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## ICONOGRAPHY IN ICELANDIC LAW MANUSCRIPTS IN C. 1330–1600<sup>1</sup>

The development of text-related book painting in Icelandic law manuscripts is directly related to the textual production and compilation of the medieval Icelandic vernacular laws, first and foremost to manuscripts that contain one or both of the two major law codes *Jónsbók* and *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*. The following article will provide an overview of both the development and the content of text-related book painting in the Icelandic law codices dated to c. 1330–1600.<sup>2</sup> The functions of the book painting in legal manuscripts can be manifold. Apart from the simple fact

- 1 This article is based on the outcome of a Snorri Sturluson Fellowship I was awarded in early 2022, which allowed me to conduct research at the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum in October–December 2022. I owe my sincere gratitude to the institute for the scholarship, housing, work desk, access to the manuscripts, and, not least, to many of its kind employees for numerous thoughtful discussions during my stay. In addition, I would like to thank the two peer reviewers for their many helpful suggestions and Friederike Richter for allowing me to work with her photographs of Ledreborg 318 4to. All remaining errors are my own.
- 2 All examples have been integrated as far as they have been available to me. Of the 169 known vernacular Icelandic law manuscripts and fragmented codices dated to c. 1200–1600, I was not able to investigate the book painting of twenty-eight. These are primarily dated to the sixteenth century and stored at the British Library (BLAdd 11242, BLAdd 11250), London; Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl. MS. Icel. E.1); Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen (NKS 1925 4to, NKS 1930 a 4to, NKS 1933 4to, NKS 1923 4to, NKS 1924 4to, NKS 1926 4to, NKS 1928 4to, Thott 2098 4to, Thott 593 8vo, Thott 596 8vo, Uldall 322 4to, Thott 2099 4to, Thott 2100 4to, Thott 2101 4to, Thott 2102 4to, Thott 2103 4to, Regius 8174, Rask 72 b, Rask 73); Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm (Engeström 97); Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn, Reykjavík (ÍB 301 4to, Lbs 1186 4to); Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Reykjavík (AM 688 b 4to, AM 688 c 4to, AM 56 8vo); as well as at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen (AM 1056 II 4to). The dating of almost all Icelandic legal manuscripts and fragments named in the present article are from the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php> (accessed on 15.11.2024). For a list of medieval Icelandic legal manuscripts, see Már Jónsson, “The Size of Medieval Icelandic Legal Manuscripts,” *The Power of the Book. Medial Approaches to Medieval Nordic Legal Manuscripts*, ed. Lena Rohrbach (Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut, 2014), 31–37.

that their size and placement structure the individual law texts in which they appear, the text-related content of the book painting adds further levels of meaning to the medieval reader. In the following article, it is the active relationship between image and text that is investigated, with particular focus on the syntactic ways that they are connected to a text,<sup>3</sup> as well as their function as pictorial exegesis of medieval theology.<sup>4</sup> The intention is to present an initial survey of text-related book painting in the Icelandic law codices dated to c. 1330–1600 in order to provide a basis for further research on regional and international aspects of Icelandic legal writing in the Middle Ages. Apart from selective surveys provided by Halldór Hermannsson in his seminal works *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Icelandic Middle Ages* and *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Jónsbók*, art historical research on Icelandic law manuscripts has thus far focused on selected manuscripts or single iconographic topics,<sup>5</sup> or parts of larger

- 3 See Kari Kraus, "Picture Criticism: Textual Studies and the Image," *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 236–256.
- 4 See Hans Belting, *Bild und Kunst. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 457–474. For a basic introduction to the book painting of medieval manuscripts, see Beatrice Kitzinger, "Working with Images in Manuscripts," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval British Manuscripts*, ed. Orietta Da Rold and Elaine Treharne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 76–107.
- 5 See Selma Jónsdóttir, "Gjafamynd í íslenzku handriti," *Árbók hins íslenska fornritafélags* (1964), 5–19; Selma Jónsdóttir, "Biskupsmynd í Arnarþælisbók," *Skírnir* 144 (1970), 111–114; Bera Nordal, "Lögbókarhandritið Gks. 1154 I folio: Íslenskt handrit?," *Skírnir*, 159 (1985), 160–181; Friederike Richter, "Illuminierte Handschriften der Jónsbók. AM 345 fol. Reykjabók und AM 147 4to Heynesbók," vol. 1 (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Unpublished Mag. Art. Thesis, 2013); Karl G. Johansson and Lena Liepe, "Text and Images in Norwegian and Icelandic Fourteenth-Century Legal Manuscripts," *The Power of the Book. Medial Approaches to Medieval Nordic Legal Manuscripts*, ed. Lena Rohrbach (Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt-Universität, 2014), 129–156; Lena Rohrbach, "Matrix of the Law? A Material Study of Staðarhólsbók," *The Power of The Book. Medial Approaches to Medieval Nordic Legal Manuscripts*, ed. Lena Rohrbach (Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt-Universität, 2014), 99–128; Patricia Pires Boulhosa, "Layout and Structure of the Text in Konungsbók," *The Power of the Book. Medial Approaches to Medieval Nordic Legal Manuscripts*, ed. Lena Rohrbach (Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt-Universität, 2014), 75–97; Stefan Drechsler, "Thieves and Workshops: On a Historical Initial in AM 343 fol. Svalbarðsbók," *Saltari stilltur og sleginn Svanhildi Óskarsdóttir fimmtugri 13. mars 2014*, eds. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson and Margrét Eggertsdóttir (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnussen 2014), 37–39; Stefan Drechsler, "Zur Ikonographie der AM 350 fol. Skarðsbók," *Collegium Mediaevale* 27 (2014), 63–113; Stefan Drechsler, "Production and Content of the Fourteenth-Century Norwegian

corpora.<sup>6</sup> The present article is divided into three sections: the first part provides a short historical introduction to the establishment of the vernacular Icelandic law codes in the Middle Ages; the second part describes the appearance of text-related book painting that accompanies these law codes; and the third elaborates on the intentions behind the use of text-related book painting.

As in many other areas of medieval Europe,<sup>7</sup> legislative activity in Iceland really became popular in the later part of the thirteenth century. It was also during the thirteenth century that the first manuscripts to feature complex textuality were made, such as AM 334 fol. (Staðarhólsbók Grágásar),<sup>8</sup> which exhibits literary techniques known from contemporary

Law Manuscript Lundarbók,” *Law Book Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas Gobbitt (Leiden: Brill 2021), 26–50; Stefan Drechsler, “The Illuminated Þjófabálkr in Fourteenth-Century Icelandic Jónsbók Manuscripts,” *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 12 (2016), 1–40; and Stefan Drechsler, “Jón Halldórsson and Law Manuscripts of Western Iceland c. 1320–40,” *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt*, eds. Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 125–150.

- 6 See Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Handritalýsingar í benediktínaklaustrinu á Þingeyrum,” *Íslensk klausturmenning á miðöldum*, ed. Haraldur Bernharðsson (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2016), 227–311; Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum,” *Kirkja og kirkjuskruð. Miðaldakirkjan í Noregi og á Íslandi. Samstæður og andstæður*, ed. Lilja Árnadóttir and Ketil Kirtan (Oslo: Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning NIKU; Reykjavík: Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 1997), 93–98; Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,” *Gripla* 27 (2016), 157–233; Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Um endurheimta fegurð drottningar, ættingja hennar og fyrsta eiganda,” *Þúsund og eitt orð sagt Sigurgeiri Steingrímssyni fimmtugum 2. október 1993*, eds. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson and Gísli Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnussen, 1993), 24–28; Friederike Richter, “Das Buch im Buch: Artefactual Philology in zwei sich überlagernden Schichten,” *From Text to Artefact. Studies in Honour of Anne Mette Hansen*, eds. Katarzyna Anna Kapitan, Beeke Stegmann and Seán D. Vrieland (Leeds: Kismet Press, 2019), 67–82; Lena Liepe, *Studies in Icelandic Fourteenth Century Book Painting* (Reykholzt: Snorrastofa, 2009), 52–75; Lena Rohrbach, “Inscriptions. The Staging and Making of Networks in Late Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts,” *Networks in the Medieval North. Studies in Honour of Jón Viðar Sigurðsson*, ed. Ben Allport, Rosalind Bonté and Hans Jacob Orning, Turnhout: Brepols, 2024, 209–228; and Stefan Drechsler, *Illuminated Manuscript Production in Medieval Iceland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 63–90, 130–142, 153–154.
- 7 For an overview, see Arne Jarrick and Maria Wallenberg Bondesson, *The Dynamics of Law-Making. A World History* (Stockholm: Kungliga Vetterhetsakademien, 2018). For the Icelandic context, see Lena Rohrbach, “Construction, Organisation, Stabilisation. Administrative Literacy in the Realm of Norway, the Case of Iceland,” *Rex Insularum. The Realm of Norway and its dependencies*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir, 2014), 227–263.
- 8 AM 334 fol. (Staðarhólsbók Grágásar) consists of three individual parts dated to c. 1271–

law manuscripts elsewhere in Europe, as well as advanced paratextual methods such as tables of contents and different sizes of initials.<sup>9</sup> Such techniques were then further elaborated in subsequent centuries, in regard to both the text and the legal iconography.

