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Myndin á kápunni sýnir blað 4v úr lækninga- og galdrakveri í Árnasafni, AM 434 a 12mo, frá því um 1500. Kverið kemur við sögu í tveimur greinum í *Griplu* að þessu sinni, hjá þeim Roberto Luigi Pagani og Lara E. C. Harris. Efst til vinstri á blaðinu er skrifað með rúnum „Ólafr : Ólafr : Haralldr : Haralldr : Eiríkr“ og síðan ráðlagt að rista þessar rúnir á kefli eða blað og leggja „undir borðið þar sem þú kastar“ – og er þar væntanlega átt við teningakast í kotru því Jón Ólafsson úr Grunnavík segir í Rúnareidslu sinni að til þess að vinna í kotru skuli skrifa „þessi orð með rúnastöfum.“ (AM 413 fol. bls. 126) Að auki er mælt með að „lesa pater noster til heiðurs Ólafi kóngi.“ Galdrastafurinn í hægri dálki nýtist til að vita hver hefur tekið eitthvað frá manni: „rist staf þenna á botninum á aski og haf í vatn hreint [...] Þetta er best við stuld. In nomine domini amen.“

GRIPLA

Ráðgjafar

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Gripla er tileinkuð minningu Jenny Jochens prófessors í miðaldasagnfræði við Towson háskólann í Maryland. Jenny fæddist í Kaupmannahöfn árið 1928 og lést í Baltimore þann 7. júlí 2025. Hún var traustur vinur, dvaldist löngum við fræðistörf í Árnagarði og var mikill velgjörðamaður Árnastofnunar. Eiginmaður Jennýjar var John Baldwin og eignuðust þau fjögur börn. Til minningar um dóttur þeirra hjóna, Birgit Baldwin (1960–1988), færði fjölskylda hennar stofnuninni rausnarlega peningagjöf árið 2004. Stofnaður var Minningarsjóður í hennar nafni til að efla erlendan bóka- og tímaritakost stofnunarinnar og hefur sjóðurinn reynst bókasafninu mikil lyftistöng.

Gripla er ritrýnt tímarit sem kemur út einu sinni á ári. Það er alþjóðlegur vettvangur fyrir rannsóknir á sviði íslenskra og norræna fræða, einkum handrita- og textafræða, bókmennta og þjóðfræða. Birtar eru útgáfur á stuttum textum, greinar og ritgerðir og stuttar fræðilegar athugasemdir. Greinar skulu að jafnaði skrifaðar á íslensku en einnig eru birtar greinar á öðrum norrænum málum, ensku, þýsku og frönsku. Leiðbeiningar um frágang handrita er að finna á heimasíðu Árnastofnunar: <https://www.arnastofnun.is/is/leidbeiningar-um-skil-og-fragang-greina>. Greinum og útgáfum (öðrum en stuttum athugasemdum o.þ.h.) skal fylgja útdráttur. Hverju bindi *Griplu* fylgir handritaskrá.

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GÍSLI SIGURÐSSON

OG

MARGRÉT EGGERTSDÓTTIR

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BEEKE STEGMANN

MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION IN ICELAND

*A State of Knowledge*¹

Traditionally, the methods of book production in medieval Iceland were regarded as largely comparable to European practices, while materials were thought to have been primarily sourced from local resources. Increasingly, these assumptions are being replaced by results from detailed codicological studies.² Considerable research has been conducted in recent years on the specifics of Icelandic manuscripts, and several projects are still underway.³ This article brings together findings from individual studies on the materiality of pre-modern Icelandic books, with the aim of synthesizing the growing understanding of their distinctive features and the particular nature of manuscript production in Iceland. Moreover, such an overview makes it possible to identify both well-covered research areas and remaining knowledge gaps.

- 1 This article was inspired by my chapter “Manuscript Production and Writing Culture in Iceland,” *World in Words: A Manuscript Exhibition in Edda*, ed. Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2024), 94–103. Due to the amount of recent research on the topic, I felt the need to provide proper references as well as to deepen the discussion for a scholarly audience. Thanks are due, for helpful feedback and fruitful conversations, to Giulia Zorzan, Guðrún Harðardóttir, Lea D. Pokorny, Soffía Guðný Guðmundsdóttir, Tiffany Nicole White, Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir as well as the two peer reviewers.
- 2 Már Jónsson was one of the pioneers of codicology in Iceland, in particular *quantitative codicology*, gathering and comparing codicological data of many manuscripts. See e.g. Már Jónsson, “Megindlegar handritarannsóknir,” Ezio Ornato, *Lofræða um handritamergð: Hugleiðingar um bóksögu miðalda*, trans. Björg Birgisdóttir and Már Jónsson (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2003), 7–34; “Manuscript Design in Medieval Iceland,” *From Nature to Script: Reykholt, Environment, Centre, and Manuscript Making*, eds. Helgi Þorláksson and Þóra Björg Sigurðardóttir (Reykholt: Snorrastofa, Cultural and Medieval Centre, 2012), 236–237.
- 3 For a general overview of recent trends in Icelandic manuscript studies see e.g. Emily Lethbridge, “Manuscript and Textual Culture,” *The Cambridge History of Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, eds. Heather O’Donoghue and Eleanor Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 44–49.

Manuscript production in Iceland formed part of the wider Western tradition. With its origins in European writing culture, the making of books in pre-modern Iceland followed the same basic stages as elsewhere:

1. *The writing support*, the medium of the leaves, was created by means of dehairing, stretching and drying animal hides to make parchment. Only relatively late, hand-made paper produced from cellulose fibres of rags replaced parchment in Iceland.
2. *The sheets* were prepared for writing by means of cutting and folding them into the desired format. On each page a grid of writing lines was established using varying techniques. The design and layout could depend on both the content and future owner's wishes or financial capabilities.
3. *The writing* was usually done with quill pens made from feathers. Employing black or brown ink, scribes commonly worked on the main text first and left spaces for colourful elements to be filled in separately.
4. *The decoration* was added to guide and please the eye, using various colours and a range of materials. Colourful elements on the page include initials, rubrics (section headings), miniatures and other decoration.
5. *The bookbinding* was supplied last to protect the manuscript's leaves and keep them in a fixed order. Folded leaves, usually arranged in one or more gatherings, were sewn together and attached to boards or other forms of covers.⁴

The total number of surviving Icelandic manuscripts or parts thereof is generally estimated to be around 20,000. However, counting them is not straightforward. The vast majority of manuscripts date from after the Icelandic Reformation, as fewer than a thousand are from before the year 1600.⁵ The same trend can be observed for charters.⁶ Many more books

4 In Icelandic manuscripts it is not uncommon to see that the last two stages were not carried out consistently, left unfinished or added significantly later. For a detailed description of medieval Western manuscript production see e.g. Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), 3–64.

5 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Brot íslenskra miðaldahandrita," *Handritasýrpa: Rit til heiðurs Sigurgeiri Steingrímssyni sjötugum 2. október 2013*, ed. Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 2014), 127–128; see also Már Jónsson, "Manuscript Design," 232.

6 While ca. 1,500 Icelandic charters from before 1540 exist, the total number of charters and

and documents with handwritten texts were nonetheless produced over the course of centuries. For instance, over 80% of medieval manuscripts with legendary and chivalric vernacular content once written in Iceland are presumably now lost. Yet, this survival rate, estimated to be 16.9% based on unseen-species models, is comparably high.⁷ Overall, preservation rates vary drastically between different kinds of texts, manuscript traditions and languages: at the other end of the spectrum for Iceland, only a single medieval codex written in Latin exists that was never dismantled (AM 679 4to). In addition, fragments of roughly 340 others remain, though thousands of Latin books must have once existed in Iceland.⁸

The present contribution provides a state of knowledge regarding the properties and production details of surviving pre-modern Icelandic manuscripts. The focus lies on material aspects of the objects and their making rather than the people involved. Hence, research on the raw materials used is included, as are, for example, technical details about the scribal process such as the speed of writing.⁹ On the other hand, studies aiming to identify individuals or to recognize hands, styles and shared trades across manuscripts are not covered. Neither are the people nor networks and communities of manuscript production discussed here.¹⁰

The main period of interest is from the beginning of the transmission of handmade books from Iceland, i.e. around the middle of the twelfth

charter copies that once were in the possession of Árni Magnússon alone is close to 12,000, although this also includes Danish and Norwegian ones, see e.g. Silvia Hufnagel, "Der Wechsel von Pergament und Wachstafeln zu Papier in Island im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 95 (2020): 177.

- 7 Mike Kestemont et al., "Forgotten Books: The Application of Unseen Species Models to the Survival of Culture," *Science* 375 (2022): 768–769. Compared to other vernacular traditions in (Northern) Europe that were investigated, this preservation is only surpassed by the survival rate of Irish manuscripts of the same kind (p. 769).
- 8 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Latin Fragments Related to Iceland," *Nordic Latin Manuscript Fragments*, eds. Áslaug Ommundsen and Tuomas Heikkilä (London: Routledge, 2016), 169–175.
- 9 Though arguably closely related, paleographical studies and details regarding the development of Icelandic script are not included in the present article, as there is a longer-standing research tradition for them and overviews exist; see for instance Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "The Origin and Development of Icelandic Script," *Régionalisme et internationalisme : Problèmes de paléographie et de codicologie du Moyen Âge. Actes du XVe colloque du Comité international de paléographie latine (Vienne, 13–17 septembre 2005)*, eds. Otto Kresten and Franz Lackner (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2008), 87–94. Similarly, art-historical studies are not discussed in detail except where relevant.
- 10 This includes art-historical, paleographical and sociolinguistic research.

century, until parchment ceased to dominate the making of Icelandic manuscripts at the end of the sixteenth century. Thus, research on the introduction of paper in Iceland, which occurred while parchment was still the main writing support, is included but not its later developments. Details on bindings from after 1600 are also covered, as most current bindings on Icelandic parchment manuscripts postdate the leaves they protect, and later binding practices are therefore relevant for understanding their material history. In the following, the discussion of research on the specifics of Icelandic manuscripts is divided into four broad categories, roughly following the production stages of handmade books.

Writing Support

In Iceland, parchment for writing purposes was exclusively made from calfskin.¹¹ At least, all specimens studied to date for animal-species identification were sourced from calves.¹² Also, the preparation of the skins seems to have differed between Iceland and most of Europe. While it was common elsewhere to soak the animal hides in a lime bath during the de-hairing process, Icelandic parchment does not appear to have been treated in that way. The levels of calcium in the parchment are too low for the hides to have been treated with lime or chalk.¹³ Similarly, the amount of ancient DNA that has survived in the parchment of Icelandic manuscripts points in the same direction, as levels are higher than in comparable writing support from other traditions.¹⁴ An alternative dehairing method that

- 11 Therefore, the more general term *parchment* is used everywhere, but in the context of Icelandic manuscripts it is supposed to be understood as referring to *vellum*, i.e. parchment made from calfskin.
- 12 See e.g. Jónas Kristjánsson, “Vellum and Literature,” *Skarðsbók: Codex Scardensis AM 350 fol.*, eds. Jónas Kristjánsson, Ólafur Halldórsson and Sigurður Lindal, Manuscripta Islandica Medii Ævi 1 (Reykjavík: Lögberg, 1981), 40; Rannver H. Hannesson, “Analyser af íslandske pergamenten,” Kandidatspeciale, Konservatorskolen, Det kongelige danske Kunsthøgskolen, Copenhagen, 1995, 25, 53; Björk Þorleifsdóttir, “Af bókfelli: Smásjárathuganir á íslenskum skinnhandritum,” BA Thesis, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, 2003, 42, 57; Natasha Fazlic and Alex Speed Kjeldsen, “Om Morkinskinna’s parchment,” *Opuscula* 14 (2016): 389–391.
- 13 Rannver H. Hannesson, “Analyser,” 46. He investigated the chemical composition of sixteen charters from the early fifteenth century to around 1600.
- 14 Jiří Vnouček, “The Parchment of Flateyjarbók,” Oral presentation delivered at the seminar “Flateyjarbók: forn og ný,” held in Reykjavík on 10 February 2023; recording available online: [youtube.com/watch?v=pQVb3PR64ME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQVb3PR64ME) (accessed 29 September 2025).

might have been used in Iceland is controlled rotting of the hides, for instance in rivers.¹⁵ Experiments using this approach have resulted in partial removal of hair with their roots, while remaining hair had to be shaved off afterwards, in line with findings on existing manuscripts.¹⁶ It has also been suggested that either geothermal water or other products containing sulphur may have been used in the dehairing process.¹⁷ Sulphur has indeed been detected in selected Icelandic parchment; however, the use of geothermal clay can be excluded, and the presence of sulphur is more plausibly attributed to post-production air pollution.¹⁸

Icelandic parchment is often darker and rather coarse or thick compared to its European counterparts.¹⁹ The extent to which the differences in appearance can be attributed to the manufacturing process versus factors such as repeated use and the conditions under which the manuscripts were stored, however, is not yet fully understood.²⁰ An example that illustrates the potential impact of post-production factors on the present colour is the fourteenth-century *Stjórn*-manuscript (AM 227 fol.). The manuscript includes some leaves with a distinctly darker hue than the rest.²¹ Those leaves had been removed from the manuscript and had been used in book-bindings for decades before being reunited with the manuscript in the early

15 Jiří Vnouček, Matthew Teasdale and Sarah Fiddymont, “Parchment of Icelandic Manuscripts,” Oral presentation delivered at the 19th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts, held in Copenhagen 19–21 April 2023; abstract at <https://nors.ku.dk/cc/programme-cc-19/> (accessed 14 February 2025). Other dehairing methods, mostly by means of decomposing, where the hides were at times folded flesh-side to flesh-side or simply stacked, are attested for Iceland from later centuries, see Þórarinn Hjartarson, *Skinna. Saga sítunar á Íslandi* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2000), 19, 25–29.

