* 1983, 36). According to the same text, the seas would not be sufficiently calm for ocean voyages before the beginning of April (*Konungs skuggsjá* 1983, 37).

We must therefore regard April 1125 as the earliest date by which Ari could have had access to the list of obits. In all likelihood, it would have come to Iceland much later, allowing time for the additional information in *Íslendingabók* to have been incorporated into the tradition. It is also possible that Ari's information derived ultimately from Fulcher's final recension from the summer of 1127 (Fulcher of Chartres 1973, 18 and 24). In that case, it is unlikely that he would have had access to it before 1128, if not later.

5 Abbot Nikulás's journey from the banks of the Jordan to Aalborg in Jutland took exactly fifteen weeks. His outward journey indicates that the voyage would continue on to western Norway before crossing to Iceland. This is consistent with the voyage to Iceland described in *Landnámabók* (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 32–33). Scholium 155 in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis* (Adam Bremensis 1917, 272) also notes that it takes thirty days to sail to Iceland from Aalborg, which if accurate would mean that a journey from Jerusalem to Iceland would, at the best of times, take approximately four-and-a-half months.

Could this, then, be information that “varð síðan kunnara” (became better known afterwards) to Ari? Of all Ari’s written sources, it seems the best candidate. Unlike the deaths of St Edmund and Óláfr Tryggvason, these obits are less integral to the structure of the history. Nevertheless, they suited Ari’s approach to chronology as they allowed him to link the death of Gizurr to those of secular and spiritual leaders from throughout Christendom, as well as linking Icelandic history to the medieval Christian world’s spiritual centres, Rome and the Holy Land (Allport, forthcoming). It is therefore unsurprising that he would choose to incorporate these notices if he encountered them at some point after the completion of *Ísl1*. If it is thought more likely that the information was already present in *Ísl1*, we must acknowledge 1125 as a generous *terminus post quem* for the completion of Ari’s first version, accepting that a later date is more likely.

Whether or not 1125 should be regarded as the *terminus post quem* for the surviving version of *Íslendingabók* hinges on whether the presence of Goðmundr Þorgeirsson in Ari’s list of lawspeakers is viewed as an interpolation. We must therefore turn to Ari’s sources of local knowledge.

4.3 Ari’s Local Knowledge

Whereas the arrival of external written sources is the subject of speculation, when it comes to Ari’s local sources, we are on firmer ground. Ari names ten direct oral authorities throughout his history: Teitr Ísleifsson (d. 1110), Þorkell Gellisson (fl. late eleventh century), Þóriðr Snorradóttir (d. 1113), Hallr Órækjason (fl. unknown), Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson (d. 1116×1118), Sæmundr *fróði* Sigfússon (d. 1133), Hallr Þórarinsson from Haukadalsr (d. 1089), Gizurr Ísleifsson (d. 1118), and Markús Skeggjason (d. 1107).⁶ In addition, Snorri Sturluson credits Oddr Kolsson (fl. late eleventh century) as Ari’s source for the Norwegian regnal chronology. All but two of these individuals are known or likely to have been dead by the end of 1118, the exceptions being Sæmundr *fróði*, who died in 1133, and Hallr Órækjason, about whom little is known. This suggests that Ari had begun the process of assembling material for a history of Iceland long before the work was shown to the bishops.

6 The death dates of Þóriðr, Sæmundr, and Hallr are sourced from the various Icelandic annals (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 19–20 and 110). *Hungrvaka* tells us that Úlfheðinn Gunnarson died before Bishop Gizurr (*Hungrvaka* 1948, 15), and the death of Markús Skeggjason is noted in *Kristni saga* (2006, 53).

Most of the knowledge these sources imparted related to events of the distant past, and in particular the ninth and tenth centuries: the settlement; the foundation of the Alþing; the conversion; and so forth. Sæmundr *fróði* told Ari that Óláfr Tryggvason fell in the same year that Christianity was accepted at the Alþing. As Ari lists Sæmundr as one of the people to whom he showed *ÍslI* (along with the bishops), Schreiner (1927, 65) suggested that Sæmundr informed him of the connection at that point. Ellehøj (1965, 33) disputes this, however, as there is no reason to suppose that Sæmundr could not have imparted this knowledge to Ari earlier.