Up until the thirteenth century, Iceland was ruled through a collection of laws commonly known as *Grágás*. In written form, it may date as far back as the early twelfth century, but it may have oral roots in earlier centuries.<sup>10</sup> During the first half of the thirteenth century, Iceland and other parts of the North Atlantic area gradually came under Norwegian control and ultimately became tributary lands of Norway, in the case of Iceland in 1262–64.<sup>11</sup> In 1271, the Norwegian king Magnús Hákonarson (r. 1263–80) commissioned a new law code for Iceland known as *Járnsiða*, which was introduced fully in 1273, but was never quite accepted by the Icelanders.<sup>12</sup>

1272 (ff. 1va–92rb), c. 1271–81 (ff. 92va–108vb) and c. 1300 (f. 1r), respectively. In addition, the oldest part (ff. 1va–92rb), was primarily written by two scribes (1: ff. 1va–69va and ff. 87ra–92rb; 2: ff. 70ra–87ra), can be further separated on the basis of minor changes in the layouts. *Staðarhólsbók Grágásar* was likely produced for the Norwegian court and may have served as a role model for the Icelandic law code of 1281, *Jónsbók*. This theory was put forward by Vilhjálmur Finsen – with reference to P. A. Munch, Jón Sigurðsson and Konrad Maurer – in “Forerindring,” *Grágás efter det Arnemagnæanske Haandskrift nr. 334 fol.: Staðarhólsbók*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1879), viii–ix, and developed further by later scholars. For discussions, see Lena Rohrbach, “Matrix of the Law,” 99–101, and Else Mundal, “Forholdet mellom gamma log ny rett i norsk of islandsk lov i middelalderen,” *Historisk tidsskrift*, 101/4 (2022), 292. On manuscript production units, see Peter J. Gumbert, “Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogeneous Codex,” *Il codice miscellaneo. Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Cassino, 14–17 maggio 2003*, eds. Edoardo Crisci and Oronzo Pecare (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 17–42, and Erik Kwakkel, “Towards a Terminology for the Analysis of Composite Manuscripts,” *Gazette du livre médiéval* 41 (2002), 12–19.

9 See Lena Rohrbach, “Matrix of the Law”; Lena Rohrbach, “Staging and Making of Networks,” 212–214; and Patricia Pires Boulhosa, “Layout and Structure.” For examples from the fourteenth and fifteenth century, see Lena Rohrbach, “Repositioning *Jónsbók*. Rearrangements of the Law in Fourteenth-Century Iceland,” *Legislation and State Formation. Norway and Its Neighbours in the Middle Ages*, ed. Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir, 2013), 183–209, and Stefan Drechsler, “Law Manuscripts from Fifteenth-Century Iceland,” *Gripla* 32 (2021), 171–181.

10 For a survey, see Dieter Strauch, *Mittelalterliches Nordisches Recht bis ca. 1500: Eine Quellenkunde* (Berlin & New York 2016), 108–139.

11 For a discussion on this process, see Sverrir Jakobsson, “All the King’s Men. The Incorporation of Iceland into the Norwegian Realm,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 46/5 (2021), 571–592, and references given there.

12 Sigurður Línal, “Lögfesting *Jónsbókar* 1281,” *Tímarit lögfræðinga* 32 (1982), 182–195;

Following this, in 1280, a revised law called *Jónsbók* was commissioned by King Magnús, and this was introduced a year later. Structurally, and partly in regard to its content, *Jónsbók* is based on *Landslog*, the Norwegian Laws of the Land of 1274; content wise, *Jónsbók* is based not only on *Landslog*, but also on both *Grágás* and *Járnsiða*.<sup>13</sup> In the decades following its ratification, *Jónsbók* was revised by three law amendments (*Réttarbætr*) in 1294, 1305 and 1314, which were issued by the two subsequent kings of Norway, King Eiríkr Magnússon (r. 1280–1299) and King Hákon Magnússon (r. 1299–1319). *Jónsbók* is generally considered to have developed in two redactions:<sup>14</sup> an uninterpolated version that features the amendments separately from the law code itself, and one that has most of the eighty-eight articles of the three *Réttarbætr* incorporated into the main text.<sup>15</sup> *Jónsbók* undoubtedly became a well-known text as it survives in the largest number of copies of all vernacular texts from the Icelandic Middle Ages: it is found in 104 complete or almost complete codices, as well as fifty-four fragments.<sup>16</sup> *Jónsbók* remained in force until 1662 when absolutism was introduced by the Danish King Frederik III (r. 1648–1670). A short collection of Icelandic trade laws entitled *Búalög* was established in c. 1400–1450.<sup>17</sup> Likely because of a change in trading practices,<sup>18</sup> most sections of *Búalög* reflect domestic trade and are much less widely distributed than *Jónsbók*: *Búalög* is found in only seven manuscripts.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly before the ratification of *Jónsbók*, the court law *Hirðskrá* was

Patricia Pires Boulhosa, "Narrative, Evidence and the Reception of *Járnsiða*," *Sturla Þórðarson: Skald, Chieftain and Lawman*, eds. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (Leiden: Brill 2017), 223–232. *Járnsiða* is mainly known from a self-contained text in AM 334 fol. (Staðarhólsbók Grágásar), dated to 1271–1281.

- 13 Ólafur Lárusson, "Grágás og lögbækurnar," *Árbók Háskóla Íslands* (1921–1922), 25–75.
- 14 Ólafur Halldórsson, "Indledning," *Jónsbók: Kong Magnus Hakonssons Lovbog for Island vedtaget paa Altinget 1281 og Réttarbætr: De for Island givne Retterbøder af 1294, 1305 og 1314*, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson (Copenhagen: S. L. Møller, 1904), xxix–xxxix.
- 15 Már Jónsson, "Inngangur," *Jónsbók. Lögbók Íslendinga hver samþykkt var á alþingi árið 1578*, ed. Már Jónsson (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2004), 18–19.
- 16 Már Jónsson, "Inngangur," 26.
- 17 Arnór Sigurjónsson, Introduction to *Búalög. Verðlag á Íslandi á 12.–19. öld* (Reykjavík: Framleiðsluráð, 1966), 18.
- 18 Stefan Drechsler, "Law Manuscripts from Fifteenth-Century Iceland," 190–191.
- 19 These are AM 128 4to (c. 1450–1500), AM 56 8vo (c. 1469–1510), AM 136 4to (Skinnastaðabók) (c. 1480–1500), AM 42 a 8vo (c. 1500), AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–1550), AM 160 4to (c. 1550), AM 161 4to (c. 1560–1565).

commissioned by King Magnús Hákonarson in Norway. *Hirðskrá* is commonly dated to c. 1273–1277 and consists of a three-part collection of laws concerning the regulation of the royal retinue and courtly households.<sup>20</sup> In the decades following its introduction, members of the Icelandic aristocracy became interested in becoming the king's retainers, with the result that *Hirðskrá* was added to a small number of Icelandic law manuscripts from the fourteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Likely because of the political changes after the establishment of the Kalmar Union in 1397,<sup>22</sup> manuscripts dating from the following two centuries only include short sections of this court law.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the secular laws, two ecclesiastical law codes were established in medieval Iceland. The oldest of these is a compilation of provincial Church laws commonly known as *Kristinna laga þáttir*. These were likely formulated by two Icelandic bishops in c. 1125, Þorlákr Runólfsson of Skálholt (1086–1133) and Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (1075–1145).<sup>24</sup> *Kristinna laga þáttir* is part of the *Grágás* texts of two Icelandic law manuscripts dated to the second half of the thirteenth century, GKS 1157 fol. (Konungsbók Grágásar) (c. 1250) and the above-mentioned AM 334 fol. (c. 1260–1300).<sup>25</sup> In the following centuries, *Kristinna laga þáttir* is found alongside younger ecclesiastical and secular laws, amendments

20 Dieter Strauch, *Mittelalterliches nordisches Recht*, 142–147. For the dating of *Hirðskrá*, see Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, “Innledning,” *Magnus Hákonsson Lagabøtes hirdskrá*, ed. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (Oslo: Nasjonalbiblioteket, 2024), 8.