16 Vnouček, “Parchment of Flateyjarbók.”

17 E.g. Björk Þorleifsdóttir, “Af bókfelli,” 21–23; Þórarinn Hjartarson, *Skinna*, 26–27.

18 Rannver H. Hannesson, “Analyser,” 40, 49–50.

19 See e.g. Áslaug Ommundsen and Gisela Attinger, “Icelandic Liturgical Books and How to Recognize Them,” *Scriptorium* 67 (2013): 306; Merete Geert Andersen, *Katalog over AM Accessoria 7. De latinske fragmenter*, Bibliotheca Arnarnagana XLVI (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 2008), xvi, fn.14; Már Jónsson, “Manuscript Design,” 236–237.

20 Vnouček et al., “Parchment of Icelandic Manuscripts”; Soffía Guðný Guðmundsdóttir and Laufey Guðnadóttir, “Book production in the Middle Ages,” *The Manuscripts of Iceland*, eds. Gísli Sigurðsson and Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík: Árni Magnússon Institute in Iceland, 2015), 46–47.

21 I am grateful to Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson for first pointing this out to me.

eighteenth century.²² Since it is unlikely that the production method of the leaves in question differed from the rest of the book, diverging storage conditions and use must have affected their current appearance. On the other hand, details of the parchment's production may have contributed to this discoloration taking place. Among others, the diverging dehairing methods may have resulted in more fatty acids remaining in the parchment, and oxidation of these acids can result in darkening of the leaves.²³ Consequently, with increasing knowledge of dehairing methods used in Iceland, it should become easier to establish their impact on the parchment's colour.

The thickness of Icelandic parchment leaves has been investigated in some cases. Measurements average around 0.3 mm with considerable variation in both directions.²⁴ Compared with this, the leaves of the *Codex Regius* of the Poetic Edda (GKS 2365 4to) with an average thickness of 0.235 mm have been described as "very thin"²⁵, which may not be unjustified in the Icelandic context, given that the thickness of a bifolium in *Flateyjarbók*, a manuscript often associated with grandeur, averages 0.272 mm.²⁶ On the other hand, in the context of European Bibles from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, leaves measuring 0.24–0.25 mm are perceived as "distinctly thick".²⁷ Similarly, calf parchment of European pocket Bibles from the thirteenth century which are famous for being made from ultrafine parchment, ranges between 0.09 and 0.28 mm in thickness, with a mean clearly below 0.2 mm.²⁸ In other words, even thin Icelandic parch-

22 See e.g. Jakob Benediktsson, "Some Observations on Stjórn and the Manuscript AM 227 fol.," *Gripla* 15 (2004): 10–12.

23 Rannver H. Hannesson, "Analyser," 45; see also Vnouček et al., "Parchment of Icelandic Manuscripts."

24 Calculations based on data from Rannver H. Hannesson, "Analyser," 60 and Björk Þorleifsdóttir, "Af bókfelli," 50–57.

25 Drífa Kristín Þrastardóttir, "The Making of the Codex Regius," *The Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda: Konungsbók Eddukvaða GKS 2365 4to*, eds. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, Haraldur Bernharðsson and Vésteinn Ólason (Copenhagen and Reykjavík: The Arnarnagmænan Institute and The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, 2019), 272–273.

26 Vnouček, "Parchment of Flateyjarbók."

27 Marilena Maniaci, "The Structure of Atlantic Bibles," *Trends in Statistical Codicology*, ed. Marilena Maniaci, Studies in Manuscripts Culture 19 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 41–42.

28 Sarah Fiddymment et al., "Animal Origin of 13th-Century Uterine Vellum Revealed Using Non-Invasive Peptide Fingerprinting," *PNAS* 112/49 (2015), 15069. A modern A4-sheet

ment appears thick compared to the finest European examples. This relative thickness of Icelandic parchment is consistent with visual observations noting traces of rough surface treatment, possibly indicating different, or less refined, working methods.²⁹ Yet, a more comprehensive study of the thickness of parchment from Iceland, potentially including surface treatments, is still lacking.

In Iceland, parchment was dominant as writing support longer than in other European and Nordic countries. The first evidence that paper was used for writing in Iceland dates to 1423, when a now-lost draft for a charter was written on paper.³⁰ However, the earliest surviving use of the new medium was not for writing purposes: In the year 1420, a parchment letter written by Bishop Jón Tófasen (d. 1423) was sealed with small pieces of paper on a drop of wax, creating paper seals.³¹ Finally, the oldest extant written artefact on paper is a charter, AM Dipl. Isl. Fasc. X,6, which attests to an exchange of land in 1437.³² The first preserved paper manuscripts date from the middle of the sixteenth century, the oldest of them presumably being AM 232 8vo, a book of correspondence from the 1540s.³³ Yet, it was not until the last two decades of the sixteenth century that paper became widespread on the island and its use overtook that of parchment.³⁴

Not all writing support employed in Icelandic manuscripts or documents, however, was new or previously unused at the time of writing. For

of paper is 0.1 mm thick.

29 E.g. Rannver H. Hannesson, "Analyser," 45; Vnouček et al., "Parchment of Icelandic Manuscripts."

30 Silvia Hufnagel, "Der Wechsel," 178.

31 Silvia Hufnagel, "The Rise of Paper: An Overview of Paper Provenance and Use in 15th- and 16th-Century Iceland," *Paper Stories – Paper and Book History in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Silvia Hufnagel, Þórunn Sigurðardóttir and Davíð Ólafsson, *Materiale Textkulturen* 38 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023), 17–18.

32 The partial watermark that is preserved in the piece of paper, a dragon's tail, makes it possible to trace its origin to the area of the Lower Rhine and the Rhine Delta, where it was presumably produced at least a decade before it was written on in Iceland (Hufnagel, "The Rise," 19–20).

33 Hufnagel, "Der Wechsel," 178–179.

34 Arna Björk Stefánsdóttir, "Um upptöku pappírs á Íslandi á sextánda og sautjándu öld," *Sagnir* 30 (2013), 228–232; see also Hufnagel, "The Rise," 17. Parchment manuscripts were still produced in Iceland in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, though presumably very few in number; see e.g. Katelin M. Parsons, "Relics of the Past: Calfskin, Authenticity and Nordic Antiquarianism," *Manuscript Studies* 9/2 (2024): 274–275.

parchment, such reuse usually entailed full or partial removal of textual or other content from the surface of the leaves, thus creating palimpsests. Yet, previously not written-on parts of leaves, such as margins, could also be repurposed for writing.³⁵ Two types of palimpsestation may be distinguished, *parchment recycling*, on the one hand, and *manuscript recontextualization*, on the other.³⁶ The former was evidently practised in Iceland from the very beginning of book production onward, whereas examples of the latter only survive post-Reformation.³⁷

In sum, preserved Icelandic parchment sets itself apart from other contemporary writing supports by often being relatively dark and thick. In addition, parchment was in use in Iceland until relatively late. Both the colour and thickness have been addressed in several smaller studies on Icelandic parchment, but the dehairing process has received most attention, as its methods clearly differed from European standards. Nevertheless, the exact impact of the production details on the parchment's present-day appearance is less well understood. Among others, the various hypotheses regarding alternative dehairing methods are still to be confirmed or rejected based on larger data sets. For now, core details of parchment production in Iceland and the precise reasons for its distinct appearance remain open to interpretation.

Gatherings and Design

Sheets were folded and nested inside each other to form gatherings. The dimensions of parchment sheets could vary considerably depending on natural factors such as the size, sex and age of the animal, as well as how a hide was cut. In particular, the number of full sheets that a single hide yielded could be higher than one, meaning that there is no strict correspondence between the number of parchment sheets and animal hides.³⁸

35 A sixteenth-century manuscript produced in that way and written by the priest Gottskálk Jónsson í Glaumbæ (1524–1590) is preserved as Isl. Perg. 8vo no. 5; see e.g. Tom Lorenz, “Latin *in situ* Fragments Connected to Iceland: A Survey,” *Scripta Islandica* 75 (2024): 83–85.

36 Tom Lorenz, “Recycling and Recontextualisation in Medieval and Early Modern Icelandic Palimpsests,” *Gripla* 35 (2024): 33.

37 Lorenz, “Recycling,” 34.

38 The size of hand-made paper, on the other hand, was fairly stable, which led to the establishment of format classifications for manuscripts based on how often the (paper) sheets had been folded.

For Iceland, it was first suggested that the leaves of *Codex Regius* had been cut in a different manner from one that would result in a single full sheet per hide (two bifolia, in this case),³⁹ and more recently, detailed observations on *Flateyjarbók* confirmed that during its production, some hides were cut into two full sheets.⁴⁰ However, as other manuscripts have yet to be studied, general assessments of the relationship between hides and sheets are currently not possible.

The number of bifolia that typically formed a gathering in Icelandic manuscripts varies, but at least in the fourteenth century, the quaternion, a gathering made of four bifolia, was predominant.⁴¹ The structure within individual gatherings can also differ with regard to how the leaves' hair- and flesh-sides are arranged. From other European traditions, two main patterns are best known: on the one hand, the so-called Gregory's rule, referencing a distribution in which hair-sides of leaves face hair-sides and flesh-sides face flesh-sides, and, on the other, a fashion associated with the British Isles, in which hair-sides consistently face flesh-sides of leaves (usually referred to as the *insular method*). A recent study of large-size fourteenth-century manuscripts indicates that most Icelandic codices from that period do not adhere to either of these two patterns.⁴² Instead, the orientation of hair- and flesh-sides tends to be inconsistent, which parallels findings from the Irish tradition. At the same time, the dimensions of the leaves might play a role in how gatherings are constructed, though mostly from loose bifolia.⁴³ In general, little scholarly knowledge exists on the size and construction of gatherings in medieval Iceland for centuries other than the fourteenth, leaving possible changes over time underexplored.

In terms of book design, a high number of very small manuscripts appear to have been preserved from Iceland. Comparison of the *semiperimetro*, the height plus width of leaves, in medieval Icelandic manuscripts to

39 Drífa Kristín Prastardóttir, "The Making," 287.

40 Vnouček, "Parchment of Flateyjarbók."

41 Björk Þorleifsdóttir, "Af bókfelli," 40–41; Lea D. Pokorny, "Consistently Inconsistent: Constructing Gatherings in Fourteenth-Century Iceland," *Manuscript Studies* (forthcoming).

42 Pokorny, "Consistently Inconsistent"; supported by examples in Natasha Fazlic and Alex Speed Kjeldsen, "Om Morkinskinns pergament," 391–393 and Drífa Kristín Prastardóttir, "The Making," 286. Previously, a considerably smaller study had concluded that almost 80% of leaves followed Gregory's rule; see Björk Þorleifsdóttir, "Af bókfelli," 40–41. The differing results highlight, among others, the importance of study sizes and how a corpus is chosen.

43 Pokorny, "Consistently Inconsistent."

codices from elsewhere in Europe found that very few fall into the largest category used by scholars abroad, while the smallest sizes occur more frequently.⁴⁴ However, this picture is probably skewed, among others by a much higher survival rate of manuscripts written in the vernacular Icelandic relative to those written in Latin.⁴⁵ Moreover, compared to most other Western manuscripts, Icelandic handwritten books tend to have slightly different proportions, with the leaves being wider relative to their height. The average ratio of the leaves' width relative to their height in Icelandic manuscripts lies clearly above 0.73,⁴⁶ while for other European manuscripts, the ratio is closer to 0.71.⁴⁷ Yet, dimensions of manuscripts as they are today might not reflect the books' original proportions due to (repeated) trimming of leaves in conjunction with rebinding over the course of the centuries. Such trimming usually affected the height more than the width, because only one of the sides was cut, while both the top and the bottom of the leaves were trimmed.

With regard to the page layout, a notable change occurred in Europe in the thirteenth century: the placement of the first written line of text on a page was moved from above the top line of the ruling grid to below it. For Iceland, a study of selected manuscripts indicates that a similar trend may have taken place with a delay of roughly one century – some manuscripts from the fourteenth century appear to display this practice – before being reversed again in later centuries.⁴⁸ Additionally, ruling and pricking methods in medieval Iceland were quite varied, although roughly comparable to Western European habits of the time. Both knives and awls, pointed instruments for punching round holes, were used for pricking, and ruling was done with either ink or lead, or using an instrument that today

44 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Brot," 130–133; Már Jónsson, "Megindlegar handritarannsóknir," 28–29.

45 See e.g. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Brot," 133.

46 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson and Már Jónsson calculated the ratio to be 0.739 and 0.734, respectively; see Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Brot," 135–137; Már Jónsson, "Megindlegar handritarannsóknir," 29–30, "Manuscript Design," 241.

47 See e.g. J. Peter Gumbert, "Sizes and Formats," *Ancient and Medieval Book Materials and Techniques*, eds. Marilena Maniaci and Paola F. Munafò, Vol. 1. Studi e testi 357 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1993), 233–234. The ratio of a modern A4 paper-sheet is 0.707.

48 Már Jónsson, "Fyrstu línur á blaðsiðum skinnhandrita: Fyrir ofan eða fyrir neðan efsta strik?," *Gripla* 13 (2002): 218–220, 225–226.

evidences as lighter lines on the parchment.⁴⁹ Traces of ink having been used for ruling are rare in the earlier manuscripts from Iceland but gradually increase with time.⁵⁰ Assuming that the scribes pricked and ruled for themselves, some may have had a fixed personal preference, while others varied their tools.⁵¹

So far, most research regarding gatherings and page design of Icelandic manuscripts has focused on codices from the fourteenth century. That attention bias still leaves a considerable gap to be filled with regard to other centuries as well as possible developments, even though the available research provides valuable indications. From what is known, notable differences between Iceland and most European traditions include the dimensions and proportions of manuscripts and the distribution of hair- and flesh-sides within gatherings.