Hallr Órækjason told Ari about the history of the land chosen for the site of the Alþing before 930 – a key detail, as the confiscation of the land from its murderous owner Þórir *kroppinskeggi* made it a neutral site suited for the purpose of a general assembly. Although it is not inconceivable that Ari only spoke to Hallr after *ÍslI* was complete, his account is integral to the story of how the Alþing came to be located at Þingvellir and is therefore likely to have been present from the start.

The amount of information attributed to oral sources diminishes as the narrative approaches its conclusion and Ari's own recollections take over. Consequently, the only local information that certainly could not have been known to Ari beforehand relates to events that had not yet come to pass when he wrote *ÍslI*. Only one piece of information meets this criterion, and that is the lawspeaker tenure of Goðmundr Þorgeirsson from 1123–1134. In fact, given the uncertainties that surround Ari's written sources, this is the only piece of information in the text, Icelandic or otherwise, that we definitively know could not have been in *ÍslI*. We must therefore consider the role played by Goðmundr's presence in the text and interrogate the suggestion that it is a later interpolation.

4.4 “Gerr sagt á þessi en á þeirri”

As Einar Arnórsson (1942, 30) noted, even without Goðmundr the lawspeaker chronology extends beyond Ari's narrative of Icelandic events, ending with Bergþórr Rafnsson in 1122. As this tenure ended the same summer that Bishop Ketill assumed office, i.e. at the *terminus post quem* for Ari's completion of *ÍslI*, we can be confident that Bergþórr was already mentioned in *ÍslI*, and indeed he is present in the subsequent reuses of this passage in *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þáttr* where Goðmundr is absent. By

the same token, we must acknowledge that Goðmundr was most likely in office when Ari presented *Ísl1* to the bishops, unless this happened before the summer of 1123, when he spoke the law for the first time.

The lawspeaker succession was an integral part of Ari's approach to chronology, as Snorri notes in his prologue: "hann ritaði ... frá lögsgu-mönnum, hversu lengi hverr hafði sagt" (he wrote...about the lawspeakers, how long each had spoken [the laws]; *Heimskringla* 1941, 5–6). The succession provides a linear timescale that acts as the chronological background for Icelandic events. I argue elsewhere that this chronology was largely abstracted from the events themselves, instead creating a framework, an Icelandic "time zone" in which they could unfold (Allport, forthcoming). It is for this reason that Bergþórr Hrafnsson's tenure could extend beyond Ari's framework of narrative events and his carefully calculated chronological conclusion. It would therefore be entirely in keeping with Ari's chronological structure to update the succession with new information if it had become available. In doing so, the chronology would become "gerr sagt á þessi en á þeirri" (more fully told in this [version] than the other; *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 3).

Extending the same logic, Ari might even have mentioned Goðmundr in *Ísl1*, albeit without yet being able to include his full tenure. Furthermore, the fact that no reference is made to the following lawspeaker, Hrafn Úlfheðinsson – who first spoke the law in 1135, according to the Icelandic *Konungsannáll* (1888, 113) – suggests that *Ísl2* was completed before he had first performed his duties. There are therefore reasonable grounds to argue for the summer meeting of the Alþing in 1135 as the *terminus ante quem* for *Íslendingabók* as we have it.

Alternatively, as Eva Hagnell (1938, 62) believed, Ari may have preferred only to refer to completed tenures. In that case, Goðmundr would only have appeared in *Ísl2*, and the *terminus ante quem* would be the Alþing meeting of 1138, when Hrafn Úlfheðinsson last spoke the law. This is pure speculation, however; Ari's silence on Bishop Jón Ögmundarson's death in 1121 suggests that he had no issue with leaving tenures open-ended when it suited his chronological principles.

If Goðmundr were not added by Ari, we must wonder, as Sverrir Jakobsson does, why he was apparently the only lawspeaker to be inserted by a later scribe. Two lawspeakers after Goðmundr (Hrafn Úlfheðinsson,

1135–1138, and Finnur Hallsson, 1139–1145) had completed terms of office by the time Ari died in 1148 (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 113–14). By the time the manuscript from which our version of *Íslendingabók* derives was completed in c. 1200, a further four lawspeakers had held office (Gunnar Úlfheðinsson, 1146–1155; Snorri Húnbogason, 1156–1170; Styrkár Oddason, 1171–1180; and Gizurr Hallsson, 1181–1200 (*Íslandske Annaler* 1888, 114–15, 117–118, and 121)). The most obvious reason for only one lawspeaker to be added to *Íslendingabók* is that only one lawspeaker had held office since the work had been shown to the bishops. The person most likely to have added this lawspeaker so soon after that meeting is Ari himself. If we do not think Ari was responsible for the addition, then it must have been inserted in one of the earliest copies of his text, while he was still very much alive.