21 Axel Kristinsson, “Embættismenn konungs fyrir 1400,” *Saga* 34 (1998), 113–152. *Hirðskrá* as a complete text appears in the following Icelandic codices dated to the fourteenth century: GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350), AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), AM 126 4to (c. 1400), as well as sections in AM 344 fol. (c. 1375–1400). In addition, in c. 1370 an Icelandic scribe added *Hirðskrá* and a number of other law texts to a production unit which today is part of a Norwegian law manuscript (Isl. Perg. 4to 34). For the textual content of this and the other production units of Isl. Perg. 4to 34, see Stefan Drechsler, *Illuminated Manuscript Production*, 129.

22 Stefan Drechsler, “Law Manuscripts from Fifteenth-Century Iceland,” 190–191.

23 According to Steinar Imsen, Introduction to *Hirdloven til Norges konge og bands håndgangne menn* (Oslo: Arkivverket, 2000), 18–19, (sections of) *Hirðskrá* are found in AM 354 fol. (Skálholtsbók yngri) (c. 1400), AM 626 4to (c. 1450–1500), AM 672 4to (c. 1450–1500), AM 42 a 8vo (c. 1500), AM 148 4to (Landeyjarbók) (c. 1500), AM 173 d C 3 4to (c. 1500) and AM 173 a 6 4to (c. 1500–1600).

24 Peter Foote, *The Early Christian Laws of Iceland: Some Observations* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 2004), 1–2.

25 See footnote 8.



and statutes.<sup>26</sup> In 1275, a new Christian law was introduced by bishop Árni Þorláksson of Skálholt (1237–98), the so-called *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*. The new ecclesiastical law was much more influenced by canon law and was therefore likely intended to bring the Christian laws in Iceland up to the international standards of their time.<sup>27</sup> Complete redactions or sections of the influential ecclesiastical law are found in fifty legal manuscripts that predate the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

Among the Icelandic law manuscripts investigated for this article, *Jónsbók* has the highest amount of legal iconography. By far the greatest amount of the text-related book painting is found in this law code: thirty-seven law manuscripts that contain *Jónsbók* feature text-related main initials and/or miniatures that predate the seventeenth century (see *Tables 1–2*). In addition, six law manuscripts include text-related illuminations as part of *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* (see below and Table 2 at the end of the article) as do two law manuscripts that contain *Hirðskrá*.<sup>29</sup> *Grágás* and *Kristinna laga þáttir* do not have historiated scenes in their extant state, and neither does the younger trade law of *Búalog*.

In medieval Icelandic law manuscripts, texts are generally divided according to the three sizes of initial letter forms: large, middle and small. Large initials generally range from five to nine lines high, not including the initial stem, which is generally extended considerably into the margin. Of the three forms of initials, large initials tend to feature the largest variety

26 *Kristinna laga þáttir* is found in six Icelandic law manuscripts and two fragments dated to the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: AM 135 4to (Arnarbælislögbók) (c. 1350), AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), AM 173 d B 1 4to (c. 1380), KBAdd 35 I 4to (c. 1380), AM 351 fol. (Skálholtsbók eldri) (c. 1400), AM 136 4to (Skinnastaðabók) (c. 1480–1500), AM 148 4to (Landeyjabók) (c. 1500) and AM 160 4to (c. 1550). For the dating of AM 351 fol., see Stefán Karlsson, “Hauksnautur. Uppruni og ferill lögbókar,” *Sólhvarfasumbl*, ed. Gísli Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnussen, 1992), 62–66.

27 Magnús Lyngdal Magnússon, “Kátt er þeim af kristinrétti, kærur vilja margar læra. Af kristinrétti Árna, setningu hans og valdsviði,” *Gripla* 15 (2004), 43–90. See also Sigurður Líndal, “Um þekkingu Íslendinga á rómverskum og kanónískum rétti frá 12. öld til miðrar 16. aldar,” *Úlfjótur Afmælisrit 50 ára*, ed. Þórólfur Jónsson (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Codex, 1997), 253–254. For the text of *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*, see *Járnsíða og Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*, ed. Haraldur Bernharðsson, Magnús Lyngdal Magnússon and Már Jónsson (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 2005), 143–190.

28 Magnús Lyngdal Magnússon, “Kátt er þeim af kristinrétti,” 83.

29 These are AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 91ra4–9 (Appointment of an Earl), and AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 109v7–11 (*Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae*).

of colours, ranging from (mostly) two to five different colours such as dark and verdigris green, bright and dark red, light blue and yellow.<sup>30</sup> Middle initials are generally three lines high, and small initials range from one to two lines. Both middle and small initials are painted either monochrome or, alternatively, bicolored. Initials that contain images related to the text are generally large. Such so-called historiated book illumination tends to have direct or at least indirect text-image relationships and thus may either express visually (parts of) the introduced text or refer in abstract terms – through religious or other symbolic iconographic motifs – to a given symbolic value of the text to the reader.<sup>31</sup> Three forms of book painting in the large initials are discernible:

- 1) *Ornamented and/or inhabited initials*, painted in internationally inspired Romanesque and Gothic styles that share a visual relation to the texts they introduce primarily through their size (see Figure 1). Initials that fall into this category are generally unhistoriated.
- 2) *Large initials that contain symbolic motifs known from Christian iconography*. Similar to the previous subclass, the use of iconography in these large initials is primarily based on iconographic models known from other kinds of literature and sketchbooks (see Figure 2).
- 3) *Text-related iconographic images*, which are either entirely original or only partly draw on iconographic models known from elsewhere (see Figures 3–4).<sup>32</sup>

30 For the research on colours in medieval Icelandic manuscripts, see Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Handritálýsingar,” 232–235, and upcoming publications by Guilia Zorzan in relation to the research project *Bókagerð í Helgafellsklaustri á 14. öld*, led by Beeke Stegmann and funded by RÍM.

31 For an introduction, see Stefan Drechsler, “Images,” *Routledge Handbook to the History of the Book in Medieval Western Europe*, ed. Hannah Ryley and James Dylan Sargan (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

32 The techniques used for large initials that belong to this subgroup often contain image-image relationships that can be described as a medieval form of *interpicturelity*. For this method, see Valeska von Rosen, “Interpikturalität,” *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft: Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. Ulrich Pfister (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 161–164. In its essence, this method identifies images or forms created for one context and then re-used in a new context, which often alters their meaning. Such image-image relations may also involve studying several iconographic elements with respect to their individual contents; they often contain elements known from Christian-iconographic images or reveal iconographic influences from German, French or Italian Roman or Canon law manuscripts





Figure 1: Ornamented and inhabited main initial, at the start of *Kvennagiftingar* in *Jónsbók*. AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók), f. 24rb13-19, c. 1330–40. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir.

In what follows, only groups 2 and 3 are investigated. Of the three sub-groups, the third is the most frequently represented in the corpus of Icelandic law manuscripts. Historiated scenes may in addition appear in miniatures that generally show pictures of Christian iconography or those of specific saints or kings. In addition, grotesques and grylli depictions are often added in the marginalia, as well as zoomorphic figures such as hares,

from the thirteenth century and earlier. For a short overview, see Stefan Drechsler, “Production and Content,” 43–44.

dogs, birds and various other animals.<sup>33</sup> If these creatures are not woven into the extension of the initial letter, their gestures sometimes refer to the scenes in the inner part of the large initials. In the majority of cases, however, animals such as dogs, birds or grylli figures are unhistoriated.

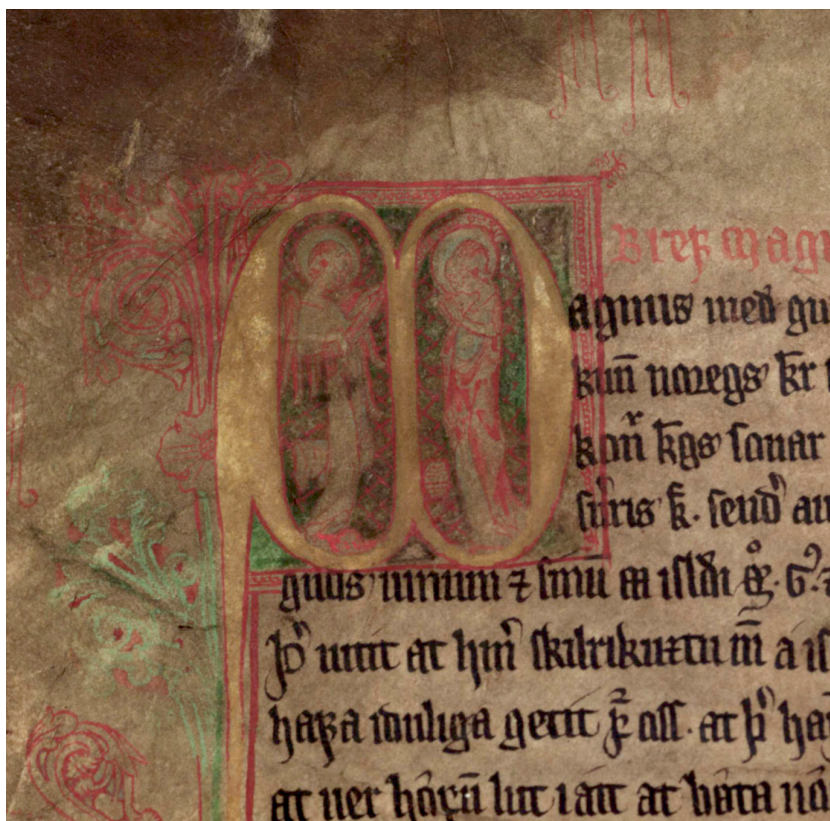


Figure 2: Historiated main initial showing the *Annunciation*, at the start of *Bréf Magnúss konungs* in *Jónsbók*. AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók), f. 1v1–5, 1363. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir.