Writing and Embellishment

The extent to which raw materials for inks and colourful paints were sourced locally and prepared according to domestic recipes in Iceland has been much debated. Sources preserving detailed instructions for how to make inks do not survive from the Middle Ages.⁵² But extant recipes from the seventeenth century onwards demonstrate how writing ink could be made from local ingredients alongside imported materials.⁵³ By this time,

49 Ibid., 226–227, and Lea D. Pokorny, “Pricking, Ruling, Helgafell? Book Production, Its Features, and Its Circumstances,” *Book Production at Helgafell? New Perspectives on a Suspected Scriptorium in 14th-Century Iceland*, eds. Beeke Stegmann and Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, forthcoming). In the former, lighter lines are considered the result of dry ruling; see Már Jónsson, “Fyrstu línur,” 221–222.

50 Már Jónsson, “Fyrstu línur,” 226–227.

51 Pokorny, “Pricking,” (forthcoming).

52 The manuscript AM 194 8vo preserves instructions for how to guild and paint sculptures, written in 1387. It touches upon which binder materials to use for which colour, but the pigments themselves are not identified explicitly; edited in Kristian Kålund, *Alfræði Íslenzk: Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur*. Vol. I: *Cod. Mbr. AM. 194, 8vo*, Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur XXXVII (København: S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1908), 89–91. For an English translation and commentary, see Unn Plahter, “Líkneskjusmíð: Fourteenth century instructions for painting from Iceland,” *Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung* 6 (1992): 167–173.

53 The best-known account of making writing ink from local ingredients dates from the seventeenth century but the method is often said to be older; see e.g. Soffía Guðný

the writing culture in Iceland had at least in part developed from a professional craft into more of a private endeavour for personal needs: this fact may have fostered preferences for local and more affordable ingredients. However, it is still uncertain how far back in time the domestic way of preparing writing ink goes.

It is clear that during the Middle Ages, multiple pigments used in European manuscript decoration were also imported to Iceland. A manuscript from the second half of the fifteenth century preserves a list of various foreign painting materials, detailing their selling prices in Bergen, Norway.⁵⁴ That such pigments were used in Icelandic manuscript production was first confirmed by non-destructive, non-invasive methods applied to a gathering of the fourteenth-century manuscript *Skarðsbók Jónsbókar* (AM 350 fol.), published in 1995.⁵⁵ Since then, a number of Icelandic manuscripts, ranging from the twelfth through the fourteenth century, have been analysed with scientific methods. Findings regularly include pigments such as vermilion (cinnabar), azurite, verdigris and orpiment, none of which are local to Iceland, but also provide evidence of more expensive or rare pigments including ultramarine, indigo, vivianite and iron phosphates.⁵⁶ Gold has so far only been identified with analytical tools in one instance in a manuscript produced in Iceland: in an historiated initial on f.

Guðmundsdóttir and Laufey Guðnadóttir, “Book Production,” 51–52. Recipes using imported goods are recorded for instance in the manuscripts JS 117 8vo, JS 395 8vo, Lbs 240 4to, Lbs 946 8vo and Lbs 1199 III 4to (all dated to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the last one possibly being slightly older; see relevant entries on *handrit.is*, (accessed 14 February 2025)).

- 54 AM 685 d 4to, f. 29r; edited in Kristian Kålund, *Alfræði Íslenzk: Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur*. Vol. 3: Landlýsingar m.fl., Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur XLV (København: S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1917–18), 74. For a detailed discussion see Unn Plahter, *Painted Altar Frontals of Norway 1250–1350*. Vol. 2: *Materials and Technique*, with contributions from Bjørn Kaland, Katharina von Salis, Sophie Stos and Raymond White (London: Archetype Publications, 2004), 57–60.
- 55 Stephen P. Best et al., “Identification by Raman Microscopy and Visible Reflectance Spectroscopy of pigments on an Icelandic manuscript,” *Studies in Conservation* 40/1 (1995): 31–40.
- 56 Esben Bukh Glindvad, “A Comparative Technical Analysis of Pigments Used in Twelve Medieval Manuscripts from the Arnamagnæan Manuscript Collection, Copenhagen,” *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts* 19 (2025), 187–200; Giulia Zorzan et al., “Not Quite *ultima Thule*: A Voyage into the Colorants of Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts,” Oral presentation given at the 20th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts, held in Copenhagen 9–11 April 2025; abstract at <https://nors.ku.dk/cc/cc20-programme/> (accessed 11 February 2025). Other pigments identified include red ochre, yellow ochre, green earth, red lead, lead white, bone white and carbon (see also following footnote).

96r of the *Stjórn* manuscript AM 227 fol., dated to the fourteenth century.⁵⁷ However, since that particular initial was changed after the original production of the manuscript, it is uncertain when the gold was applied.⁵⁸

For other pigments identified in medieval Icelandic manuscripts, a domestic source cannot be excluded. Bone white and coloured earths, for instance, could plausibly have come from local origins.⁵⁹ Further, the use of green earth in minor initials (in addition to historiated initials) has been identified in a group of Icelandic fourteenth-century manuscripts. Finding this pigment on the lower levels of the initial hierarchy is rare elsewhere in Europe and might hint at a local practice.⁶⁰ Overall, however, test results suggest that only approximately half of the colorants identified in medieval Icelandic manuscripts could have been sourced locally – that is if knowledge of the specific production techniques was available.⁶¹ Knowing for certain that a range of pigments used in Icelandic manuscripts in the medieval period were acquired from abroad, it is conceivable that standard ingredients for writing ink used in Europe – such as gall apples for iron-gall ink – were also brought into the country. Scientific analysis of writing ink in Icelandic medieval manuscripts has identified the presence of iron,⁶² but it remains to be investigated whether this may be due to the ink being prepared in the domestic way using iron sulphates from peat soils.⁶³

Calculations of how fast medieval Icelandic scribes wrote have been

57 Unpublished analysis by Maurizio Aceto and Angelo Agostino (Autumn 2021). Other medieval Icelandic manuscripts for which the presence of gold has been suggested, but not tested, include Isl. Perg. 4to no. 16, see e.g. Lena Liepe, *Studies in Icelandic Fourteenth Century Book Painting* (Reykholt: Snorrastofa, Cultural and Medieval Centre, 2009), 191.

58 Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, “Handritalýsingar í benediktínaklaustrinu á Þingeyrum,” *Íslensk klausturmenning á miðöldum*, ed. Haraldur Bernharðsson (Reykjavík: Miðaldastofa Háskóla Íslands, 2016), 253–255.

59 On the occurrence of bone white, see Best et al., “Identification,” 38. Red, green and yellow earths from Iceland are still being used, for instance, by the pigment supplier Kremer Pigmente GmbH & Co. KG, see <http://kremer-pigmente.com/en/shop/pigments/11553-set-iceland-earthcolours-assortment.html> (accessed 3 October 2024).

60 Giulia Zorzan, “The Colourful Codex,” *Book Production at Helgafell? New Perspectives on a Suspected Scriptorium in 14th-Century Iceland*, eds. Beeke Stegmann and Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, forthcoming).

61 There is, for example, evidence of orchil, a pigment derived from lichens, having been used in Iceland, which would have required knowledge of its elaborate production technique if manufactured in Iceland; see Zorzan et al., “Not Quite *ultima Thule*.”

62 Zorzan et al., “Not Quite *ultima Thule*”; Esben Bukh Glindvad, “A Comparative Technical Analysis,” 196–198.

63 For recipes, see fn. 53 above.

conducted for a single manuscript, *Flateyjarbók*. More specifically, it is estimated that it took a total of 8.5 months to write the roughly 184 large leaves comprising the main part of *Flateyjarbók*, with an average speed of 200 lines per day (not including pricking and ruling of the leaves).⁶⁴ Since the oldest part of *Flateyjarbók* is known to have been written between 1387 and 1394, this is one more example of an aspect of manuscript production in Iceland that has so far only been studied for the fourteenth century. Another feature for which this is true is how texts in medieval Icelandic manuscripts were corrected: for fourteenth-century manuscripts from Iceland, textual correction has been identified as a separate production step, consistent with practices abroad.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the number of different technical signs employed in Icelandic texts appears to have been rather limited. Icelandic scribes also displayed a greater freedom in their use of these correction signs compared to their Western European colleagues, who relied more on established sets of signs with fixed meanings.⁶⁶

Scholarly knowledge regarding the division of labour and union of functions in providing texts, rubrics and/or decoration in Icelandic parchment manuscripts is also still improving. Examples have long been known of scribes who also acted as illuminators,⁶⁷ and not infrequently, a hand that wrote the main text can also be found in the rubrics of the same manuscript.⁶⁸ The latter, however, is not always the case: preliminary

64 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "How Fast Did the Scribes of *Flateyjarbók* Write?," *RE:writing: Medial Perspectives on Textual Culture in the Icelandic Middle Ages*, eds. Kate Heslop and Jürg Glauser, *Medienwandel – Medienwechsel – Medienwissen* 29 (Zürich: Chronos, 2018), 217.

65 Lea D. Pokorny, "Correcting Icelandic Manuscripts in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century: Techniques and Context," *Scripta Islandica* 75 (2024): 135, 157–158.

66 *Ibid.*, 148–149.

67 Most notably, in *Flateyjarbók* Magnús Þórhallsson identified himself as both scribe and illuminator (GKS 1005 fol., f. 1v). For other examples see e.g. Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, "Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld," *Gripla* 27 (2016): 157–233; as well as Lea D. Pokorny, "Skrifari og listamaður: Falið andlit í AM 226 fol.," *Árnastofnun*, 22 April 2022, arnastofnun.is/is/utgafa-og-gagnasofn/pistlar/skrifari-og-listamadir-falid-andlit-i-am-226-fol. (accessed 4 October 2024).

68 For example, in *Morkinskinna* (GKS 1009 fol.), the rubrics, and possibly initials, were supplied by one of the two scribes of the text. This scribe (hand A) may have further supervised the writing of *Morkinskinna* and corrected the writing of hand B; see Alex Speed Kjeldsen, *Filologiske studier i Kongesagahåndskriftet Morkinskinna*, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagæna Suppl.* 7 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2013), 45–46.

investigations into fourteenth-century manuscripts associated with the religious house at Helgafell, for instance, indicate that significantly more hands appear to have contributed to the writing of the manuscripts when the rubrics are considered.⁶⁹ Such investigations are, however, complicated by the possibility that scribes wrote in several hands. Moreover, for certain manuscripts of the same corpus it has been argued that the pen-flourishing of initials was not done by the scribes themselves (as has been suggested for some foreign manuscripts), but rather by the illuminator in question. Additionally, the same person may or may not have supplied rubrics.⁷⁰ Finally, *Reykjabók of Njáls saga* (AM 468 4to) has been identified as a manuscript in which the rubricator was also responsible for marginal additions and possibly provided initials.⁷¹ Accordingly, many observations made so far on the division of labour in Icelandic manuscripts are based on individual cases and cannot be generalized. To achieve that, larger and more comparative studies are necessary.

As a whole, what is known about the material and technical aspects of writing and embellishment in Icelandic parchment manuscripts is biased toward the fourteenth century. For that period, though, many different aspects have been addressed, even if only in a single study. Especially regarding the colourants used in Icelandic manuscripts, the application of modern analytical techniques has significantly contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the materials and their possible origins. In part, these results correct romanticized notions of medieval Icelandic manuscripts being made solely from local resources.

69 Beeke Stegmann, Lea D. Pokorny and Giovanni Verri, "Revisiting a Scribal Network Based on Rubrics," Oral presentation delivered at Leeds International Medieval Congress, held in Leeds, 3–6 July 2023.

70 See e.g. Liepe, *Studies*, 157–70 and "Image, Script and Ornamentation in the 'Helgafell Manuscripts'," *From Nature to Script: Reykholt, Environment, Centre, and Manuscript Making*, eds. Helgi Þorláksson and Þóra Björg Sigurðardóttir (Reykholt: Snorrastofa, Cultural and Medieval Centre, 2012), 245–271.

71 Beeke Stegmann, "Collaborative Manuscript Production and the Case of Reykjabók: Paleographical and Multispectral Analysis," *New Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Njáls saga: The historia mutila of Njála*, eds. Emily Lethbridge and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), 44.

Bindings and Seals

Bookbindings that survive on Icelandic parchment manuscripts show a large variety of styles, often dating later than the leaves. Limp bindings represent the oldest type of bookbinding generally known, and are characterized by their flexible covers, to which gatherings are directly attached.⁷² Wrap-around limp bindings made from sealskin that are found on some Icelandic manuscripts are therefore often assumed to be contemporary with the enclosed leaves, even if a degree of uncertainty remains.⁷³ On the other hand, bindings with bare wooden boards and an open spine on medieval Icelandic manuscripts generally postdate the leaves they protect. More specifically, dendrochronological research has found that the wood often comes from trees felled in the late sixteenth century in the general area of Northern Germany.⁷⁴ Similarly, a number of prestigious parchment manuscripts have younger reddish-brown leather bindings on wooden boards with blind tooling of a distinct style. The tools can be traced back to bookbinding activities first at the bishopric of Hólar and later at Skálholt in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁷⁵

The particular styles or materials used in the covers or around the boards can further help date them. For example, with regard to reused parchment, different styles are associated with specific collectors or owners. Not only is Árni Magnússon thought to have provided professional bookbinders with various discarded parchment,⁷⁶ but certain styles of limp

72 J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Ashgate: Routledge, 1999), 287–288.

73 See e.g. Emily Lethbridge, “Gráskinna: Material Aspects of a pocket, patchwork Njála,” *New Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Njáls saga: The historia mulita of Njála*, eds. Emily Lethbridge and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018), 59–66. Examples of sealskin limp bindings are found on *Gráskinna* (GKS 2870 4to) and the *Icelandic Homily Book* (Isl. Perg 4to no. 15).

74 Among the bindings analysed, the only exception formed the lower board of Isl. Perg 4to no. 6, which dates to after 1335 and originates from Southern Sweden. However, it is unknown when it became part of that manuscript’s binding; see Niels Bonde and Peter Springborg, “Wooden Bindings and Tree-Rings: A Preliminary Report,” *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts* 8 (2005): 15; “Wooden Bindings and Tree-Rings: A Conclusion,” *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts* 9 (2006): 7–8.