Yet how are we to explain the absence of Goðmundr from dependent passages in *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þáttur*? If one subscribes to the belief that *Ísl1* circulated independently, the answer is straightforward. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (2001, 153–54) is among those who argue that both *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þáttur* used this older version (although see “Conclusions” below).

Yet even if these sagas follow *Ísl2*, Goðmundr’s absence in the dependent passages is not as decisive as it might first appear (Hagnell 1938, 59–61). Their authors did not share Ari’s aim of creating a history of Icelandic social development up to their own time nor did they use the lawspeaker succession as a chronological backbone, as Ari did. In both cases, the primary motivation for borrowing the passage in question is to use the first year of Bergþórr Hrafnsson’s tenure to date events beginning in 1117. Consequently, the inclusion of Goðmundr’s tenure, beginning in 1123, was extraneous to their purposes.

Kristni saga paraphrases the entire section and even omits any reference to the length of Bergþórr Hrafnsson’s tenure, as this was irrelevant to the purpose of dating the codification of the laws:

Þá er Gizurr byskup hafði tuttugu ok fim vetr verit byskup, þá tók Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson lögsoðu, en Markús var þá andaðr. <Þá tók lögsoðu Bergþórr Hrafnsson.> Ok it fyrsta sumar er hann sagði lög opp var nýmæli þat gjört at um vetrinn eptir skyldi rita lögín. (*Kristni saga* 2003, 41–42)

Then when Bishop Gizurr had been bishop for twenty-five years, Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson took the lawspeakership, and Markús was then dead. Then Bergþórr Hrafnsson took the lawspeakership. And the first summer he spoke the law, a new decree was made that in the following winter the laws should be written.

This passage displays none of Ari's careful chronological instincts and is essentially redundant as an absolute means of dating the events described. We are not told how long Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson spoke the law and are thus given no way of relating Bergþórr's accession, and therefore the writing of the laws, to the year of Gizurr's tenure (although this can be deduced from subsequent passages).

Although *Haukdæla þáttur* more closely follows the passage in *Íslendingabók*, it omits not only Goðmundr but also the entirety of the following passage on the recording of the laws. It instead skips ahead in Ari's narrative, using the first year of Bergþórr's tenure to date Bishop Gizurr's final illness:

Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson tók lögsögu eftir Markús ok hafði níu sumur. Þá hafði Bergþórr Hrafnsson sex sumur. It fyrsta sumar, er Bergþórr sagði lög upp, var Gizurr byskup eigi þingfærr. (*Haukdæla þáttur* 1953, 93–94)

Úlfheðinn Gunnarsson took the lawspeakership after Markús and had it nine summers. Then Bergþórr Hrafnsson had it six summers. The first summer when Bergþórr spoke the law, Bishop Gizurr was not able to go to the þing.

As an entire continuous section of the text has been excised, it is impossible to know whether *Haukdæla þáttur's* exemplar included a reference to Goðmundr or not.

The changes in *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þáttur* make it clear that their authors were engaging creatively with their source material, not copying blindly (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, 150). These authors took the same approach to Ari's chronological conclusion, discarding the date of 1120,

which was irrelevant beyond Ari's framing of his own history. *Kristni saga* also omits Ari's references to the deaths of St Edmund and Óláfr Tryggvason and adds the Incarnation date 1118, whereas *Haukdæla þáttr* removes St Edmund as the intermediary between the Incarnation date and the settlement of Iceland. It is also possible that Goðmundr was excised from an intermediate exemplar for similar reasons. In sum, Goðmundr's absence from *Kristni saga* and *Haukdæla þáttr* does not prove that he was a later interpolation in *Íslz*.