Overall, the layout and the book painting of Icelandic law manuscripts do not follow stylistic and iconographic standards known from glossed

33 Animals are particularly often depicted in the three legal manuscripts AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–1550), Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–1550) and AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549). For these, see Friederike Richter, “Illuminierte Handschriften,” vol 1, 63–64.

Roman or Canon law manuscripts.<sup>34</sup> On the contrary, written as they are in one or two columns, the *mise-en-page* of the law manuscripts appears to differ little from other vernacular literature written at the same time in Iceland and elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> Stylistically and throughout the time period investigated in this article,<sup>36</sup> the law manuscripts contain a varied range of Romanesque motifs featuring mainly two-coloured curled and encircled palmette ornamentation with mirrored acanthus tendrils or clubbed plumes combined with rounded palmette spirals. Major initials are usually painted as *littera florissa* or simple Lombard initials with added ornamentation. From around 1300, single blue or red acanthus tendrils appear more numerous, combined with often dual-coloured initials embellished with Gothic-styled *fleuronnée* ornamentations that are extended into the surrounding areas of the margin (see Figure 1). At the same time, text-unrelated book painting appears particularly often. A recurring example is the use of human heads in the initials, which appear most frequently in texts of *Jónsbók* and *Kristínréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*, although in at least three cases the heads may be linked to textual content.<sup>37</sup> Numerous manuscripts, predominantly from the fifteenth century, feature a multitude of inhabited middle initials that involve grylli figures.<sup>38</sup> Other inhabited initials appear

- 34 Stefan Drechsler, "Marginalia in Medieval Western Scandinavian Law Manuscripts," *Imaginationen und Praktiken des Rechts: Literatur- und geschichtswissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, eds. Roland Scheel & Silke Schwandt (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter 2020), 184–186.
- 35 Stefan Drechsler, "Marginalia," 180–195.
- 36 For surveys, see Halldór Hermannsson, Introduction to *Icelandic Illuminated Manuscripts of the Middle Ages* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1935), 8–28; Halldór Hermannsson, Introduction to *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Jónsbók* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940), 8–18; and Björn Th. Björnsson, "Pictorial Art in the Icelandic Manuscripts," *Icelandic Sagas, Edda, and Art. Treasures Illustrating the Greatest Medieval Literary Heritage of Northern Europe*, ed. Charles Ryskamp (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1982), 26–38.
- 37 The most important example of the use of human heads in initials is AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), where at times moral intentions seem to be implied in these middle initials. For a discussion on these, see Stefan Drechsler, "Skarðsbók," 71. Selected text-related examples are also found in GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350), AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–1550) and Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–1550); see Lena Liepe, *Studies*, 37–38, and Friederike Richter, "Illuminierte Handschriften der Jónsbók," vol 1, 61–62.
- 38 Grylli figures are found in various minor and middle initials in the following manuscripts. Examples are AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), AM 344 fol. (c. 1375–1400), AM 158 a 4to (Hlíðarendabók) (c. 1400), Thott 1280 fol. (c. 1400), AM 140 4to (c. 1400), AM 137 4to (c. 1440–1480), AM 132 4to (c. 1350), AM 151 4to (c. 1450), AM 186 4to (Hvanneyjarbók) (c. 1480), AM 456 12mo (c. 1480), Rask 72 a (c. 1500), AM 148 4to (Landeyjabók) (c. 1500),

in the form of dragon heads. Although these motifs are not exclusive to law manuscript illumination in medieval Iceland,<sup>39</sup> they appear most frequently in legal writing. In one case, the use of such initials is combined with a historiated figure, St Óláfr Haraldsson (995–1030), in GKS 3268 4to (c. 1350), on f. 2v1–6. Similarly to other European manuscript cultures, the margins of Icelandic law manuscripts were used for paintings, too.<sup>40</sup> In addition to unhistoriated paintings, there are fifteen manuscripts whose margins were used for text-related iconography (see Table 1 at the end of the article).

Figural book painting appears only sparsely in Iceland prior to 1300 and nowhere in legal writing.<sup>41</sup> Yet, from the turn of the fourteenth century, Early Gothic and, soon after, High Gothic figural styles appear in abundance. Overall, throughout the fourteenth century and beyond, a large number of law manuscripts feature text-related book painting. From the earliest text-related illuminations in the law manuscripts dated to c. 1330–40, the illuminators' particular familiarity with the content of the texts is evident, as is the case in other illuminated legal manuscript cultures from medieval Europe.<sup>42</sup> Text-related initials first appear in AM 343

AM 140 4to (c. 1530) and AM 160 4to (c. 1550).

39 For examples, see Lena Liepe, "The Knight and the Dragon Slayer. Illuminations in a Fourteenth-Century Saga Manuscript," *Ornament and Order: Essays on Viking and Northern Medieval Art for Signe Horn Fuglesang*, eds. Margrethe Stang and Kristin A. Aavidsland (Oslo: Tapir 2008), 179–199.

40 For a survey of the research on iconography in the margins of medieval manuscripts, see Kathryn Smith, "Margin," *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012), 29–44, with further references.

41 Prior to the fourteenth century, only five Icelandic examples are known: two vernacular *Physiologus* fragments dated to c. 1200, AM 673 a I 4to and AM 673 a II 4to; a miniature of Christ Enthroned on f. 59v in AM 679 4to from c. 1250; a calendar including the Virgin and the Child in AM 249 c fol. from c. 1300; and three *mappae mundi* in GKS 1812 4to, dated to c. 1225–1250. The two major Icelandic law codes from the thirteenth century, GKS 1157 fol. (Konungsbók Grágásar) and AM 334 fol. (Staðarhólsbók Grágásar), although advanced in their paratextual contents through tables of contents and varying sizes of initials, feature no iconographic content. For the book painting of these manuscripts, see Lena Rohrbach, "Matrix of the Law"; Patricia Pires Boulhosa, "Layout and Structure of the Text in Konungsbók"; and Stefan Drechsler, "Illuminated Manuscript Production in Western Iceland in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries," *Gripla* 28 (2017), 169–196.

42 For an overview, see Susan L'Engle, "Legal Iconography," *Illuminating the Law: Legal Manuscripts in Cambridge Collections*, ed. Robert Gibbs and Susan L'Engle (London: Harvey Miller, 2002), 75–104. On iconographic catalogues of Latin law codes, see Anthony Melnikas, *The Corpus of the Miniatures in the Manuscripts of Decretum Gratiani*, 3 vols. (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1975) and Friedrich Ebel, Andreas Fijal and Gernot Kocher, *Römisches Rechtsleben im Mittelalter: Miniaturen aus den Handschriften des Corpus*



fol. (Svalbarðsbók) and GKS 3269 b 4to. Svalbarðsbók features the oldest known redaction of the interpolated version of *Jónsbók*.<sup>43</sup> Other textual and iconographic elements may indicate new inspiration in the production of law manuscripts from that time on.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 3: Historiated main initial showing the weighing of goods at the start of *Kaupabálkr* in *Jónsbók*. GKS 3269 a 4to, f. 65va17–25, c. 1350. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. Photo: Sigurður Stefán Jónsson.

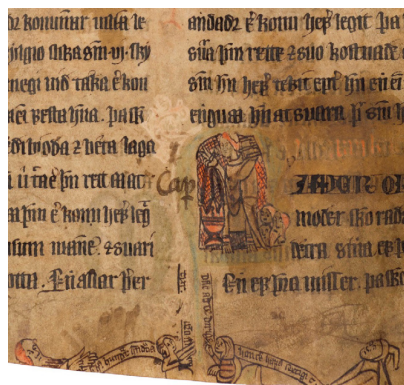


Figure 4: Historiated main initial showing a wedding ceremony at the start of *Kvennagiftingar* in *Jónsbók*. GKS 3269 b 4to, f. 14vb24–27, c. 1330–40. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. Photo: Sigurður Stefán Jónsson.