75 Examples are AM 227 fol. (Stjórn) and AM 351 fol. (*Skálholtsbók eldri*); see Jakob Benediktsson, “Some Observations,” 12 and Chr. Westergård-Nielsen, “Introduction,” *Skálholtsbók eldri: Jónsbók etc. AM 351 fol.*, ed. Chr. Westergård-Nielsen, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile* 9 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1971), 27–29.

76 See e.g. Peter Springborg, “The Care Taken by Árni Magnússon of the Manuscripts in his Collection: A Study of Records,” *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts* 2 (1996): 11–20.

bindings made from reused manuscript leaves can also be useful in dating and localizing the binding activity in question.⁷⁷ For cardboard bindings, a particular type of thin, grey binding with printed waste on the inside has been traced back to a large-scale binding initiative at the Arnarnagnæan Collection in Copenhagen in the 1770s.⁷⁸ Further, watermark research has proven helpful for dating paper in endleaves and therewith often the binding itself.⁷⁹ Still, many bindings on Icelandic manuscripts and their styles have not yet been described in detail, meaning that their age and other production details can only be guessed at.

Charters are usually distinguished from codices by not being bound, as they tend to consist only of single leaves. Further, they regularly feature seals as proof of authenticity. Relatively little research has been done on Icelandic seals so far, but both wax and paper seals exist.⁸⁰ Appended seals appear to have been exclusively hung from parchment straps.⁸¹ The matrices used to create the imprints in seals were made from different materials as well, mostly copper or a copper alloy such as bronze. Some examples from Iceland exist that are made of silver, tin and even walrus tooth.⁸² The shape and size of the wax lumps used in appended seals varied, among other factors according to the status of the people or institutions involved. In addition, the utensils for pressing against the matrices could differ.⁸³ Examples of what has not yet been researched include the pigments used

77 E.g. Tom Lorenz, "Latin *in situ* Fragments," 80–81.

78 Peter Springborg, "The Work of Conservation at the Arnarnagnæan Institute," *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts* (1995): 45–46.

79 Beeke Stegmann, "Papierforschung im Dienste der Buchgeschichte: Einbände des 18. Jahrhunderts in der Handschriftensammlung Árni Magnússon," *Paper History*, 29/1 (2025): 7–16.

80 For paper seals, see above.

81 Personal communication with Guðrún Harðardóttir, 18 February 2025. Other materials used for sealing, such as silk thread for hanging the seal, also survive in Icelandic archives but only on charters produced outside of Iceland, e.g. the Royal charter from Christian II of Denmark, AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XXXVIII,10. I am thankful to Bjarni Gunnar Ásgeirsson for pointing me to this example.

82 Guðmundur Magnússon, "Icelandic Medieval Seals: History and Research," *Middelalderlige seglstamper i Norden*, eds. Michael Andersen and Göran Tegnér (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum Forlag, 2002), 15–16; Guðrún Harðardóttir, "Myndefni íslenskra klausturinnisigla," *Íslensk klausturmenning á miðöldum*, ed. Haraldur Bernharðsson (Reykjavík: Miðaldastofa Háskóla Íslands, 2016), 202.

83 Personal communication with Guðrún Harðardóttir, 20 February 2025.

to colour the wax of Icelandic seals and a comparison of those to pigments found in Icelandic codices.

To date, numerous questions about the production details of seals, as well as many bindings, of Icelandic origin remain open – particularly from the early periods. They have in common that preservation is often relatively poor, as they were particularly susceptible to wear and tear. Bindings tended to be replaced over the centuries, meaning that few original bindings exist, and many seals have been lost or deteriorated over time, further complicating analysis. Nonetheless, future studies on material aspects of Icelandic bindings, as well as seals, will hopefully allow for both better insight into internal developments and comparison with other manuscript traditions.

Concluding Remarks

Thanks to the recent increase in material-codicological research, the scholarly understanding of the specifics of manuscript production in pre-modern Iceland has improved considerably. Bit by bit, various projects and initiatives are providing a more nuanced foundation for analysing both parallels with and differences from manuscript production in other parts of Europe. For example, different methods appear to have been used to dehair hides for Icelandic parchment, not using the lime bath typical elsewhere. Since limestone is not native to Iceland, this may reflect an adaptation of the production process to local circumstances. In contrast, imported pigments were regularly used, suggesting that not all aspects of Icelandic manuscript production were fully adapted to local resources.

Codicological investigations have especially focused on the fourteenth century. This trend aligns with the dating of many of Iceland's most famous codices and with what is often referred to as the 'Golden Age' of Icelandic manuscript production.⁸⁴ Other periods, however, have yet to receive comparable attention. Moreover, several studies are based on small corpora or are unique in their approach, meaning that their findings still require confirmation from larger investigations as well as other comparable studies. Addressing these gaps will enable more meaningful analyses of

84 E.g. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, "Manuscripts and Palaeography," *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk, reprinted with corrections, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 31 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011), 250.

long-term trends and developments, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of these cultural heritage objects as material artefacts.

Where they have been applied, technological innovations and interdisciplinary methods have significantly advanced scholarship – especially in the identification of materials such as pigments, wood types and animal species. Further collaboration with neighbouring disciplines and the continued application of methods from other fields are expected to deepen our understanding of Icelandic manuscript production. Not least, rapid developments in Heritage Science and Digital Humanities offer promising new opportunities. At the same time, while many raw materials used in Icelandic parchment production have now been identified, the specific motivations or details behind some practices that diverge from broader Western traditions still need to be fully explained.

In general, research on the details of manuscript production often intersects with the study of other aspects of the book. For instance, analysis of bookbindings frequently overlaps with studies of transmission history and material reuse. Even though this article has attempted to treat material codicology separately, such investigations are closely interwoven with other manuscript-based disciplines, including palaeography, art history and historical linguistics. These fields both depend on and enrich one another. At the same time, a well-rounded and materially informed understanding of the craftsmanship involved in Icelandic manuscript production provides a broad foundation for fruitful interaction with adjacent academic fields such as medieval Icelandic literature, archaeology and socio-economic history.⁸⁵ One promising synergy lies in combining the study of how a manuscript was made with ecocritical approaches to the texts it preserves.⁸⁶ In short, deepening our knowledge of the material aspects of Icelandic manuscripts not only enhances scholarly understanding of production practices but also opens new pathways for interdisciplinary insights into Iceland's cultural heritage.

85 On reciprocal benefits of the growing codicological interest and other subfields of Old Norse Studies, such as genre studies, see e.g. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, "Manuscripts and Codicology," *A Critical Companion to Old Norse Literary Genre*, eds. Massimiliano Bampi, Carolyne Larrington and Sif Ríkhardsdóttir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 89–111.

86 See also Lethbridge, "Manuscripts," 58.

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SUMMARY

Manuscript Production in Iceland: A State of Knowledge

Key words: manuscript production, Icelandic manuscripts, material codicology

The present contribution provides a state of knowledge for manuscript production in Iceland. It is structured thematically, discussing both publications and ongoing research on (1) writing support, (2) gatherings and design, (3) writing and embellishment and (4) bindings and seals. Traditionally, the methods of book production in Iceland have been considered largely comparable to European practices, although the materials were thought to have been sourced mainly locally. Slowly, assumptions are being replaced with results from material-codicological studies. In fact, recent years have seen a significant increase in scholarly attention on the specifics of Icelandic manuscript production, allowing us to understand better both parallels with and differences from other European traditions. Technological advances and interdisciplinary approaches have particularly benefitted scholarly progress, such as for the identification of various materials. While the fourteenth century has been relatively well covered by research, other periods remain less explored.

ÁGRIP

Handritagerð á Íslandi: staða þekkingar

Efnisorð: handritagerð, íslensk handrit, efnisleg handritafræði

Þessi grein veitir yfirlit yfir stöðu þekkingar á handritagerð á Íslandi. Henni er skipt niður í efnisflokka þar sem dregnar eru saman niðurstöður rannsókna sem nýlega hafa birst í fræðiritum og rannsókna sem enn eru í vinnslu um 1. blaðefni, 2. kver og síðuhönnun, 3. skrift og skreytingar og 4. bókband og innsigli. Menn hafa lengi unnið út frá þeirri tilgátu að aðferðir íslenskrar handritagerðar hafi að miklu leyti verið sambærilegar við það sem gerðist annars staðar í Evrópu en að efnið hafi einkum verið fengið innanlands. Undanfarin ár hafa niðurstöður

rannsóknna á efnislegum þáttum smám saman komið í stað ágiskana. Athygli fræðimanna hefur í auknum mæli beinst að sérstöðu íslenskrar handritagerðar og þannig hefur skilningur aukist á því hvað er sambærilegt og hvað er ólíkt handritagerð annars staðar í Evrópu. Tækniframfarir og þverfaglegar aðferðir hafa reynst sérstaklega gagnlegar, einkum við greiningu á efnisvali og verkferlum. Hingað til hafa rannsóknir fræðimanna aðallega beinst að handritagerð á fjórtándu öld á meðan eldri og yngri tímabil bíða enn frekari greiningar.

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?
*Revisiting Crymogæa, Vatnshyrna,
and Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*

In 1609, a history of Iceland titled *Crymogæa* was published in Hamburg. It was written between 1596 and 1603 by Arngrímur Jónsson (1568–1648), most likely at the episcopal seat of Hólar, where he served as rector of the Latin school and as episcopal chaplain. In order to situate Iceland within the learned history of the world, he drew on a wide range of sources – classical, European, and Icelandic – selecting and juxtaposing them to make the country's past and present credible and comprehensible abroad. Among these sources was *Watzhyrna*.

The name *Vatnshyrna*¹ evokes both excitement and grief among scholars. Excitement, because it is believed to have been one of the largest compilations of *Íslendingasögur* from the Middle Ages. It is thought to have been commissioned by Jón Hákonarson (b. 1350) in Viðidalstunga, North Iceland, around 1390–1400, containing no fewer than seven or nine *Íslendingasögur* and three *þættir*. Stefán Karlsson suggested that the entire manuscript may have been written by Magnús Þórhallsson, the illuminator and one of the two scribes of *Flateyjarbók*.

Grief follows, however, because the manuscript was destroyed in the Great Fire of Copenhagen in 1728, when a large portion of the University Library was lost, leading to a long history of scholarly misunderstanding and attempts at reconstruction.

To further complicate matters, in 1860, Guðbrandur Vigfússon mistakenly considered a vellum fragment (AM 564a 4to) to be the last surviving piece of the burnt codex that the manuscript collector and scholar Árni

- 1 I use *Vatnshyrna* when referring to the elusive or ambiguous manuscript whose identity remains unclear. I use **Vatnshyrna* to refer specifically to the reconstructed manuscript proposed by Guðbrandur Vigfússon, which was adopted in scholarship from 1860 to 1970 and treated as established fact in subsequent research. *Watzhyrna* refers to the source cited by Arngrímur Jónsson, and *Membr. Res. No. 5* denotes the burnt manuscript also referred to by Árni Magnússon as *Vatnshornsbók*.

Magnússon nicknamed *Vatnshornsbók* when he had it on loan from Peder Hansen Resen. Ásgeir Jónsson, an assistant to Árni Magnússon, made copies of the manuscript between 1686 and 1688. The copies Ásgeir made are often valued as scientifically accurate and have frequently been taken at face value, as stand-in-eyewitnesses for the lost manuscript, which has raised suspicion from more material-focussed scholars when it comes to the treatment of these copies as medieval texts.²

John McKinnell (1970) has already pointed out that the manuscript that Árni Magnússon called *Vatnshornsbók* should rather be called *Membrana Reseniana No. 5* (*Membr. Res. No. 5*), which is the shelf-mark it had in Peder Hansen Resen's collection, to avoid indicating relations that might not exist with a source that is mentioned in Arngrímur Jónsson's *Crymogæa* and that he calls *Watzhyrna*. But McKinnell found Stefán Karlsson's argumentation that *Membr. Res. No. 5* was written by only one scribe that he identified as Magnús Þórhallsson (Stefán Karlsson 1970 b) so convincing that he thought it unnecessary to hold on to the doubt that he formulated himself:

Strictly speaking, the original for Árni Magnússon's paper copies should probably be referred to as *Membrana Reseniana* rather than *Vatnshyrna*, in case Árni was mistaken in identifying it as *Vatnshyrna* [...]. When *Vatnshyrna* is referred to in this article, it is therefore the Ms. which Árni calls *Vatnshornsbók* which is meant (McKinnell 1970, 313).

But Árni never connected the source *Watzhyrna* in *Crymogæa* and the manuscript he called *Vatnshornsbók*.³ This connection only came into the world

2 Mår Jónsson has convincingly shown that not all of the copies believed to derive from *Membr. Res. No. 5* were copied directly from the parchment manuscript itself. Rather, some of them appear to be composites, based on copies made by Ketill Jörundarson from another manuscript, supplemented with corrections and additions inserted by Árni Magnússon. See Mår Jónsson, "Scribal Inexactitude and Scholarly Misunderstanding: A Contribution to the Study of *Vatnshyrna*," in *Frejas Psalter: En psalter i 40 afdelinger til brug for Jonna Louis-Jensen*, ed. Peter Springborg and Bergljót Soffía Kristjánsdóttir (Copenhagen: Den Arnamagnæanske Kommission, 1997), 119–127.

3 See Guðbrandur Vigfússon. *Bárðarsaga Snæfellsáss, Viglundarsaga, Þórðarsaga, Draumavitranir, Völsapáttir*. Kjöbenhavn: Nordiske Literatur-Samfund, 1860. XI: „At Árni Magnússon da han skrev sine annotationes til Are frodes Schedæ ikke har kjendt Sammenhængen

in 1860 when Guðbrandur Vigfússon searched for Arngrímur's source. To avoid further confusion, I will follow McKinnell's suggestion and refer to the burnt manuscript from Resen's collection as *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5 because this is the name it had in the catalogues when it burnt, and we know what it contained when Árni had it (see AM 226a 8vo f.58v).