With these texts removed from the equation, the suggestion that Goðmundr was added at a later date is difficult to sustain. The only factor that actively argues against his presence in Ari's *Íslz* is the comment that Þorlákr "nú es byskup í Skálaholti" (is currently bishop in Skálholt) in the genealogies. Even assuming that these genealogies were always attached to the text, there is a scenario in which their continued use of the present tense after 1133 is justifiable, if not completely accurate. As with the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, the rough seas of the North Atlantic may hold a clue.

Hungrvaka tells us that Þorlákr died in February of 1133 and that Magnús Einarsson, Ari's second cousin (*Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók* 1968, 318; Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, 158), was nominated as his successor that summer. However, Magnús's journey to Norway for consecration was delayed by bad weather until the summer of 1134. He was consecrated by Archbishop Özurr of Lund on the Feast of St Simon (28 October) in 1134 and returned to take up office in the summer of 1135 (*Hungrvaka* 1948, 21).

Thus, although Þorlákr had passed away during this period, he had yet to be officially replaced. In this situation, Ari might be forgiven for not updating the genealogies to reflect Þorlákr's death. Until news of Magnús's consecration, or else Magnús himself, had arrived in Iceland in the summer of 1135, it would not be known for certain whether his term had officially begun. Therefore, the genealogies were not "incorrect" inasmuch as no one else could yet claim to be bishop of Skálholt. While not a fully satisfactory explanation, this is at least a possibility. Moreover, the same argument can counter Björn Sigfússon's point about the phrase "byskupum órum" (our bishops) in Ari's prologue. Before 1135, there were no other bishops to whom Ari could refer.

5 Conclusions

The traditional dating of *Íslendingabók* to 1122–1133 is built on a flawed reading of the history’s prologue, the use of the present tense in genealogies whose presence in the original text cannot be proven, and an unconvincing dismissal of countervailing information within the text itself as a later interpolation. Nevertheless, this dating has largely been accepted by researchers without its proponents ever having effectively “won” the argument. I have here argued that clues to the dating and composition of *Íslendingabók* are best gleaned from an analysis of its sources. In light of Ari’s claim to have expanded the text he showed to the bishops and Sæmundr Sigfússon between 1122 and 1133, we can attempt to categorize his sources based on when they might have become available to him. My analysis supports a dating of 1134–1135 for the completion of the text as we have it.

All but two of Ari’s acknowledged oral informants were definitely known to Ari by 1122, as they had passed away beforehand. To this, we can add sources that were probably known to Ari before he wrote *ÍslI*, where nothing convincingly argues the contrary: Hallr Órækjuson; Sæmundr fróði; Oddr Kolsson; genealogies; Easter tables; Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* and *De temporum ratione*; Adam of Bremen’s *Gesta Hammaburgensis*; and the “saga” of St Edmund. Each of these sources offered information which either related to events long past or was integral to Ari’s aims in structuring Icelandic history and connecting it to the progression of universal history.

We are left with the obits deriving ultimately from Fulcher of Chartres’s *Historia Hierosolymitana* and the appearance of Goðmundr Þorgeirsson’s full term on the list of lawspeakers as the only pieces of information whose availability to Ari before he wrote *ÍslI* is in doubt or impossible. The former could not have been known to Ari before 1125 at the absolute earliest, and the latter was not completed before the summer of 1134.

Although we cannot be certain that the obits were not present in *ÍslI*, they must be regarded as compelling candidates for information that “varð ... kunnara” (became better known) to Ari. Their function within Ari’s chronological structure is not so important that they must have been present from the beginning, unlike Ari’s Incarnation dates. Nevertheless, if

they are considered to belong to *Ísl1*, we must revise the traditional *terminus post quem* of Ari's meeting with the bishops up from 1122 to 1125. Similarly, if Goðmundr's appearance on the list of lawspeakers is regarded as a later interpolation, we must regard 1125 as the *terminus post quem* for *Ísl2*.

The debate over Goðmundr's appearance in *Íslendingabók* raises questions about the importance we as modern researchers attach to Ari *fróði*'s authorship. Regardless of whether Ari himself added Goðmundr to the list, this was the latest datable piece of information to be added to "our" version of *Íslendingabók*, and 1134 can thus be included in the time frame for the text's final composition phase. The summer of 1135 becomes a possible *terminus ante quem* given the absence of Goðmundr's successor Hrafn Úlfheðinsson, which is difficult to explain (either as Ari's work or a later addition) unless the latter had not yet taken office. Alternatively, Hrafn's final summer as lawspeaker, 1138, must be considered the ultimate *terminus ante quem* if only full terms were considered worthy of inclusion.