Overall, the counter of major initials, which are generally placed at the beginning of new sections (*bálkar*), remains the most commonly used place for legal iconography until c. 1500. As indicated in Table 1, ico-

*iuris civilis* (Heidelberg: C. F. Müller, 1988). On iconography in vernacular law codes, see Jorge Prádanos Fernández, “A servicio de Dios y por comunal de todos hacemos este libro. Análisis y contexto de la iluminación de los manuscritos de las Siete Partidas” (Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2022); Na’ama Shulman, “The Chronotope of Law in the Sachsenspiegel Illustrations: A Pictorial Travel through the World of Law,” *Travel, Time, and Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Time: Explorations of World Perceptions and Processes of Identity Formation*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 224–265; and Anthony Musson, “Illuminated English Law Books,” *Image et Droit. Les manuscrits juridique enluminés*, ed. Maria Alessandra Bilotta and Serge Dauchy (Lisbon, 2021). Available at <https://publications-prairial.fr/cliiothemis/index.php?id=18o8> (last accessed 15.11.2024).

43 Ólafur Halldórsson, “Indledning,” xxxii–xxxiii. See also Már Jónsson, “Inngangur,” 18–19.  
44 Stefan Drechsler, “Jón Halldórsson and Law Manuscripts,” 133–141.

nographic themes vary strongly between the different *bálkar*. Not all *bálkar* are equally and generously illuminated during the Middle Ages, and in fact, almost no manuscripts feature historiated initials in all of their sections.<sup>45</sup> The perhaps greatest variety of topics occurs in the first three *bálkar* of *Jónsbók*, which in their textual and iconographic structure may be understood as a sort of unit.<sup>46</sup> It is in these three sections (*Bréf Magnúss konungs*, *Pingfjararbálkr* and *Kristindómsbálkr*) that most iconographic motifs occur that do not directly refer to the related text but instead reflect the religious piety of the medieval viewer. An example is found in AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) dated to 1363, where the Annunciation is shown on f. 1v1–5 (see Figure 2). Following the standard patterns of this iconography, the proclamation of Gabriel is depicted with the well-known address *Ave Maria, gratia plena* written on an upheld scroll. In the symbolic context of the text it introduces, this message is probably meant to be both political and religious, since the following secular laws are likely intended to be regarded as being as important as this religious promise.<sup>47</sup> Apart from Christian iconography, such as the shown Annunciation or the Calvary Group, the Throne of Grace or Christ in Majesty, images showing St Óláfr appear more frequently in the Icelandic law manuscripts of the late Middle Ages. As well as being mentioned in *Bréf Magnúss konungs* and *Pingfjararbálkr*,<sup>48</sup> the iconography of St Óláfr as *Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae* frequently appears in law manuscripts dating to the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Apart from a number of historiated initials (see Table 1), most of these illuminations are found in miniatures (see Table 2).

45 Some of the sections of *Jónsbók* appear differently in the un-interpolated and interpolated redactions of the law code. Most importantly, this difference concerns the separation of the section *Búnaðarbálkr/Landsleigubálkr* and related (sub-)sections, such as, *Framfærslubálkr* and *Rekaþáttir*. The so-called *Hirðsiðir* section integrated in the *Jónsbók* text of AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók) and a number of copies of the same manuscript, includes *Kristindómsbálkr*, *Konungs þegnaskýlda* and also a number of sections from *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* and *Hirðskrá*; see Ólafur Halldórsson, “Indledning,” xlv, and Stefan Drechsler, “Jón Halldórsson and Law Manuscripts,” 134–136.

46 See also Karl G. Johansson and Lena Liepe, “Text and Images,” 151.

47 Karl G. Johansson and Lena Liepe, “Text and Images,” 49–51.

48 *Jónsbók: Kong Magnus Hakonssons Lovbog for Island vedtaget paa Altinget 1281 og Réttarbætr: De for Island givne Retterbøder af 1294, 1305 og 1314*, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson (Copenhagen: S. L. Møller, 1904), 2, 5, 20; *Jónsbók*, ed. Már Jónsson, 77, 81, 90. In addition to *Bréf Magnúss konungs* and *Pingfjararbálkr*, several manuscripts contain an epilogue that also mentions the Trinity, Saint Olaf and Mary. See *Jónsbók*, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson, 280.

Miniatures are first and foremost of a religious nature: Of the eighteen miniatures from *Jónsbók* and four from *Kristínréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*, the dominant iconographies are *Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae* (nine), the Calvary Group (five) and St Þorlákr Þórhallsson (1133–1193) (two) (see Table 2).<sup>49</sup> Six miniatures differ from the three dominant iconographic images and show secular images, such as a German Kogge ship (one) and Norwegian kings (two), or Christian iconography, such as a selection of Christological scenes (one), Mary Enthroned (one) and the Throne of Grace (one). Overall, the iconography of miniatures primarily seems to express either a religious *credo* or a historical or trade-related purpose of the manuscript as a whole, rather than specific, textual aspects.

Large initials at the beginning of *Kristínréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* usually show the act of baptism.<sup>50</sup> The choice of iconography was likely because this act is described in the first section of the ecclesiastical law. AM 168 b 4to (c. 1360) is the only codex that features more than one text-related main initial for the Christian law code: section 1 on f. 1r1–5 shows the Baptism of Christ, section 2 on f. 2r12–14 shows the head of a father, chapter 11, f. 5r1–3 shows a figure reading, similar to chapter 14 on 6v4–7 and section 16 on f. 8v3–5 shows two figures shaking hands. Other historiated scenes are also found in the beginning of *Kristínréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*, in GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350) and AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363). In GKS 3270 4to, in the margin of f. 7ra, a hanging scene is depicted, similarly to many other illuminations at the start of *Þjófabálkr*, the last section of *Jónsbók* (see Table 1). In GKS 3269 a 4to, in the margin on f. 89va, and in Skarðsbók in the margins of f. 107v, grylli figures are shown as part of the ornamentation. Iconographically, it is likely that they relate to the baptism scene depicted in the main initials on the same leaves.<sup>51</sup>

With regard to the intentions behind the use of text-related book paint-

49 The two miniatures showing St Þorlákr are placed at the start of *Kristínréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* and are likely intended to be seen in relation to miniatures showing St Óláfr as *Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae* at the start of *Jónsbók* texts elsewhere in the same manuscripts. See Jens Eike Schnall, "Recht und Heil. Zu Kompilationsmustern in Handschriften der *Jónsbók*," *Gripla* 16 (2005), 84–85.

50 Baptism scenes are found in the following manuscripts: GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 89va1–8; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 107va3–9; AM 157 b 4to (c. 1460), f. 1r1–7; and AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–1550), on f. 112r (in the margin).

51 See Stefan Drechsler, *Illuminated Manuscript Production*, 88–89.



ing, it seems clear that the illuminators have kept a particularly close eye on the text that they illuminated. Likely due to the fact that *Jónsbók* is among the earliest texts to be illuminated in Iceland, many of the illuminations are found in that law code and have an innovative spirit.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, due to the rather poor state of preservation and the very small number of illuminated law manuscripts dated to the thirteenth century, it is likely that a larger number of illuminated law manuscripts were produced during the thirteenth century than have survived.<sup>53</sup> It is likely that the text-related book painting was first and foremost intended as visual guidance by and for the original clients.<sup>54</sup> This is particularly related to legally binding agreements sealed by handshake or vows. Such pictorial scenes are often found in those sections of *Jónsbók* where text-related illuminations specifically relate to legal agreement, such as the section on trade called *Kaupabálkr*. The manuscript GKS 3269 a 4to, dated to c. 1350, for example, shows at the beginning of the relevant section a figure holding scales, flanked by a horse and a cow (see Figure 3). On the outside, the herding of a cow is depicted, led by two cramped figures with the lower one leading the cow by the nose.