In 1970, Stefán Karlsson refuted Guðbrandur Vigfússon's assumption that *Membr. Res. No. 5* and AM 564a 4to once belonged to the same codex, and McKinnell (1970) subsequently reconstructed a vellum manuscript that included AM 564a 4to as well as two other vellum fragments from Árni's collection, namely AM 445b 4to and 445c I 4to. McKinnell baptised this newly reconstructed manuscript *Pseudo-Vatnsþyrna*, which makes the bewilderment about the complex entanglement complete, since the name *Pseudo-Vatnsþyrna* reflects the research history surrounding AM 564a 4to rather than doing justice to the actual manuscript. A name is sometimes a burden, and in this article, I will examine the naming history of *Vatnsþyrna*, *Vatnsþornsbók*, and *Pseudo-Vatnsþyrna* and argue that renaming these manuscripts would facilitate better research.

During the high tide of saga writing in medieval Iceland, the transmission of regional sagas is characterised by the production of compilations – meaningful combinations of texts or text variants.⁴ Even if Guðbrandur

viser hans Yttring (Additam. 6 pag. 246): *Ipse quoque Arngrimus Crymogæa p. 77 eundem alsherjargoði vocat; manuscriptum quoddam Kjalnes. historiam, Barði Snæfellsens um Dei vitam et nescio quid ultra continens secutus, quod a possessoris ut existimo prædico citati libri pagina 62, 77, et 113, Vatnsþyrnam denominare placuit.*" (That Árni Magnússon, when he wrote his annotations on Are Frode's schedule, did not recognise the context is shown by his statement (Additam. 6 pag. 246): Arngrímur himself, in *Crymogæa* p. 77, also calls him alsherjargoði; he follows a certain manuscript containing the history of Kjalnes, the life of Bárðr Snæfellsáss, and something else unknown. It appears to have been named *Vatnsþyrna*, presumably after the estate of its owner, as referenced in the cited book on pages 62, 77, and 113.) All translations are my own. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the original note by Árni Magnússon, as the reference Guðbrandur Vigfússon provides (Additam. 6 pag. 246) cannot be verified.

- 4 The term *compilation* is usually applied on a textual level, describing a combination of individual texts that are rearranged, varied, and shaped into a new text-work. The compiler is thus someone who "transcribes the works of others, but with the freedom to add [...] [and to] rearrange the material in order to make it fit his needs" (Johansson 2018, 122, 125). *Sturlunga saga* provides an example in this sense. Here, however, I use *compilation* on a material level: to refer to the combination and variation of sagas – understood as open and unstable texts whose variants are linked through Wittgenstein's concept of *Familienähnlichkeit* (family resemblance) – together with other texts, such as genealogies, whose arrangement and editing are coordinated within a specific codex. In contrast, a *collection* is an assemblage

Vigfússon implied that **Vatnshyrna* was a collection and McKinnell reconstructed a codex, they were never researched as proper compilations. This is, to some extent, understandable, given that Membr. Res. No. 5 is lost and no material analysis of its structure is possible. However, the lack of physical evidence never prevented saga editors from using the seventeenth-century paper copies as material for reconstructing the medieval texts,⁵ nor did it stop Stefán Karlsson from analysing the script of the copies of *Membr. Res. No. 5* and treating it as a medieval hand in order to support his conclusion that Magnús Þórhallsson had written the entire manuscript (see Stefán Karlsson 1970 b).

**Vatnshyrna* and *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* have been consistently referred to in scholarship but never explored as compilations in their own right. Instead, they have always been treated as quarries for best-text variants rather than meaningful works in themselves. In the following, I will compile what appears to be common knowledge about *Vatnshyrna* and *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* and go back to the beginning – when the name *Vatnshyrna* emerges in scholarship – and trace the name and the connected manuscripts in research history.

I will put forward a way to untangle the two manuscripts that have been mentioned in one breath for the last fifty years by examining how Arngrímur Jónsson treated *Watzhyrna* and other sources, which also gives insight into the usage and understanding of written sources in early modern historiography. I will further propose a reconstruction of the manuscript hitherto known as *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* and introduce the new name *Melabók* that allows a new view of the creation of compilations in the Middle Ages in Iceland.⁶

of texts without mutual influence. Medieval scribes may not have distinguished between the two, and the distinction is not always clear, particularly because many codices have yet to be examined with regard to the narratological and editorial interplay of their components. In this article, I use *collection* for cases where scholarship has treated texts in manuscripts as independent, without considering their deliberate arrangement or interrelation within a codex.

- 5 Some of the widely used Íslendingasögur editions of *Íslenzk fornrit* are based on the seven-teen-century paper copies that are supposed to derive from Membr. Res. No. 5. For the mentioned sagas, these copies are the only so-called complete accounts. This is for example the case for *Eyrbyggja saga* (AM 448 4to).
- 6 The conviction that *Melabók* is an appropriate name for the remake of *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* is the result of many conversations with Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, to whom I am grateful.

I. Vatnshyrna – Quid est?

The problem is that it is often unclear what exactly is meant when referring to *Vatnshyrna*.⁷ Are we speaking of the lost manuscript that Árni Magnússon referred to as *Vatnshornsbók*, the source Arngrímur Jónsson called *Watzhyrna*, or the hypothetical codex **Vatnshyrna* reconstructed by Guðbrandur Vigfússon? Scholarship thus far appears to have operated on the assumption that at least the first two are the same. Even though some revisions and new insights have emerged, this identification has never been seriously questioned.⁸ While Guðbrandur Vigfússon arrived at the conclusion that *Watzhyrna* and Árni's *Vatnshornsbók* are the same by eliminating alternative possibilities based on probability (Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 1860, see also analysis below), Stefán Karlsson went further. Building on the assumption that Membr. Res. No. 5 and *Melabók* (formerly *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*) are sister compilations and closely related, he asserted that there is no doubt that one or the other is identical with Arngrímur's *Watzhyrna* (Stefán Karlsson 1970 b, 280).⁹

- 7 See for example the *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur*, edited by Rudolf Simek and Hermann Pálsson, first published in 1987 and revised in 2007, which states the following under the entry **Vatnshyrna*: “**Vatnshyrna* [...] ist der Name einer im Brand von Kph. 1728 zum Großteil [sic] vernichteten Pergament-HS von Isländersagas, die anscheinend Ende des 14. Jhs. für Jón Hákonarson von Viðidalstunga, den ersten Besitzer der Flateyjarbók hergestellt wurde. Sie enthielt folgende Sagas: Flóamanna saga, Laxdæla saga, Hænsa-Þóris saga, Vatnsdæla saga, Eyrbyggja saga, Kjalnesinga saga, Króka-Refs saga, Stjórnu-Odda draumr, Víga-Glúms saga, Harðar saga, Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss, Þórðar saga hreðu, Bergbúa þáttur, Kumlbúa þáttur, Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar.” (**Vatnshyrna*: [...] is the name of a parchment manuscript of Icelandic sagas that was mostly(!) destroyed in the Copenhagen fire of 1728. It was apparently produced at the end of the fourteenth century for Jón Hákonarson of Viðidalstunga, the first owner of Flateyjarbók. It contained the following sagas ...). Most interestingly, the only connected shelfmark is AM 564a 4to (7 folios), and the connected literature is limited to: “Jakob Benediktsson, Arngrimi Jonæ Opera Latina Conscripta IV, Kbh. 1957; J. McKinnell, The Re-construction of Pseudo-Vatnshyrna (Opuscula 4), Kbh. 1970 (= BiblArn 30); Stefán Karlsson, Um Vatnshyrnu (ibid.); idem, ‘V.’ (KLNLM 19), 1975; J. McKinnell, ‘V.’ in *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia*, New York 1993.” This suggests that the editors were well aware of the re-evaluations by Stefán Karlsson and John McKinnell, whose work convincingly demonstrated that AM 564a 4to was not, in fact, part of whatever *Vatnshyrna* may have been. However, the outdated entry continues to confuse students and scholars alike. Cf. Rudolf Simek and Hermann Pálsson, eds., *Lexikon der Altnordischen Literatur*. 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2007), 412–13.
- 8 See for example Valgerður Hilmarsdóttir. “Myndin af Vatnshyrnu. Draumaþættir í AM 555h 4to, AM 564c 4to og AM 564a 4to: varðveisla og efnisleg tengsl” (MA thesis, Háskóli Íslands, 2013).
- 9 “Á hvorn veginn sem þessu hefur verið farið má að öllu saman lögðu fullvíst telja að þessi

I will argue that there is reason to question this equation and that such doubts can never be fully ruled out, as we must acknowledge that *Membr. Res. No. 5* is lost and that the surviving copies offer only very limited access to the composition and contents of the medieval codex. Furthermore, the relationship between *Membr. Res. No. 5* and *Melabók* does not appear as close as Stefán suggested, since the sagas preserved in both compilations differ significantly in their redactions. It therefore cannot be concluded that it would make no difference which of the two manuscripts, if any, served as Arngrímur's source.

Crymogæa and the Emergence of Watzhyrna in Scholarship

The following analysis will demonstrate how Arngrímur employed varying levels of detail in his referencing and formatting practices to signal quotations from different kinds of sources. His overall conceptual framework drew on contemporary historiographical methods, particularly those articulated in Jean Bodin's *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1572, see Middel 2016, 110). As Kim P. Middel has noted, Arngrímur adopted Bodin's concepts of government and structured *Crymogæa* into three books in order to present Iceland's past and present in terms intelligible to an international learned audience (Middel 2016, 116). He quoted *Watzhyrna* three times in the first book (Arngrímur Jónsson 1609, 62, 77) – which is “a general encyclopedia on Iceland's geography, language, people, customs and government” (Middel 2016, 116) – and once in the second book that is dedicated to the history of aristocratic rule in Iceland (Arngrímur Jónsson, 113).

Figures 1–3 show how *Watzhyrna* is referenced. In general, quotations in Icelandic, single words and place names are set in Fractura to distinguish them from the main text, which is set in Antiqua. When Arngrímur quotes directly from an Icelandic source, the quotation is indented and set in a separate paragraph.

Resensbók hafi verið hluti af því handriti sem Arngrímur lærði nefndi Vatnshyrnu, en af þeim þremur sögum sem hann vitnar til með Vatnshyrnu nafni var Kjalnesinga saga ein í Resensbók.” (Whichever way this has been handled, it can be considered certain, when everything is taken into account, that this Resen manuscript was part of the manuscript that Arngrímur the Learned referred to as Vatnshyrna, but of the three sagas he refers to by the name Vatnshyrna, only Kjalnesinga saga was in Resen's book.)

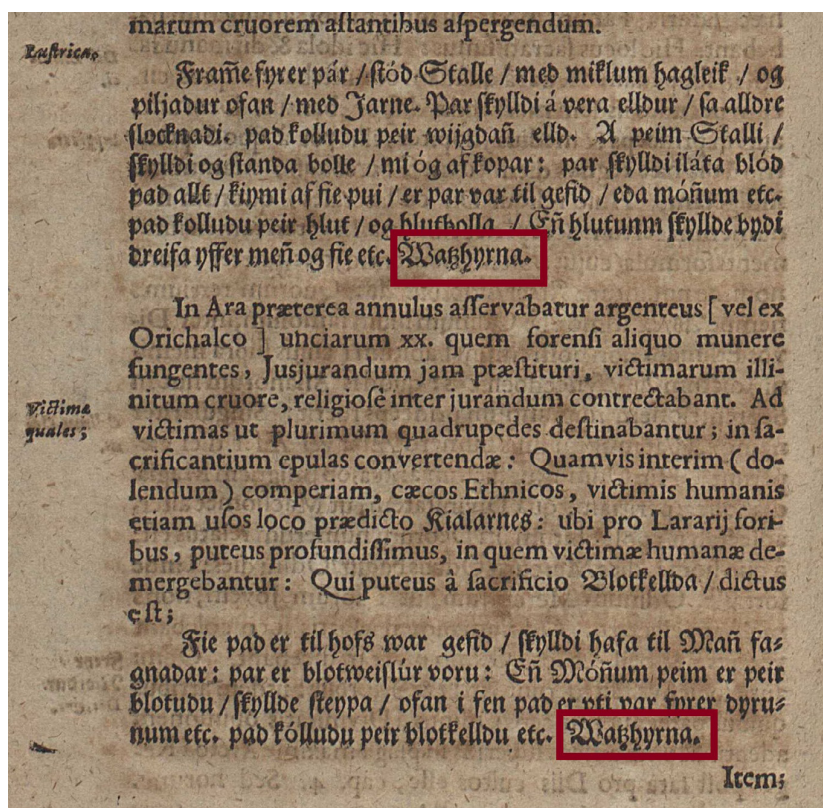


Figure 1: Watzhyrna reference in Crymogæa p. 62. *Bekur.is*. Public domain.

Watzhyrna is the first Icelandic source that is both typographically distinguished and named. Árni Magnússon identified the excerpts on page 62 as stemming from *Kjalnesinga saga*, though they may alternatively derive from a redaction of *Eyrbyggja saga* (see the letters further down), and the one on page 113 as excerpts from *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, while he could not identify the one on page 77. Guðbrandur Vigfússon came to the conclusion that this must be taken from *Þórðar saga hreðu* (see Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, XI). However, these considerations, which have never been questioned in scholarship, rest on the general assumption that *Watzhyrna* is the nickname of a manuscript that was named after the farm where it was kept and that it preserved several different sagas. By analysing how Arngrímur

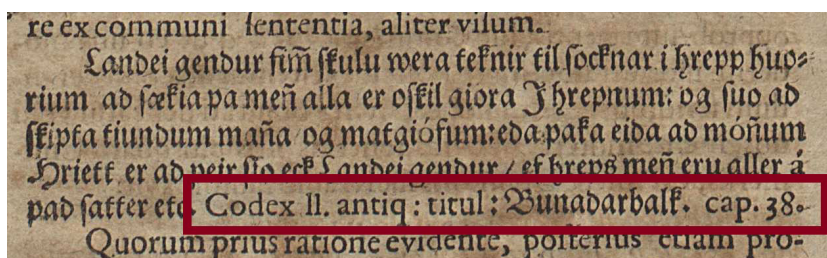


Figure 4: Crymogæa p. 66. Quotation from Jónsbók, Búnaðarbálkur, with manuscript indication. Bækur.is. Public domain.