Having said that, there is no good reason to think that Ari could *not* have added this information, making the lawspeaker list "gerr sagt" (more fully told) than in *Ísl1*. Nothing in the prologue suggests that Bishop Þorlákur lived to see *Ísl2*, and the genealogies' observation that he "is now bishop of Skálholt" can be justified in at least three ways that do not conflict with the text's dating to 1134–1135: the genealogies were only attached to our version of *Íslendingabók* at a later stage; they were copied blindly from an earlier version of *Íslendingabók*; or it was not felt necessary to update the genealogy as Þorlákur's replacement was not yet in office. Similarly, if Ari simply wished to appeal to the bishops as the highest spiritual authorities in Iceland in observance of contemporary literary conventions, he might be prepared to look beyond the fact that one of them had recently passed away if his replacement was not yet installed. Finally, Goðmundr's absence in subsequent traditions simply reflects those traditions' active engagement with their source material.

This article's final word on the dating of *Íslendingabók* is therefore that the surviving version of the text could not have been completed before 1125 at the earliest but was most probably completed between the summer Alþing meetings of 1134 and 1135, and at any rate before the Alþing meeting of 1138 (Figure 1). On the composition of *Íslendingabók*, this article has endorsed the concept that the surviving version was shaped over the course

of two distinct phases. Most of the material in the second version was carried over from the first. Beyond that, this analysis has little concrete to say about what material may have been cut or whether the first version was ever circulated. Nevertheless, there is room for some speculation in this regard.

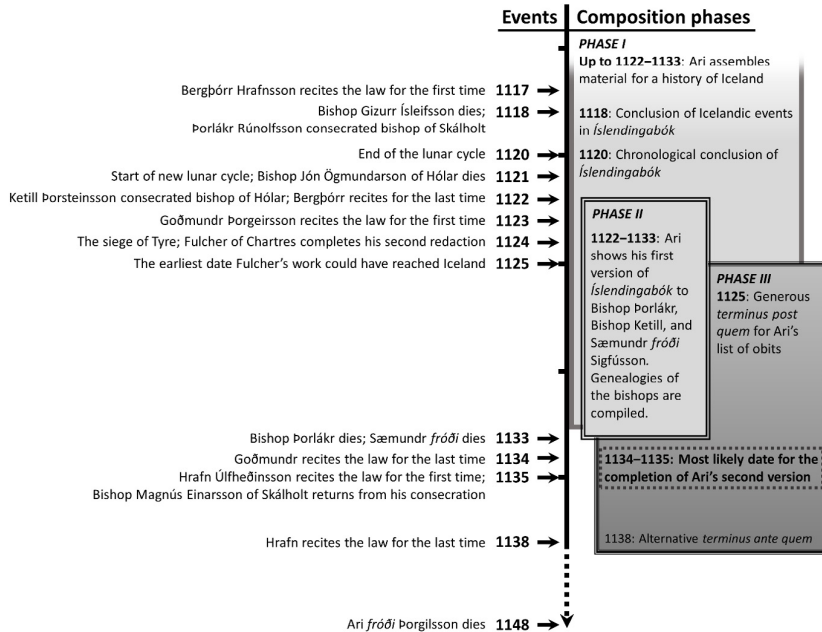


Figure 1: Timeline of events and proposed production phases of *Íslendingabók*.

For example, whereas previous researchers have used the subsequent history of *Íslendingabók* to speculate about its composition, we can now apply the conclusions of this article to speculate about the versions that later authors had available to them. *Kristni saga*, *Hungrvaka*, and *Haukdæla þáttr* all had access to a version of *Íslendingabók* that contained the list of obits from 1118. The arguments presented here would therefore suggest that they used *Ísl2*, as did the Icelandic annals, which frequently include these deaths at the appropriate date. Deviations and expansions in these sources may indicate the use of an intermediate tradition or the use of other texts from Ari's oeuvre. *Heimskringla*, on the other hand, refers to none of the information here assigned to *Ísl2*. It remains conceivable, if unprovable, that Snorri had access to an older version of *Íslendingabók*.