A further example of the use of a main initial and the surrounding margins for connected, historiated scenes is found in GKS 3269 b 4to from c. 1330–40 (see Figure 4). In a late section of *Jónsbók* entitled *Erfðatal*, which

- 52 The same innovative spirit also applies to other Old Norse texts. See Selma Jónsdóttir, “The Illuminations of Helgastaðabók,” *Helgastaðabók. Nikulás saga Perg. 4to Nr. 16 Konungsbókhlöðu í Stokkhólmi*, ed. Selma Jónsdóttir, Stefán Karlsson and Sverrir Tómasson (Reykjavík: Lögberg, 1981), 202–228; Lena Liepe, “The Knight and the Dragon Slayer”; and Stefan Drechsler, “Ikonographie und Text-Bild-Beziehungen der GKS 1005 fol. Flateyjarbók,” *Opuscula* 16 (2016), 215–300.
- 53 Examples such as the two Icelandic *Physiologus* fragments AM 673 a I 4to and AM 673 a II 4to from c. 1200 and the encyclopaedic manuscript GKS 1812 4to, which too is primarily dated to c. 1200 and after, show that European-inspired and text-related book painting was indeed used in Iceland already some hundred years earlier. On the two *Physiologus* fragments, see Sophie Fendel, *Physiologus- und Bestiarienzepktion in Nordeuropa* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2024), 61–85, and on GKS 1812 4to the volume *A World in Fragments. Studies on the Encyclopaedic Manuscript GKS 1812 4to*, edited by Gunnar Hardarson, Christian Etheridge, Guðrún Nordal and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2021).
- 54 Lena Rohrbach, “Die Fabrikation des Rechts. Implikationen medialer Ausformungen in west- und ostnordischen Rechtsbuchhandschriften,” *Á Austrvegi. Saga and East Scandinavia*, Vol. 2, eds. Agneta Ney, Henrik Williams and Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist (Gävle: Gävle University Press, 2009), 809–812.

defines the fines and arrangement of marriages and regulates the value distribution of goods to heirs and their direct relatives, both iconography and related speech scrolls guide the viewer to the textual content of the section. The initial depicts a priest clad in a vestment and holding a book in his heraldic left hand and a thurible in his right. The priest is watched by three faces found in the lower corner on the right. Below the initial, the letter is extended into the lower margin where two speech scrolls follow the initial letter on both sides and feature a shortened first part of the *Liber Psalmorum* 140, 1–2 (*domine ad te diriga | tur oratio mea*, “Lord, to you my prayer is addressed”). Flanking the scrolls on the left and the right, four figures are depicted, two on the inner part representing bride and groom, and on the outer side, two others who are holding extensions of the speech scrolls. These latter two are depicted as an elderly figure and a second, younger figure wearing a liripipe. The scene in the margin is directly related to the priest in the initial and represents monetary arrangements linked to a wedding.<sup>55</sup> The legal background is specified in the extended speech scrolls on the left and the right as these show parts of the agreement. On the left it says “[...] *skal* hafa. hundrat hundrada” (shall have hundred hundreds) and, on the right, “*hon skal* hafa sextigi c.” (she shall have sixty hundreds).<sup>56</sup>

As can be gathered from Table 1, several of these iconographic themes seem to have become commonplace during the late Middle Ages. However, it is primarily in the fourteenth century that most internationally inspired styles appear in the Icelandic law manuscripts,<sup>57</sup> followed by less internationally inspired book painting in the subsequent centuries.<sup>58</sup> Yet, both the size of major initials and also the size of the law manuscripts themselves do not change much during these centuries.<sup>59</sup> As regards *Jónsbók*, neither of the two major redactions appears to be significantly more illuminated. During the first half of the fourteenth century, a likely rise in wealth of the Icelandic aristocracy, Church and monasteries caused

55 *Jónsbók*, ed. Már Jónsson, 121–122.

56 My translations.

57 Stefan Drechsler, *Illuminated Manuscript Production*, 169–198.

58 Halldór Hermannsson, Introduction to *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Jónsbók*, 14–15.

59 The size of major initials remains between five and eight lines throughout the time frame investigated in this article. On the size of the law manuscripts, see Már Jónsson, “The Size of Medieval Icelandic Legal Manuscripts,” 25–38.

by the rising trade of *vaðmál* and stockfish with Norway<sup>60</sup> contributed to the internationally inspired book painting and its particularly lavish and complex execution. Despite changing political and trade-related circumstances, law manuscripts produced in the second half of the fourteenth century remain strongly inspired by the trend started in the first half of the century, due to the possible export of Icelandic manuscripts to Norway,<sup>61</sup> as well as the fact that a number of Icelandic clerics who worked in Norway were brought in to fill the gaps in the much-reduced clergy in the wake of the Black Death in 1349.<sup>62</sup> After the establishment of the Kalmar Union in 1397 and the first wave of the plague in Iceland in 1402–4,<sup>63</sup> Iceland began to trade directly with English seafarers, and the Norwegian hegemony shifted towards Denmark, with less political influence on the Icelandic trade.<sup>64</sup> Yet, text-related illuminations in *Jónsbók* remain in the inventory of Icelandic illuminators until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>65</sup> In iconographic terms, much fewer of the law manuscripts that were illuminated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries feature text-related initials than those in the previous century (see Table 3),<sup>66</sup> and they

60 Helgi Þorláksson, “Vaðmál og verðlag: Vaðmál í utanlandsviðskiptum og búskap Íslendinga á 13. og 14. öld” (Reykjavík: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1991), 337–433. For a general overview, see Björn Þorsteinsson, “Þættir úr verzlunarsögu: nokkur atriði úr norskrí verzlunarsögu fyrir 1350,” *Saga* 4 (1964), 3–53.

61 Stefán Karlsson, “Íslandsk bogekspert til Norge i middelalderen,” *Maal og Minne* (1979), 1–17.

62 For two examples, see Stefán Karlsson, “Helgafellsbók í Noregi,” *Opuscula* 4 (1970), 347–349, and Stefán Karlsson, “Lovskriver i to lande: Codex Hardenbergensis og Codex Belgsdalensis,” *Festskrift til Alfred Jakobsen*, eds. Jan Ragnar Hagland, Jan Terje Faarlund and Jarle Rønne (Trondheim: Tapir, 1987), 166–184.

63 On the Black Death in Iceland, see Gunnar Karlsson and Helgi Skúli Kjartansson, “Plágurnar miklu á Íslandi,” *Saga* 32 (1994), 11–74.

64 For a review, see Baldur Þórhallsson and Þorsteinn Kristinsson, “Iceland’s External Affairs from 1400 to the Reformation,” *Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration* 9/1 (2013), 113–137.

65 Halldór Hermannsson, Introduction to *Illuminated Manuscripts of Jónsbók*, 14–15.

66 The three sixteenth-century law manuscripts AM 147 4to (Heynesbók), Ledreborg 318 4to and AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) differ from this pattern. In them, historiated scenes are placed entirely in the margins and often combined with both non-historical scenes and those of daily life in Iceland in the late Middle Ages. In Table 1, only scenes are included that with little doubt can be classified as historiated. For complete overviews of AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) and AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), see Friederike Richter, “Illuminierte Handschriften der Jónsbók,” Vol. 1, 74–77, and Vol. 2, 3–10.

exhibit partly different topics (see Table 1).<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, in the sixteenth century, margins likely became the primary place for historiated illuminations in the Icelandic law books.<sup>68</sup>

Bálkr	c. 1330–1400		c. 1401–1500		c. 1501–1600	
	<i>Initials</i>	<i>Margins</i>	<i>Initials</i>	<i>Margins</i>	<i>Initials</i>	<i>Margins</i>
<i>Bréf Magnúss konungs</i>	4				2	
<i>Pingfararbálkr</i>	7		1		2	
<i>Kristindómsbálkr</i>	4				1	2
<i>Konungs þegnskylda</i>		2				
<i>Mannhelgisbálkr</i>	7	5	1		2	5
<i>Kvennagiftingar</i>	3				1	3
<i>Erfðabálkr</i>	1				1	2
<i>Framferðslubálkr</i>	1	1				1
<i>Landsbrigðabálkr</i>	4	1	2		1	1
<i>Landsleigubálkr / Búnaðarbálkr</i>	2	2		1		19
<i>Rekápáttir</i>	5	1	1			5
<i>Kaupabálkr</i>	5	1	2			11
<i>Farmannalög</i>	3		1			3
<i>Þjófabálkr</i>	9	6	4	1	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>59</b>

Table 3: Number of historiated initials and historiated marginalia in *Jónsbók* in c. 1330–1600.

The large variety of topics depicted in the main initials and margins of the *Jónsbók* law code, as shown in Table 1, undoubtedly strengthened the visual understanding of the vernacular legal text. Most of the topics are secular: of the altogether 102 historiated motifs identified in the present analysis, only eight are religious images. Due to the considerable number of religious motifs used for the miniatures mentioned above, it may be concluded that it is primarily the secular, text-related content that was

67 One of the prevalent topics is found in the hanging scene at the beginning of *Þjófabálkr*. For a discussion of this particular iconography, see Stefan Drechsler, “Þjófabálkr,” and Már Jónsson, “Jónsbók,” *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 64/1 (2002), 168–169.