Arngrímur makes it clear that this is a manuscript understood as a book. A similar way of citation but in a different layout is used when he refers to his methodological role model Bodin. He introduces the text with a source attribution – usually giving the author, the work, and the relevant chapter

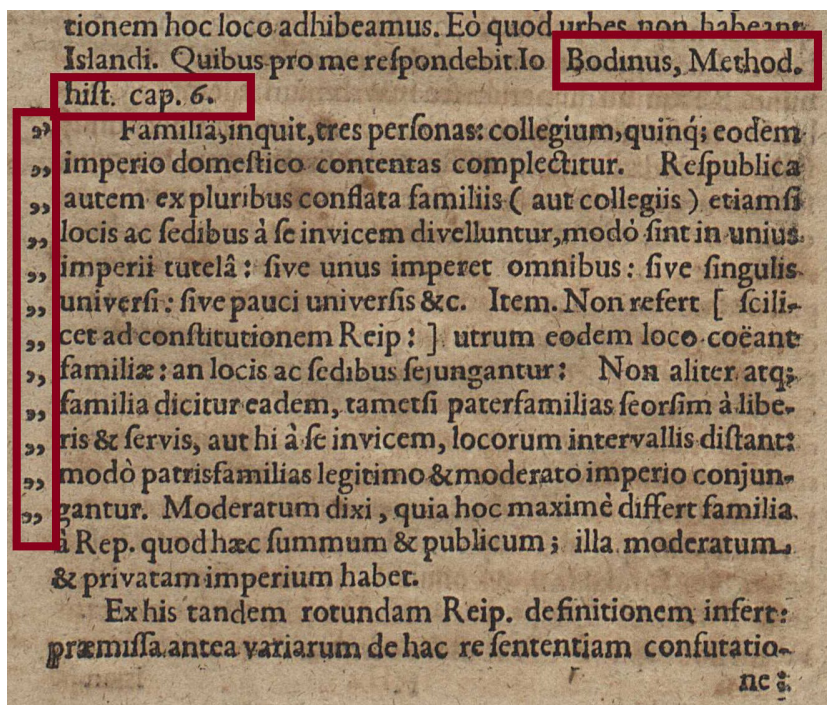


Figure 5: Crymogæa p. 58, Latin source indication. Bækur.is. Public domain.

– and marks it in the margin with quotation marks. It should be noted here, as Middel (2016, 116) has pointed out, that Arngrímur slightly misquotes Bodin, showing that he altered the texts he used at times, whether deliberately or not.¹⁰

By contrast, when Arngrímur refers to certain sagas, he distinguishes whether he is quoting directly from an Icelandic source – placing the saga’s name at the end of the quotation and marking it typographically in Fractura (see the examples of *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Laxdæla saga* quotations below; Figures 6–7) – or whether he is paraphrasing or merely reporting information drawn from a saga in Latin, in which case he does not employ typographic distinction but only gives the source (see the example from *Gísla saga Súrssonar* below; Figure 8). In both cases, however, he seems to treat the saga references as references on the level of text rather than of manuscript.

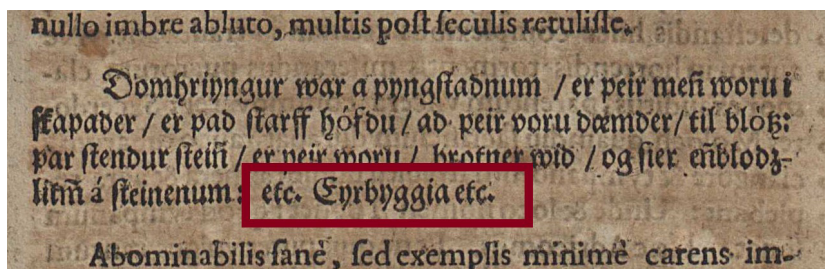


Figure 6: Crymogæa p. 63. Example 1 for a direct saga quotation.

Bekur.is. Public domain.

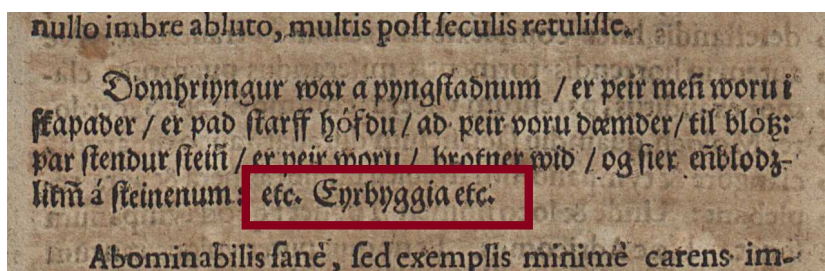


Figure 7: Crymogæa p. 102. Example 2 for a direct saga quotation.

Bekur.is. Public domain.

10 “... for Bodin had written that a familia consists of five persons and a collegium of three” (Middel 2021, 116). In the same manner, he quotes Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* (Arngrímur Jónsson, 34) and other authoritative sources.

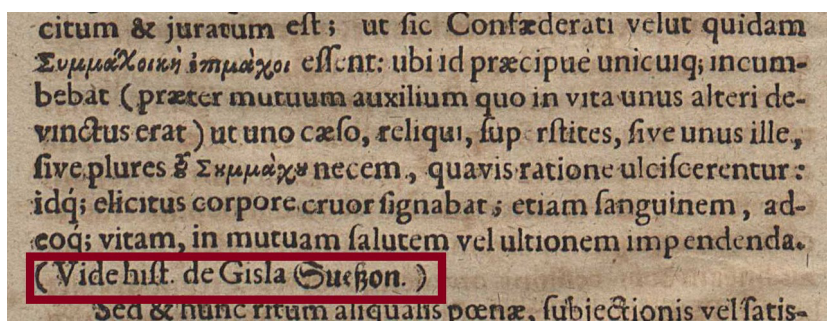


Figure 8: Crymogæa p. 102. Example for an indirect saga quotation.
Bekur.is. Public domain.

In the same manner, both directly and indirectly, he quotes *Wigslóði* (*Víglóði*) – written and abbreviated in several variations – which is a part of *Grágás* dealing with manslaughter and bodily injuries. He often provides chapter numbers (see, for example, Arngrímur Jónsson, 73: wigsl, [without chapter]; 78: wygsloda/24; 83: wijgsleda: 15; 98: Wigsl. 62). These chapter numbers indicate that he refers to a specific manuscript, as they are later additions not found in all manuscripts that existed in his time. However, he did not specify which manuscript he used, referring only to the particular section.

As has been demonstrated, Arngrímur never uses manuscript names when referring to Icelandic sources, citing only texts or parts of texts. The only instance in which he explicitly indicates a material source is when citing *Jónsbók*, which he does not name but references as a codex, specifying the section *Búnaðarbálkur*. It therefore seems unlikely that he would use a title referring to an entire manuscript, as he apparently never does so when citing sources known to us.

Based on Arngrímur's manner of citation and source attribution, it thus cannot be concluded that *Watzhyrna* refers to a manuscript. An alternative is that *Watzhyrna* refers to a specific saga or textual tradition now lost.

One scenario, though highly speculative, is that Arngrímur had access to a defective manuscript, similar to AM 564a 4to, in which textual boundaries were unclear, so he understood the fragments as one text. Another possibility is that sagas now known to us were indeed assembled in a condensed redaction and that this led him or others to assign the name

Watzhyrna, either based on the farm where the source was kept – potentially Vatnshorn í Línakradalur (see below) – or on the place where the narrative is centred. This could correspond to the way all known redactions of *Eyrbyggja saga* are composed – featuring only loosely connected episodes that all focus on the regional history of Snæfellsnes. If this were the case, parts of the redaction of *Þórðar saga hreðu* – now known as the fragmentary version and preserved in AM 564a 4to – together with textual components from *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* and the temple description known from *Kjalnesinga saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga* may have been compiled into a new textual work, which was then named *Watzhyrna*.

EXCURSUS: *Vatnshyrna saga*?

In two letters to Árni Magnússon, Halldór Þorbergsson suggested in 1696 and 1699 that the source Arngrímur refers to as *Watzhyrna* corresponds to what they know as *Eyrbyggja saga*, arguing that the information Arngrímur provides appears only in that saga.

Reikdælu hef eg bædi sed og lesid þá er eg var úngur, hún var í láni hjá mínum sal: fòdur, enn hvor hana átti, man eg ei. Þess er og ad giæta ad sögurnar eru adskilianlega nefndar: so sem ein hiá oss sem nafnkend er Eirbyggja, hefur og annad nafn og er nefnd Vatnshyrna, so citerar Sra. Arngrímur hana í sinni Crýmogæa og færir þar inn dæmi mörg sem ei finnaz í sögum nema Eýrbýggju. Þad hefi eg gaumgæfilega samanleitt, má so vera um fleiri sögur. (Halldór Þorbergsson 1696, NKS 1836 4to, No. 2, 46)

And

Um Reikdælu minnst eg ad í henne væru nefndir Askill Godi og Vermundur Kögur. Þad kann vel vera sem þer skrifid ad öðru nafni se nefnd. so sem Eirbyggja, er vær svo nefnum, kallaz af S^{ra} Arngrími Vatnshyrna. (Halldór Þorbergsson 1699, NKS 1836 4to, No. 2, 47)¹¹

11 'I have both seen and read Reikdæla when I was young; it was on loan to my late father, but I do not remember who owned it. It should also be noted that the sagas are named

Stefán Karlsson dismissed Halldór's interpretation by suggesting that while it is possible Halldór recalled a manuscript known as *Vatnshyrna* that included *Eyrbyggja saga*, it is equally likely that Halldór simply mistook the reference to *Vatnshyrna* that has been attributed to *Kjalnesinga saga* – specifically the passage concerning a temple – for a passage from *Eyrbyggja saga*, since the content and wording are notably similar. As a result, Stefán concludes that Halldór's remarks hold little scholarly value (see Stefán Karlsson 2000, 338). Nevertheless, the very fact that Halldór assigns not only this passage but obviously also other passages that were attributed to *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* and *Þórðar saga hreðu* instead to *Eyrbyggja saga* illustrates that individual narrative elements cannot always be attributed unambiguously to a single saga; rather, they seem to have circulated independently and been integrated selectively into different redactions (see Gísli Sigurðsson 2004). This is particularly evident in *Eyrbyggja saga*, whose episodic structure demonstrates how diverse narratives could be compiled to reflect a spatial interest.¹² Even if it is unlikely that Arngrímur intended to refer to another redaction of *Eyrbyggja saga* – given that he explicitly cites other passages under that saga's title (see Figure 6 above), implying he saw the sources as distinct – Halldór's identification still provides valuable insight into the seventeenth-century understanding of *Eyrbyggja saga*. Moreover, Halldór clearly perceives the citation as originating from a single saga rather than a compilation. To dismiss his attribution merely as an error would, therefore, overlook both the inherently variable and fluid nature of the transmission of *Íslendingasögur* and the sophisticated distinctions Arngrímur applied when citing his sources in *Crymogæa*. Furthermore, all extant versions of *Kjalnesinga saga* contain

differently: for example, one known to us as *Eyrbyggja* has another name and is called *Vatnshyrna*. Thus, Sr. Arngrímur cites it in his *Crymogæa* and includes there many examples that are found only in *Eyrbyggja saga*. I have carefully compared this, and it may be the case with other sagas as well' (Halldór Þorbergsson 1696, NKS 1836 4to, No. 2, 46). And 'Of Reikdæla I remember that in it are named Askell Goði and Vermundur Kögur. It can well be that it will be written to you that other names are named, just like *Eyrbyggja*, that we call so, that Sr. Arngrímur calls *Vatzhyrna*' (Halldór Þorbergsson 1699, NKS 1836 4to, No. 2, 47).

- 12 I wrote about this in my Master's thesis: "hann fór út um fjörðu ok upp á fjall. Landschaft, Wege und Wetter in der *Eyrbyggja saga*" (Masterarbeit zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades Master of Art, Nordeuropa Institut, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 2016, unpublished).

more extensive text within the passage than that cited by Arngrímur. It is, therefore, plausible that Arngrímur was citing yet another distinct version of the temple description, one separate from the two known versions in *Kjalnesinga saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga*. This possibility is further supported by the fact that Árni Magnússon apparently did not recognise the passage now attributed to *Þórðar saga breðu*. That *Vatnshyrna* was considered a saga at a certain point in time is supported by at least two lists in which *Vatnshyrna* (*Vatnshirna saga*) appears as a saga title.

In 1777, the Swedish priest Uno von Troil, who became archbishop of Uppsala in 1786, compiled the outcome of his 1772 expedition to Iceland in his book *Bref rörande en resa til Island*. He met the clerical and intellectual elite in Iceland to add to his knowledge about the island (Lefter 2025, 45). In his fourteenth letter about Icelandic literature, he noted the interest of the Icelanders in their own history and included a list of Icelandic texts that according to von Troil were mostly written between the eleventh and fourteenth century, of which some circulate in modern print editions (von Troil 1777, 147–69).