Íslendingabók is a significant literary monument: the oldest surviving (and, according to Snorri, the first) vernacular history of Iceland. Its legacy loomed large in medieval Icelandic scholarship to an extent disproportional to its length. The dating and composition of this text are key factors to consider in understanding the context that may have shaped it, and a re-dating of even a few years can considerably alter our perception. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, a more recent advocate of the 1134 dating, points to tumultuous political events in Scandinavia and northern Europe during this period as a possible motivation for the completion of *Íslz* (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, 158–60). This possibility, combined with Ari's willingness to incorporate new sources from an impressively broad learned network, highlights the dynamism of this short but compelling text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPTS

Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Reykjavík

AM 113 a fol.

AM 113 b fol.

AM 732 a VII 4to

British Library, London

MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii

PRIMARY SOURCES

Adam Bremensis. 1917. *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. Edited by Bernhard Schmeidler. MGH SS rer. Germ. 2. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung.

Albert of Aachen. 2007. *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*. Edited and translated by Susan B. Edgington. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Alfræði íslenzk: Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur 1. 1908. Edited by Kristian Kálund. Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri.

Ari Thorgilsson. 1930. *The Book of Icelanders (Íslendingabók)*. Edited and translated by Halldór Hermannsson. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library.

The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis Volume 6: Books XI, XII, and XIII. 1978. Edited and translated by Marjorie Chibnall. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The First Grammatical Treatise. 1972. Edited and translated by Hreinn Benediktsson. University of Iceland Publications in Linguistics 1. Reykjavík: Institute of Nordic Linguistics.

- Fulcher of Chartres. 1973. *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*. Edited by Harold S. Fink. Translated by Frances Rita Ryan. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Fulcheri Carnotensis. 1913. *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095–1127), Mit Erläuterungen und einem Anhage*. Edited by Heinrich Hagenmeyer. Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung.
- Haukdala þátr*. 1953. Edited by Guðni Jónsson. *Sturlunga saga* 1. Akureyri: Prentverk Odds Björnssonar h.f., 89–100.
- Heimskringla* 1. 1941. Edited by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson. Íslenzk fornrit XXVI. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag.
- Hungrvaka*. 1948. Edited by Guðni Jónsson. *Biskupa sögur* 1. Reykjavík: Snorra-
prent h.f., 1–33.
- Islandske Annaler indtil 1578. Udgivne for det norske historiske Kildeskriftfond*. 1888. Edited by Gustav Storm. Christiania: Grøndahl & Sons Bogtrykkeri.
- Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*. 1968. Edited by Jakob Benediktsson. Íslenzk fornrit I. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag.
- Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders; Kristni Saga: The Story of the Conversion*. 2006. Edited and translated by Siân Grønlie. London: Viking Society for Northern Research.
- Konungs skuggsiá*. 1983. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen. *Norrøne tekster* 1. Oslo: Norsk historisk kildeskrift institutt.
- Kristni saga*. 2003. Edited by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, Ólafur Halldórsson, and Peter Foote. In *Biskupa sögur* 1, 3–48. Íslenzk fornrit XV. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Allport, Ben. 2021. “Unearthing St Edmund: A Source for Edmund’s Martyrdom in *Íslendingabók*.” *Gripla* 32: 57–72.
- Allport, Ben. Forthcoming. “The Chronological Structure of *Íslendingabók* and its Legacy.” In *Time, Space, and Narrative in Medieval Icelandic Literature*, edited by Ben Allport and Alison Finlay. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Barði Guðmundsson. 1936. “Tímatal annála um viðburði söguvaldar.” *Andvari* 61: 32–44.
- Björn M. Ólsen. 1885. “Om Forholdet mellem de to Bearbejdelser af Ares Islændingebog.” In *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie*, 341–71.
- Björn Sigfússon. 1944. *Um Íslendingabók*. Reykjavík: Vikiingsprent.
- Einar Arnórsson. 1942. *Ari fráði*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Ellehøj, Svend. 1965. *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*. Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 26. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.
- Finnur Jónsson. 1923. *Den oldnorske ok oldislandske litteraturs historie* 2. Copenhagen: Gad.
- Grønlie, Siân. 2006. “Introduction.” *Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders; Kristni Saga: The Story of the Conversion*. Edited and translated by Siân Grønlie, vii–xlvi. London: Viking Society for Northern Research.