68 Friederike Richter, “Illuminierte Handschriften der Jónsbók,” Vol. 1, 22.

most important for the medieval clients of the Icelandic legal manuscripts. Altogether, the number of such historiated initials appears to be rather small: less than a third of the *Jónsbók* manuscripts known today feature text-related book painting at all, and much smaller numbers can be counted for the other Icelandic law texts mentioned above. Thus, the importance of such text-related illuminations for the law text may not be overestimated. Even so, the text-related book painting can be regarded as a vital component as well as a significant tool to better understand the use of the thirteenth-century Icelandic law codes in the following centuries, the role of international inspiration and, not least, the changing approaches to religious veneration in medieval Iceland. The ongoing usage of many of these law manuscripts supports the important role they played after the time of their completion, since they remained in frequent use for several centuries.

# Tables

Bálkr	Textual Content	Iconography
<i>Bréf Magnúss konungs</i>	Prologue by King Magnús Hákonarson	<i>The Annunciation</i> (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 1va1–5. <i>Fall of Man</i> (1): AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 1r1–9. <i>Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae</i> (1): AM 43 8vo (c. 1507), f. 2v1–8. <i>King Enthroned (with additional figure)</i> (3): AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók) (c. 1330–40), f. 1va1–10; AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 8rb1–11; Isl. Perg. 4to 25 (1550–1600), f. 8r1–5.
<i>Ping-farar-bálkr</i>	On the election of law men	<i>Christ in Majesty</i> (2): AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók) (c. 1330–40), f. 2va16–22; AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 9rb1–7. <i>Christ in Majesty (with additional figure)</i> (1): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 1va7–12. <i>Throne of Grace (with additional figure)</i> (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 2rb17–22. <i>St Óláfr and St Þorlákr</i> (1): AM 351 fol. (Skálholtsbók eldri) (c. 1450), <sup>69</sup> f. 2ra1–9. <i>Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae</i> (1): AM 140 4to (c. 1530), f. 4v1–5. <i>King Enthroned</i> (2): AM 127 4to (c. 1350), f. 2vb11–16; GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 12va1–10. <i>St Óláfr fighting</i> (1): GKS 3268 4to (c. 1350), f. 2v1–6. <i>Two figures (holding hands)</i> (1): Isl. Perg. 8vo 7 (1550), f. 121v3–9.
<i>Kristin-dóms-bálkr</i>	On ecclesiastical and royal powers and royal lineage	<i>Christ in Majesty</i> (2): GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350), f. 29vb8–12; AM 127 4to (c. 1350), f. 7rb17–21. <i>Calvary Group</i> (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 5vb4–9. <i>King and bishop</i> (1): AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 12ra10–17. <i>King holding a ring</i> (1): AM 140 4to (c. 1530), f. 9v18–22. <i>Priest with coven (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), f. 6v. <i>Single figure (lawman?) (marginalia)</i> (1): Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 13r.
<i>Konungs þegn-skylda</i>	On allegiance	<i>Two figures measuring vaðmál (marginalia)</i> (2): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 6vb; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 9r.

69 According to Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, AM 351 fol. (Skálholtsbók eldri) was illuminated some fifty years after the text was written in c. 1400; see Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,” 192, 195. Accordingly, the dating given for this manuscript in Table 1 is related to its book painting.

<i>Mann-belgis-bálkr</i>	On personal rights and keeping the peace	<p><i>David playing harp</i> (1): Steph 12 4to (c. 1500–1600), f. 21r2–12.</p> <p><i>Christ in Majesty</i> (1): Thott 128o fol. (c. 1400), f. 9va14–21.</p> <p><i>King and servant</i> (1): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 7va4–8.</p> <p><i>Single figure (lawman?)</i> (1): Lbs 527 4to (1600), f. 5r8–15.</p> <p><i>Single figure (lawman?) (marginalia)</i> (1): Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 20v.</p> <p><i>Single figure with a halberd (marginalia)</i> (1): Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 20r.</p> <p><i>Mother and child (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 15v.</p> <p><i>Fighting scene (marginalia)</i> (4): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 7v; AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 15v; Thott 128o fol. (c. 1400), f. 9va; AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), f. 10v.</p> <p><i>Decapitated figure (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), f. 11r.</p> <p><i>Killing scene</i> (3): AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók) (c. 1330–40), f. 14va2–8; GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 19rb13–20; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 9vb22–27.</p> <p><i>Negotiation scene</i> (1): AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 15va15–21.</p> <p><i>Two armed figures</i> (2): AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 9r; AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 8v3–10.</p> <p><i>Figure and holy man with axe (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 127 4to (c. 1350), f. 15rb.</p> <p><i>Killing of a figure by a bull (marginalia)</i> (1): Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 31v.</p>
<i>Kvenna-giftingar</i>	On marriage	<p><i>Settlement scene</i> (2): AM 168 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 17r15–18; AM 140 4to (c. 1530), f. 30r1–4.</p> <p><i>Oath scene</i> (1): AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 19r1–3.</p> <p><i>Wedding ceremony</i> (1): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 14vb24–27.</p> <p><i>Figure announcing a marriage (marginalia)</i> (1): Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 36v.</p> <p><i>Wedding participants (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), ff. 19v–20r.</p> <p><i>Figure hunting a bird (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 24r.</p>
<i>Erfða-bálkr</i>	On inheritance	<p><i>Inheritance scene (figures and cattle)</i> (1): GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 30rb1–5.</p> <p><i>Dragon with script roll</i> (1): AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 27r1–7.</p> <p><i>Lying figure holding a rune stick (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 29v.</p> <p><i>Funeral cortege (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), ff. 21v–22r.</p>
<i>Fram-færslu-bálkr</i>	On social duties	<p><i>Social relations scene</i> (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 27ra19–24.</p> <p><i>Mother and child (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 27ra19–24.</p> <p><i>Beggar and court (marginalia)</i> (1): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók), (1549), f. 27r.</p>



<i>Lands- brigða- bálkr</i>	On the inherit- ance of land	<p><b>Oath scene (2):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 25rb13–17; AM 168 a 4to (c. 1360), f. 30v1–5.</p> <p><b>Inheritance scene (figures and cattle) (1):</b> GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 39rb17–24.</p> <p><b>Dispute scene (1):</b> AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 31ra22–28.</p> <p><b>Figure riding (2):</b> AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 24v13–20; AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 37ra22–28.</p> <p><b>Figure with horse (1):</b> AM 140 4to (c. 1530), f. 53v9–13.</p> <p><b>Figure with speech scroll (marginalia) (1):</b> Thott 1280 fol. (c. 1400), f. 25vb.</p> <p><b>Oath scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 33v.</p>
<i>Lands- leigu- bálkr/ Bún- aðar- bálkr</i>	On tenancy	<p><b>Settlement scene (2):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 27rb4–9; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 34ra4–11.</p> <p><b>Settlement scene (marginalia) (2):</b> Thott 1280 fol. (c. 1400), f. 28ra; AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 48v.</p> <p><b>Figure and bull (marginalia) (1):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 27r.</p> <p><b>Bishop with two grylli figures (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 132 4to (c. 1450), ff. 29v–30r.</p> <p><b>Two figures (marginalia) (2):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 58r; Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 76v.</p> <p><b>Farmhouses (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 34r.</p> <p><b>Figure with a charter (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 49v16–20.</p> <p><b>Figure hunting a bird (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 50v14–20.</p> <p><b>Cow-herding scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 44v–45r.</p> <p><b>Wood-cutting scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 46r.</p> <p><b>Grass-cutting scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 47r.</p> <p><b>Figure with a rake (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 47v.</p> <p><b>Figure catching a bird (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 48r.</p> <p><b>Horse-fighting scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 51v.</p> <p><b>Dragon catching a goat (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 53v.</p> <p><b>Rowing scene with farmhouse and sheep (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 54r.</p> <p><b>Figure with sword and horse (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 56r.</p> <p><b>Figure with pick pointing at a rider (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 56v.</p> <p><b>Figure with halberd and animal (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 57v.</p> <p><b>Hunting scenes (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), ff. 58v–59r.</p> <p><b>Egg collection (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 59v.</p>