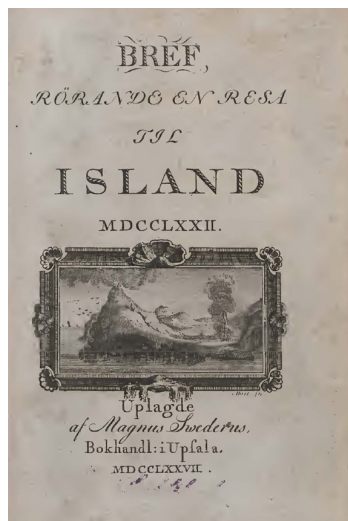


Figure 9: Titlepage of Uno von Troil, *Bref rörande en resa til Island* 1772. Bækur.is. Public domain.

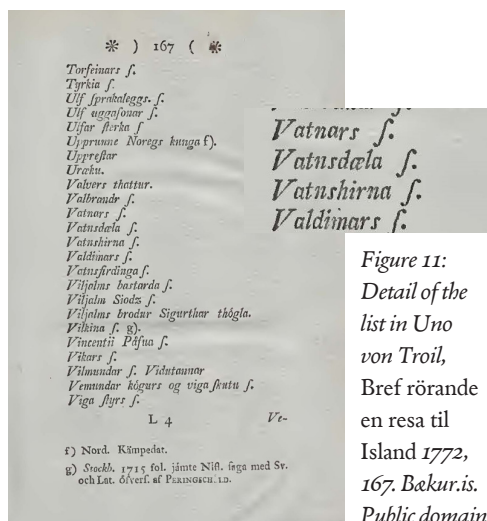


Figure 10: *Vatnshirna saga* in Uno von Troil, *Bref rörande en resa til Island* 1772, 167. Bækur.is. Public domain.

Figure 11: Detail of the list in Uno von Troil, *Bref rörande en resa til Island* 1772, 167. Bækur.is. Public domain.

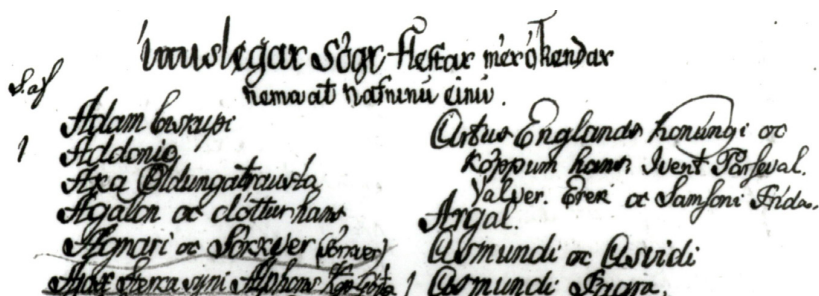


Figure 12: AM 1055 4to p. 40. Digital reproduction courtesy of Sprogsamlingar, University of Copenhagen.

Uno von Troil notes that not all sources may be of value, but that they nevertheless bear witness to the eagerness of the Icelanders to preserve the knowledge of their past (von Troil 1777, 147).¹³

Among these accounts he lists “Vatnshirna saga”. Lefter demonstrates that von Troil’s knowledge of Iceland was largely mediated through his Icelandic contacts, among whom Bishop Finnur Jónsson, Amtmann Ólafur Stephensen, the physician and naturalist Bjarni Pálsson, and Bishop Hannes Finnsson were particularly significant. It is therefore likely that the list of sagas included in *Brefrörande en resa til Island* was not compiled by von Troil himself but originated from this scholarly network (see Lefter 2015, 45–47). This in turn attests that the existence of a *Vatnshirna saga* was intelligible in these circles. It remains uncertain whether the entry *Vatnshirna saga* is independent of Arngrímur’s *Crymogæa*, which von Troil cites as a source (von Troil 1777, 11). In any case, the source from which the list was assembled treats *Vatnshirna* as a saga, whether or not it depends on Arngrímur.

In 1838, Einar Bjarnason (1785–1856), an active scribe in the Skagafjörður district of northern Iceland, compiled a register of Icelandic scribes and sagas (AM 1055 4to). Under the heading “Ymislegar sögur, flestar mér ókendar, nema að nafninu einu” (Various sagas, most of them unknown to me except by name), he recorded sagas that he had either heard of or found in other lists, among them *Vatnshyrnu* (AM 1055 4to, p. 44).¹⁴

As Lukas Rösli observes, Einar Bjarnason recorded titles he had either heard of or found in other lists, without classifying them by motifs, themes, or chronology, relying instead on mediated knowledge circulating

13 I am indebted to Patrizia Huber for drawing my attention to the existence of this list.

14 I thank Lukas Rösli for drawing my attention to this list.

as a saga or a single text bearing this name a hundred years after the publication of *Crymogæa*, rather than as a manuscript containing several sagas. This suggests that the assumption that *Watzhyrna* was a manuscript is not an indisputable fact but a hypothesis that Árni Magnússon implied when he identified the quotes with sagas known to him and that was reinforced by Guðbrandur Vigfússon.¹⁵

II. In search of **Vatnshyrna*

To my knowledge, Guðbrandur Vigfússon was the first scholar to attempt to determine what Arngrímur meant by his reference to *Watzhyrna*. Guðbrandur laid out his considerations in his 1860 edition of *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*. By comparing the beginnings of the different versions of *Þórðar saga hreðu* known to him with Arngrímur's quotation, he concluded that the quote must come from this saga and that Arngrímur used AM 564a 4to, which also preserves *Bárðar saga*, as his exemplar. Since Arngrímur also refers to *Watzhyrna* when he quotes a text that Árni Magnússon attributed to *Kjalnesinga saga*, Guðbrandur inferred that the original manuscript to which AM 564a 4to belonged must also have included *Kjalnesinga saga*. Based on the catalogues available to him, he searched for a manuscript containing all three sagas. Unable to locate one that preserved them together, he concluded that the burnt Membrana Reseniana No. 5 must have been the source, as Resen's 1685 catalogue of his book collection indicates it preserved *Kjalnesinga saga*. He further identified the fragment AM 564a 4to (and one leaf of AM 445c I 4to¹⁶), which contains parts of *Bárðar saga* and *Þórðar saga hreðu* (both on folio 2), as a remnant of the burnt manuscript.

After Stefán Karlsson convincingly demonstrated in 1970 that these fragments could not have belonged to the same codex (1970 b), Jón Helgason offered a simple explanation for the absence of the two sagas from *Membr. Res. No. 5*: they had presumably been torn out before the

15 Árni Magnússon attributed Arngrímur's quotations of *Watzhyrna* to *Bárðar saga*, *Kjalnesinga saga*, and another saga he could not identify, which indicates that he understood the source as a manuscript containing several individual sagas (see Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, XI).

16 Some leaves of AM 564a 4to and AM 445b 4to were at the time archived under the shelf-mark Add. 20 fol., before being divided into their current form (see Stefán Karlsson 1970 b, 281).

manuscript came into the possession of Peder Hansen Resen, as has happened with other manuscripts (Jón Helgason 1985, 52). This explanation was necessary to maintain the prevailing assumption that *Watzhyrna* refers to *Membr. Res. No. 5*, which Árni called *Vatnshornsbók*.

What do we know about Membr. Res. No. 5?

In the 1680s, Árni Magnússon borrowed several manuscripts from Peder Hansen Resen. One of them was *Membr. Res. No. 5*. In two notes, one about *Eyrbyggja saga* (AM 267 8vo) and one on a copy of *Vatnsdæla saga* (AM 128 fol.), he refers to a manuscript he calls *Vatnshornsbók*.

About *Eyrbyggja saga* he writes: “Eyrbyggjur flestar á Islandi hygg eg sieu eptir Vazhornsbók er nu stendr in bibliotheca Resen” (AM 267 8vo f.26r; Figure 14).¹⁷

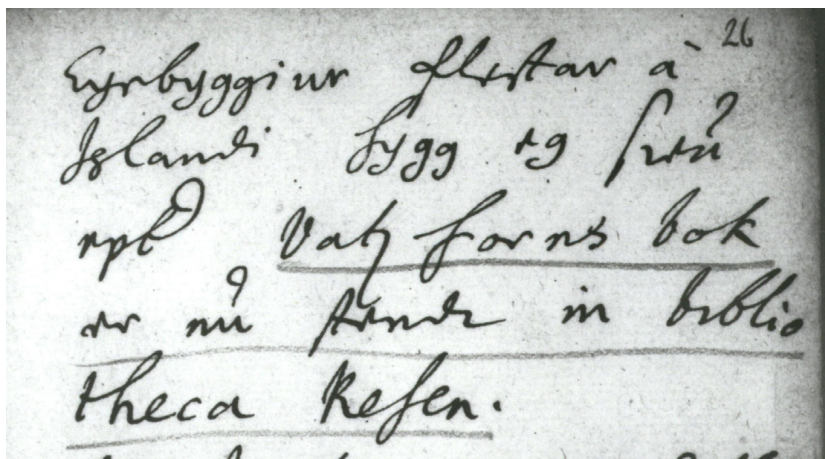


Figure 14: AM 267 8vo f.26r. Digital reproduction courtesy of Sprogsamlinger, University of Copenhagen.

About *Vatnsdæla saga* he notes: „Watnsdæla Sagann virdest mier vera eins og þær almennelegu, id est, tekenn ur Vatnshornsbokenne, sem nú á heima in Bibliotheca Reseniana Hafniæ.” (AM 128 fol.; Figure 15).¹⁸

17 “Most *Eyrbyggja saga* [manuscripts] in Iceland, I believe, are based on *Vatnshornsbók*, which is now kept in the Resen Library.”

18 “*Vatnsdæla Saga* seems to me to be like the common ones, that is, taken from *Vatnshornsbók*, which now resides in the Resen Library in Copenhagen.”

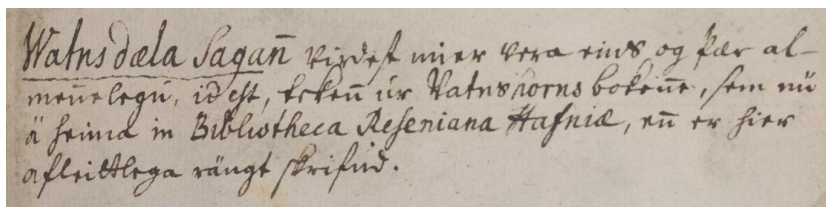


Figure 15: AM 128 fol. Flyleaf. Digital reproduction courtesy of Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, hosted at handrit.is.

Since Membr. Res. No. 5 is the only manuscript preserving *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Vatnsdala saga* in the collection from Resen, Stefán Karlsson concluded that this must be the one Árni refers to as *Vatnsbornsbók*. Stefán speculates that Árni used this name after he came across the reference in *Crymogæa* (Stefán Karlsson 1970 b, 280), although there is no evidence for this connection and it seems rather unlikely that Árni would make a note about *Crymogæa*, identifying *Kjalnesinga saga* – which is part of Membr. Res. No. 5 – and *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, which is not part of the codex, and leaving one reference unidentified without stating that he had the codex that Arngrímur used once on loan. Guðbrandur Vigfússon interpreted this as a sign that Árni was not aware of the connection that he was about to establish (Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, XI). It is more plausible that Árni used this nickname since he knew that Resen got the codex from Árni Hákonarson of Vatnshorn in Haukadalur (see Jón Helgason 1985, 52–53, and Valgerður Hilmarsdóttir 2013, 10). However, this codex was lost when the University Library in Copenhagen burnt to the ground in 1728, leaving only traces in catalogues and notes. The surviving single-text copies derived from it provide only limited access to the medieval composition of the original manuscript; consequently, all conclusions must be approached with particular caution in order to avoid circular reasoning.

Membr. Res. No. 5 was a vellum codex, probably produced in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, that consisted of at least seven sagas and three þættir. The following description of the manuscript is found under Nr. 5 in the catalogue *Petri Johannis Resenii Bibliotheca Regiæ Academiæ Hafniensi*:

Nr. 5. Codex Islandicus Membraneus M. SS. Contines

1. *Hiftoriam Incolarum Australis Islandiæ dictam Floamanna saga*
2. *Hiftoriam Incolarum occidentalis Islandiæ; Vulgo Laxdæla saga*
3. *Hænfathoreri Hiftoriam antiquum Jus Islandiæ valde illustrantem*
4. *Watez-Dæla saga; Hiftoriam Watnez Dalefensium Borealis Islandiæ, Leges Duelli pulchre attingentem*
5. *Eyrbyggja saga, Hiftoriam de occidentalis Islandiæ Incolis, Theologiam gentilium Arctoorum explicantem*
6. *Kjalne Singa saga, Hiftoriam de incolis Kjalnesensibus Australis Islandiæ Theologiæ gentilium itidem multum Lucis Affenterem*
7. *Krokarefi Hiftoriam ad Cognitionem Grønlandiæ (ut antiquitus fuit) valde necesariam*¹⁹

Guðbrandur based his assumption that AM 564a 4to must be a remnant of the burnt codex, and thus Arngrímur's source, on the catalogue in which the *þættir* were not listed as separate texts. This may explain why he did not perceive what Stefán Karlsson, a hundred years later, would make the central point of his argument to disentangle the manuscripts.

Árni catalogued the codex in his notes as follows (Figure 16).

19 Peder Hansen Resen, "Petri Johannis Resenii Bibliotheca Regiæ Academiæ Hafniensi Donata Cui Præfixa Est Ejusdem Resenii Vita" (Copenhagen, 1685), 369–70. (No. 5. Icelandic parchment codex in manuscript. Contains: (1) The history of the inhabitants of southern Iceland, called *Flóamanna saga* (2) The history of the inhabitants of western Iceland, commonly known as *Laxdæla saga* (3) The story of *Hænsa-Pórir*, greatly illuminating the ancient law of Iceland (4) *Vatnsdæla saga*, the history of the Vatnsdalur people of northern Iceland, beautifully addressing the laws of duelling (5) *Eyrbyggja saga*, the history of the inhabitants of western Iceland, explaining the theology of the pagan northerners (6) *Kjalnesinga saga*, the history of the inhabitants of Kjalarnes in southern Iceland, also greatly illuminating pagan theology (7) The story of *Króka-Refur*, very necessary for the understanding of Greenland (as it was in ancient times).