- Gustafsson, Harald. 2011. "Íslands kristnande – en kritisk undersökning." *Scandia* 77: 18–37.
- Hagnell, Eva. 1938. *Are Frode och hans författarskap*. Lund: Håkan Ohlssons boktryckeri.
- Halldór Hermannsson. 1930. "Introductory Essay." Ari Thorgilsson. *The Book of Icelanders (Íslendingabók)*. Edited and translated by Halldór Hermannsson, 1–46. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library.
- Halldór Hermannsson. 1948. "Ari Þorgilsson fróði." *Skírnir* 122: 5–29.
- Hastrup, Kirsten. 1990. *Island of Anthropology: Studies in Past and Present Iceland*. Odense: Odense University Press.
- Hermann, Pernille. 2007. "Íslendingabók and History." In *Reflections on Old Norse Myths*. Studies in Viking and Medieval Scandinavia 1, edited by Pernille Hermann, Jens Peter Schjødt, and Rasmus Trandum Kristensen, 17–32. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Hermann, Pernille. 2010. "Who Were the *Papar*? Typological Studies in *Íslendingabók*." In *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West: Papers from the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18–27 August 2005*, edited by J. Sheehan and D. Ó Corráin, 145–53. Dublin: Four Courts Press.
- Hjalti Hugason. 2000. *Kristni á Íslandi, I. bindi: Frumkristni og upphaf kirkju*. Reykjavík: Alþingi.
- Jakob Benediktsson. 1968. "Formáli." *Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*. Edited by Jakob Benediktsson, v–cliv. Íslenzk fornrit I. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag.
- Lindow, John. 1997. "Íslendingabók and Myth." *Scandinavian Studies* 69: 454–64.
- Louis-Jensen, Jonna. 1976. "Ari og Gregor." *Nordiska studier i filologi och lingvistik. Festskrift tillägnad Gösta Holm på 60-årsdagen den 8. juli 1976*, edited by Lars Svensson, Anne Marie Wieselgren, and Åke Hansson. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 273–79.
- Marani, Tomasso. 2012. "*Leiðarvísir*. Its Genre and Sources, with Particular Reference to the Description of Rome." Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Durham.
- Maurer, Konrad. 1891. "Über Ari fróði und seine Schriften." *Germania* 36: 61–120.
- Mundal, Else. 1984. "Íslendingabók, ættar tala og konunga ævi." In *Festskrift til Ludvig Holm-Olsen på hans 70-årsdag den 9. juni 1984*, edited by Øvre Ervik, 255–71. Bergen: Alvheim & Eide akademisk forlag.
- Mundal, Else. 1994. "Íslendingabók vurdert som bispestolskrønike." *Alvíssmál* 3: 63–72.
- Ólafía Einaradóttir. 1964. *Studier i kronologiske metode i tidlig islandsk historieskrivning*. Bibliotheca historica Lundensis 8. Stockholm: Natur och kultur.
- Rösli, Lukas. 2021. "The Primal Scribe: The Old Norse Scriptogenesis and Ari Þorgilsson inn fróði as Iceland's First Author." In *In Search of the Culprit: Aspects of Medieval Authorship*, edited by Lukas Rösli and Stefanie Gropper, 53–74. Berlin: DeGruyter.
- Schmeidler, Bernhard. 1917. "Einleitung." *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. Edited by Bernhard Schmeidler, vii–lxviii. MGH SS rer. Germ. 2. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung.

- Schreiner, Johan. 1927. *Saga og oldfunn. Studier til Norges eldste historie*. Oslo: Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo. II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse. No. 4.
- Skårup, Poul. 1979. "Ari frodes dødliste for året 1118." *Opuscula* 6: 18–22.
- Stefán Karlsson. 2000. "Fróðleiksgreinar frá tólfu öld." In *Stafkrókar*, edited by Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, 95–118. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi.
- Storm, Gustav. 1873. *Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning, en kritisk undersøgelse*. Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.
- Sveinbjörn Rafnsson. 2001. *Sögugerð Landnámabókar: Um íslenska sagnaritun á 12. og 13. öld*. Ritsafn sagnfræðistofnunar 35. Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands.
- Sverrir Jakobsson. 2017. "Narrating History in Iceland: The Works of Ari Þorgilsson." *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 137: 75–99.
- Sverrir Tómasson. 1975. "Tækileg vitni." *Afmælisrit Björns Sigfússonar*, edited by Björn Þorsteinsson and Sverrir Tómasson. Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 251–87.
- Turville-Petre, Gabriel. 1953. *Origins of Icelandic Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wellendorf, Jonas. 2011. "Whetting the Appetite for a Vernacular Literature: The Icelandic *Hungurvaka*." In *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)*, edited by Ildar H. Garipzanov, 123–42. Turnhout: Brepols.