<i>Reka- þáttir</i>	On the regulations of stranded goods	<p><b>Fishing scene (1):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 42rb17–20.</p> <p><b>Cutting of a whale (marginalia) (2):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 42r; AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 52r.</p> <p><b>Cutting up of a whale (3):</b> AM 127 4to (c. 1350), f. 65rb15–20; GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 61rb1–8; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 51rb15–21.</p> <p><b>Negotiation scene (1):</b> AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 58v10–12.</p> <p><b>Wood-cutting scene (1):</b> AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 38v16–24.</p> <p><b>Wood-cutting scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 60r.</p> <p><b>Driftwood (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 51v.</p> <p><b>Three figures (two crowned) and one seal (marginalia) (1):</b> Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 110v.</p> <p><b>Dog-fighting scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 63v.</p>
<i>Kaup- bálkr</i>	On domestic and foreign trade	<p><b>Settlement scene (3):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 45vb4–8; AM 168 a 4to (c. 1360), f. 48v9–13; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 55rb8–14.</p> <p><b>Two figures and cattle (marginalia) (1):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 45v.</p> <p><b>Purchase scene (figure, cattle, scales) (1):</b> GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 65va17–25.</p> <p><b>Purchase scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 72v.</p> <p><b>Figure with book (1):</b> AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 63v1–13.</p> <p><b>Slaughtering scene (1):</b> AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 41v12–20.</p> <p><b>Figure binding an animal (1):</b> AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 62ra1–8.</p> <p><b>Figure with bound animal on his back (1):</b> AM 140 4to (c. 1530), f. 86v19–23.</p> <p><b>Herding of a cow (marginalia) (2):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 67r; AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 72r.</p> <p><b>Herding of a horse (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 71v.</p> <p><b>Catching a bird (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 65v.</p> <p><b>Two figures with scales (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 69r.</p> <p><b>Riding figure with animals (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), ff. 69v–70r.</p> <p><b>Figure with beast (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 70v.</p> <p><b>Killing of a cow (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 71r.</p> <p><b>Figures with tradable items (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 72v.</p> <p><b>Measurements (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 73r.</p>

<i>Far- manna- lög</i>	On nautical laws and trade con- ducted via seaways	<p><b>Settlement scene onboard a boat (1):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 52ra5–10.</p> <p><b>Settlement scene onboard a boat and the boat being repaired (1):</b> AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 61va23–28.</p> <p><b>Sailing scene (2):</b> GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 73rb6–14; AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 68va12–21.</p> <p><b>Sailing scene (marginalia) (2):</b> AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), ff. 61v–62r; AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), ff. 73v–74r.</p> <p><b>Social scenes (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), ff. 74v–75r.</p>
<i>Þjófa- bálkr</i>	On the treat- ment and punish- ment of thieves	<p><b>Prosecution scene (5):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 56vb21–25; AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók) (c. 1330–40), f. 84rb16–20; AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók) (c. 1350–70), f. 60va10–14; AM 168 a 4to (c. 1360), f. 54v19–23; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 67va20–25.</p> <p><b>Prosecution scene (marginalia) (3):</b> AM 148 4to (Landeyjabók) (c. 1500), f. 96v; AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 82r; AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), ff. 67v.</p> <p><b>Hanging scene (3):</b> AM 158 a 4to (Hliðarendabók) (c. 1400), f. 51r21–26; Thott 1280 fol. (c. 1400), f. 54rb1–7; Princeton MS 62 (1550–1600), f. 135v9–14.</p> <p><b>Hanging scene (marginalia) (9):</b> GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 56v; GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350), f. 97ra; AM 168 a 4to (c. 1360), f. 54v; AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 67v; AM 139 4to (c. 1400), f. 68v; AM 161 4to (c. 1560–65), f. 114v; AM 342 fol. (1500–1600), f. 80r; AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), ff. 68r; Ledreborg 318 4to (c. 1525–50), f. 152r.</p> <p><b>Hanging and prosecution scene (2):</b> AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 51v22–28; AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 75ra4–13.</p> <p><b>Hanging and flagellation scene (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 81v.</p> <p><b>Figure with stolen goods on his back (3):</b> AM 127 4to (c. 1350), f. 78rb1–6; GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 79vb15–22; AM 137 4to (c. 1440–80), f. 78r7–11.</p> <p><b>Figure with stolen goods on his back (marginalia) (1):</b> AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 79v.</p> <p><b>Figure holding a stave (1):</b> AM 151 4to (c. 1450), f. 94r4–7.</p>

*Table 1: Iconography in main initials and margins of Jónsbók texts in manuscripts and fragments dated to c. 1330–1600.*

Text	Iconography	Manuscript
Jónsbók	<i>Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae</i> (9)	AM 135 4to (Arnabælislögbók) (c. 1350), f. 6r; AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 1r; AM 152 4to (c. 1500); AM 157 a 4to (c. 1500–1600), f. 1r; AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 1v; AM 140 4to (c. 1546–52) (twice), f. 2r–v; AM 160 4to (c. 1550), f. 1v; AM 131 4to (c. 1550–1600), f. 1v.
	<i>Calvary Group</i> (5)	GKS 3270 4to (c. 1350), f. 23vb1–10; AM 344 fol. (c. 1375–1400), f. 1r; AM 48 8vo (c. 1375–1400), f. 1v; AM 152 4to (c. 1500), f. 104v; AM 140 4to (c. 1546–52), f. 1v.
	German Kogge ship (1)	AM 40 8vo (c. 1550–1600) f. 1r.
	Norwegian kings (Sverrir Sigurðarson, Hákon Hákonarson, Magnús Hákonarson and Eiríkr Magnússon) (1)	AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 1r.
	King Magnús Hákonarson (1)	MS Icelandic 43 (c. 1566), on f. 3v.
	Christological scenes ( <i>Annunciation, Birth of Christ, Calvary Group, Resurrection of Christ, Ascension, Throne of Grace</i> ) (1)	DG 9 (c. 1575), on ff. 10r–11v.
Kristinréttr Árna Þorlákssonar	St Þorlákr (2)	AM 135 4to (Arnabælislögbók) (c. 1350), f. 74vb; AM 160 4to (c. 1550), f. 102v.
	Mary Enthroned (1)	AM 49 8vo (1507), f. 1v.
	Throne of Grace (1)	AM 49 8vo (1507), f. 6v.

Table 2: Iconography in miniatures of *Jónsbók* and *Kristinréttr Árna Þorlákssonar* texts in manuscripts dated to c. 1350–1600.

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AM 342 fol.	AM 173 d C 3 4to
AM 343 fol. (Svalbarðsbók)	AM 626 4to
AM 344 fol.	AM 672 4to
AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók)	AM 673 a I 4to
AM 347 fol. (Belgsdalsbók)	AM 673 a II 4to
AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók)	AM 679 4to
AM 351 fol. (Skálholtsbók eldri)	AM 688 b 4to
AM 354 fol. (Skálholtsbók yngri)	AM 688 c 4to

AM 126 4to	AM 39 8vo
AM 127 4to	AM 40 8vo
AM 128 4to	AM 42 a 8vo
AM 131 4to	AM 43 8vo
AM 132 4to	AM 48 8vo
AM 135 4to (Arnarbælislögbók)	AM 56 8vo
AM 136 4to (Skinnastaðabók)	
AM 138 4to	AM 456 12mo
AM 139 4to	
AM 140 4to	GKS 1157 fol. (Konungsbók Grágásar)
AM 147 4to (Heynesbók)	GKS 1812 4to
AM 148 4to (Landeyjabók)	GKS 3268 4to
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## ÁGRIP

Lýsingar í handritum íslenskra lögbóka frá um 1330–1600

**Efnisorð:** gerð lögbókarhandrita, íslensk lagamenning, íslenskar handritamyndir, *Jónsbók*, *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*

Þessi grein byggir á meginðlegum gögnum og kannar notkun lagalegra tákmynda í handritum íslenskra lögbóka frá um 1330–1600, með áherslu á handrit *Jónsbókar* (frá 1281) og *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* (frá 1275). Greinin skiptist í þrjá hluta: fyrsti hlutinn veitir stutt sögulegt yfirlit um tilurð íslenskra lögbóka á miðöldum. Í framhaldi af þessum textalega bakgrunni er fjallað um útlit lýsinga sem tengjast textanum í handritum lögbókanna og í þriðja hlutanum er reynt að greina hvaða hugmyndir hafi búið að baki lýsingum sem ætlað var að tengjast textanum.

## SUMMARY

Iconography in Icelandic Law Manuscripts in c. 1330–1600

**Keywords:** Law manuscript production, Icelandic law codes, Icelandic book painting, *Jónsbók*, *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar*

Based on quantitative data, this article investigates the use of legal iconography in Icelandic law manuscripts produced in c. 1330–1600, focusing primarily on manuscripts of two important vernacular legal codes: *Jónsbók* from 1281 and *Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar* from 1275. The article is divided into three sections: the first section provides a short historical introduction to the establishment of the vernacular Icelandic law codes in the Middle Ages. Based on this textual background, the second section describes the appearance of text-related book painting that accompanies these law codes in the manuscripts. The third section concludes the article and elaborates further on the intentions behind the use of text-related book painting.

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