ÁGRIP

Heimildir, aldursgreining og samsetning *Íslendingabókar*

Efnisorð: Íslendingabók, Ari fróði, aldursgreining, heimildir, Fulcher of Chartres

Í formála að *Íslendingabók* segist Ari fróði Þorgilsson hafa sýnt biskupunum Þorláki Runólfssyni í Skálholti (biskup 1122–1145) og Katli Þorsteinssyni á Hólum (biskup 1118–1133) eldri gerð textans. Að því búnu endursamdi hann textann með hliðsjón af „því es mér varð síðan kunnara ok nú es gerr sagt á þessi en á þeiri.“

Tilvísunin til biskupanna hefur verið notuð til að tímasetja textann til árabilsins 1122–1133, enda þótt tilvísun til Guðmundar Þorgeirssonar (lögsögumaður 1123–1134) í skrá yfir lögsögumenn í textanum hafi verið notuð til að tímasetja hann til 1134 eða síðar. Fræðimenn hafa ekki verið á einu máli um muninn á gerðunum tveimur, hvort báðar hafi gengið í handritum eða hvort eldri gerðin hafi yfirleitt nokkurn tíma verið til. Umræðan um aldursgreiningu *Íslendingabókar* og ritun hennar hefur fyrst og fremst beinst að því hvernig texti hennar var notaður af íslenskum fræðimönnum á miðöldum.

Í þessari grein beini ég aftur á móti sjónum að heimildum Ara. Hvað gæti hann hafa fengið vitneskju um á milli fyrstu og annarrar gerðar *Íslendingabókar*? Tvö lykilatriði koma til greina: Skrá yfir látna úr *Historia Hierosolymitana* eftir Fulcher frá Chartres og tilvísunin til Guðmundar Þorgeirssonar. Á þessum grundvelli færi ég rök að því að varðveitt gerð *Íslendingabókar* geti ekki hafa verið samin fyrir 1125 og að tímasetningin 1134–1135 sé mun líklegri.

SUMMARY

The Sources, Dating, and Composition of *Íslendingabók*

Keywords: *Íslendingabók*, Ari fróði, dating, sources, Fulcher of Chartres

In the prologue to *Íslendingabók*, Ari fróði Þorgilsson informs us that he showed an early version of the text to Bishop Þorlákr Runólfsson of Skálholt (r. 1118–1133) and Bishop Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (r. 1122–1145). He then updated his text with “því es mér varð síðan kunnara ok nú es gerr sagt á þessi en á þeiri” (that which afterwards became better known to me and is now more fully told in this [version] than in the other).

The reference to the bishops has been used to date the text to 1122–1133, although a reference to Goðmundr Þorgeirsson (r. 1123–1134) in the text’s list of lawspeakers has also been used to date the text to 1134 or later. The differences between the two versions, whether they both circulated, or whether the oldest version existed at all have been the subject of debate. These discussions about *Íslendingabók*’s dating and composition have primarily focused on the text’s use by subsequent medieval Icelandic scholars.

In this article, I instead consider Ari’s sources of information. What could have “become better known” to him between his first and second versions? Two key clusters of information suggest themselves: a list of obits derived from Fulcher of Chartres’s *Historia Hierosolymitana* and the reference to Goðmundr Þorgeirsson. On this basis, I argue that the surviving version of *Íslendingabók* could not have been completed before 1125 at the earliest, and that a date of 1134–1135 is more likely.

Ben Allport

Kulturhistorisk museum, Universitetet i Oslo

Seksjon for etnografi, numismatikk, klassisk arkeologi og universitetshistorie

Postboks 6762 St. Olavs plass, NO-0130 Oslo

benjamin.allport@khm.uio.no