4. Thomas, Idgu Erkiþs
 (cantuar.) fragmentu.
 fol. pag. 262.
 + 5. Floamanna Saga.
 Laxdæla Saga.
 Hænsa þoriss Saga.
 Vatzdæla Saga.
 Eyrbyggja Saga.
 Kjalnesinga Saga.
 Kroka-Refs Saga.
 Stidruna odda Draumr.
 Bergbua þattr.
 2. Drauma vitranr.
 fol. p. 369-70.

Figure 16: AM 226a 8vo f.58v. Digital reproduction courtesy of Sprogsamlinger, University of Copenhagen.

Árni Magnússon added the three þættir – *Stjörnu-Odda draumr*, *Bergbúa þáttir*, and *Kumlbúa þáttir* – in his notebook.²⁰ Guðbrandur, however, appears not to have had access to this notebook, as he would otherwise likely have realised that these þættir appear twice in his reconstruction of **Vatnshyrna* – once in AM 564a 4to, which he believed to have been separated from the original codex before coming into Resen's possession as Membr. Res. No. 5, and once in Membr. Res. No. 5 itself, where the þættir were also preserved. However, Guðbrandur sets the groundwork for all the following confusion when he states:

Naar vi nu slaaer sammen Cod. Res. (Vatnshornsbók) med de førmtalte Membranlevninger, saa passer Codex i sin oprindelige Heelhed til Arngríms Citater, da Kjalnesingasaga netop findes i Cod. Resen. I sin Heelhed har Codex altsaa indeholdt: 1) Flóamannasaga, 2) Laxdælasaga, 3) Hænsaþóris saga, 4) Vatnsdælasaga, 5) Eyrbyggjasaga, 6) Kjalnesingasaga, 7) Króka-Refssaga, 8) Vigaglúmssaga, 9) Harðarsaga, 10) Bárðarsaga, 11) Þórðarsaga, 12) Bergbúaþáttir, 13) Kumlbúaþáttir, 14) Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar. Denne Membran har altsaa været en af de allerstørste islandske Membraner, den er skrevet ved Aar 1400, og er mærkværdig ogsaa derved, at den kan kaldes et Søster-Haandskrift til den berømte Flatøbog, som Slutningen af Flóamannasaga (den forreste Saga i Bogen) og Þórðar saga hreðu (den sidste i Bogen foruden de smaae þættir) viser. (Guðbrandur Vigfússon, x–xi)²¹

20 An introduction and edition of the relevant parts of the notebook can be found in Stefán Karlsson 1970 a.

21 'When we now join together Cod. Res. (Vatnshornsbók) with the aforementioned membrane remnants, then the codex in its original wholeness fits Arngrímur's quotations, since Kjalnesingasaga is precisely found in Cod. Resen. In its wholeness, the codex has therefore contained: (1) Flóamannasaga, (2) Laxdælasaga, (3) Hænsaþóris saga, (4) Vatnsdælasaga, (5) Eyrbyggjasaga, (6) Kjalnesingasaga, (7) Króka-Refssaga, (8) Vigaglúmssaga, (9) Harðar saga, (10) Bárðar saga, (11) Þórðar saga, (12) Bergbúaþáttir, (13) Kumlbúaþáttir, (14) Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar. This membrane has therefore been one of the very largest Icelandic membranes; it is written in the year 1400, and is remarkable also in that it can be called a sister manuscript to the famous Flateyjarbók, as the ending of Flóamannasaga (the foremost saga in the book) and Þórðar saga hreðu (the last in the book besides the small þættir) shows.'

Since Árni referred to a parchment manuscript that was part of Resen's library as *Vatnhornsbók* and this manuscript also included *Kjalnesinga saga*, Guðbrandur came to the momentous conclusion that

Enten maa vi nu antage at der har existeret 2 Membraner 1) af samme Navn, der 2) begge vare skrevne paa samme Mands (Jón Hakonssons) Foranstaltning 3) begge i samme Format (folio) 4, der begge indholt Kjalnesingasaga. Umuligheden af, at alt dette kunne støde sammen, er indlysende, den anden Udvei er altsaa, at vi her have to Dele af den selvsamme Codex, der i det 17de Aarh. er bleven adskilt, hvoraf Halvdelen er kommen i Resens Eie, den mindre, Slutningsdelen, derimod bleven tilbage i Island og nogle Levninger af den komne i Arni Magnússons Eie. (Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, X)²²

**Vatnshyrna in Scholarship*

What Guðbrandur effectively did was to construct a new codex by combining Membr. Res. No. 5, AM 564a 4to, and a single leaf from AM 445c I 4to (for further information on these manuscripts, see below). Only this brainchild can truly be called **Vatnshyrna*. It existed from 1860 to 1970, when Stefán Karlsson and John McKinnell finally revisited Guðbrandur's examinations and showed that AM 564a 4to never belonged to Membr. Res. No. 5.

However, Guðbrandur's conclusion was soon widely accepted, as Finnur Jónsson expressed in 1880:

Dr. Guðbrandur Vigfússon hefur í formálunum fyrir Bárðarsögu (Nordiske Oldskrifter XXVII Kbh. 1860) og Fornsögum (Leipzig 1860) ljóslega sýnt og sannað að þessi 8 blöð, sem nú eru til, séu leifar af skinnbók þeirri, sem Arngrímur lærði kallaði Vatnshyrnu,

22 'Either we must now assume that there have existed two parchment manuscripts: (1) of the same name, (2) both were written at the same man's (Jón Hákonarson's) instigation, (3) both in the same format (folio), (4) both contained *Kjalnesinga saga*. The impossibility that all this could coincide is obvious. The other way is thus that we here have two parts of the very same codex, which in the seventeenth century was separated, of which one half came into Resen's possession, the smaller, final part, however, remained in Iceland, and some remnants of it came into Árni Magnússon's possession.'

og að á hans dögum hafi að minnsta kosti þessar sögur verið á henni: 1. Flóamanna saga, 2. Laxdæla saga, 3. Hænsa-Þóris saga, 4. Vatnsdæla saga, 5. Eyrbyggja saga, 6. Kjalnesinga saga, 7. Króka-Refs saga, 8. Glúma, 9. Harðar saga, 10. Bárðar saga, 11. Þórðar saga hreðu, 12. Bergbúa þáttir, 13. Kumlbúa þáttir, 14. Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar. (Guðmundur Þorláksson and Finnur Jónsson 1880, XV)²³

Later research on *Crymogæa* also accepted Guðbrandur's conclusions and continued to speculate about Arngrímur's using of Guðbrandur's **Vatnshyrna*. In 1957, Jakob Benediktsson identified **Vatnshyrna* as one of the main sources for most of the *Íslendingasögur* used by Arngrímur. He finds arguments for the usage of all the parts bound together by Guðbrandur. He does so despite the fact that, in most cases, pure information is taken from the sagas without explicitly citing them as sources. For example, he states:

From the sections which here follow below, it will be seen that AJ used all the sagas in 1 [Membr. Res. No. 5] and Bárðar saga and Þórðar saga from 2 [AM 564a 4to]. It is reasonably certain therefore that Vatnshyrna was AJ's source for all these texts. There is at least nothing which suggests the use of different sources, except possibly in the case of Eyrbyggja saga. (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 92)

For the usage of *Laxdæla saga* Jakob states: "Vatnshyrna [...] was undoubtedly his source" (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 96). Since *Eyrbyggja saga* seems not to fit in Jakob's argumentation, he declares outright:

The readings here do not agree with those of the Vatnshyrna-copies [...], but since they also differ from other manuscripts of Eyrbyggja, it is probable that AJ himself was, at least partly, responsible for

23 Dr. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, in the prefaces to *Bárðar saga* (Nordiske Oldskrifter XXVII, Copenhagen 1860) and *Fornsögur* (Leipzig 1860), clearly demonstrated and proved that the eight leaves now preserved are remnants of the parchment book which Arngrímur the Learned referred to as *Vatnshyrna*, and that in his time at least the following sagas were included in it: 1. Flóamanna saga, 2. Laxdæla saga, 3. Hænsa-Þóris saga, 4. Vatnsdæla saga, 5. Eyrbyggja saga, 6. Kjalnesinga saga, 7. Króka-Refs saga, 8. Glúma, 9. Harðar saga, 10. Bárðar saga, 11. Þórðar saga hreðu, 12. Bergbúa þáttir, 13. Kumlbúa þáttir, 14. Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar.

the variants. The fact that AJ does not cite *Vatnsþyrna* in this instance might seem to suggest that he used a different text. (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 93)

Arngrímur makes extensive use of information that later scholarship has attributed to specific sagas, such as genealogies or biographical details about historical figures. However, he often does not cite these details with reference to a particular source. For example, when Arngrímur refers to a genealogy connected to Scotland that is known from different versions of *Flóamanna saga* – preserved respectively in Membr. Res. No. 5 and *Melabók* (AM 445b 4to) – Jakob Benediktsson asserts that “*Vatnsþyrna* was certainly his source” (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 94). I have examined all sagas preserved in Membr. Res. No. 5 and *Melabók* for which Jakob identifies *Vatnsþyrna* as Arngrímur’s definitive source, and must conclude that, in most cases, particularly for those preserved in both manuscripts, it is not possible to conclusively determine the source that Arngrímur used.

Even following Jakob’s own reasoning – namely, that Arngrímur freely adapted his sources as needed – it remains unclear how we are to decide when he copied directly and when he altered the material. Jakob insists that **Vatnsþyrna* was Arngrímur’s definite source at points where direct text comparison is not possible, whereas he hesitates to decide which manuscripts were used by Arngrímur when a direct text collation is actually possible. For example, in cases where, according to Jakob, *Flateyjarbók* was used – a manuscript that permits direct comparison – he states:

For the Kings’ sagas proper, however, AJ also used other texts, parallel to Flat. (expanded saga of Olaf Tryggvason, Óláfs saga helga, Hulda), so that it is often impossible to decide, whether his material comes from Flat. or from the comparable text; sometimes, it can be shown, that the two texts have been combined. (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 83)

Arngrímur never referred to *Flateyjarbók* explicitly – nor to any compilation that might correspond to that manuscript under a different name – as a source, either as a manuscript or as a textual authority. While it remains possible that he had *Flateyjarbók* on loan for his project, he certainly did not make a note of it. As has been shown above, he never used manuscript nicknames to designate his sources. Even within Jakob’s reasoning, it

seems highly unlikely that Arngrímur would explicitly refer to a comparatively modest manuscript such as *Watzhyrna* by its nickname while leaving a monumental work like *Flateyjarbók* entirely unmentioned.²⁴

Stepping outside Jakob's ultimately unconvincing analysis, a close collation reveals that, in most instances, we cannot determine with certainty which manuscript Arngrímur used – or whether he introduced variations himself.

Conclusion I: What's in a Name?

The name *Vatnshyrna* refers to a work cited by Arngrímur Jónsson in his *Crymogæa* (1609), which contained information now associated with three different sagas: *Kjalnesinga saga*, *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, and *Þórðar saga hreðu*. For this reason, scholars have so far assumed that a codex called **Vatnshyrna* must have included at least these three sagas.

As shown above, Arngrímur's citations and the attribution of additional sources do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that his references to *Watzhyrna* designate a specific manuscript. Arngrímur treats this source as a single text. The manner in which he quotes the texts he refers to as *Watzhyrna* resembles his citing of *Laxdæla saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga*. Furthermore, he never refers to manuscript names in his entire work.

While it cannot be ruled out that Arngrímur had Membr. Res. No. 5 or *Melabók* as an exemplar, this cannot be proven either. Whatever he may have cited cannot – and should not – serve as the basis for assuming the existence of a codex titled *Watzhyrna*.

We can assume that there was a manuscript that made its way from the farm Vatnshorn in Haukadalur to Copenhagen through Árni Hákonarson in 1681, where it entered the Resen collection in 1686, was catalogued by Peder Hansen Resen and Árni Magnússon, copied by Ásgeir Jónsson, and burnt in 1728. The exact age of this manuscript and whether it contained more than what survived in the Resen collection cannot be determined.

In any case, neither the lost manuscript nor its copies should be referred to as *Vatnshyrna*, as a connection to the source cited by Arngrímur cannot be excluded, but certainly cannot be proven either. It should be referred to as *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5, as this marks the first tangible point in the history of scholarship where we can trace this now-lost manu-

24 Since Jakob Benediktsson assumed that AM 564a 4to was a remnant of *Watzhyrna*, he believed he had an example of the layout of **Vatnshyrna* at hand.

script with certainty. One could argue that the name *Vatnshornsbók* was also used by Árni Magnússon and is thus a legitimate name for Membr. Res. No. 5. Given the confusion of the last 200 years concerning this manuscript, I would instead suggest withdrawing from this charged title. Consequently, the reconstructed manuscript hitherto known as *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* should also be freed from the burden of this name.

Membr. Res. No. 5 and *Melabók* overlap in only three sagas and three *þættir*, which is not a substantial amount for a manuscript of such size. Moreover, the versions of the sagas present in both differ considerably. We have two different redactions of *Eyrbyggja saga* (M and V) and the so-called long and short versions of *Flóamanna saga* and *Vatnsdala saga*.

By reconsidering the naming conventions and research history of these manuscripts, we can create space for a more nuanced understanding – one that acknowledges the uncertainties while respecting the material and textual evidence that remains. Furthermore, recognising the possible errors in past assumptions allows for a fresh evaluation of how medieval Icelandic texts were transmitted, compiled, and interpreted over the centuries.

In what follows, I will show what new perspectives emerge when the codex reconstructed by McKinnell is viewed impartially and independently of its misclassification in the past.

III. Remaking *Melabók*

The analysis above clears the way for *Melabók* to finally be examined as an independent and carefully composed manuscript in its own right. The three fragments, hitherto named *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*, have been studied in detail by John McKinnell. He found the fragments to belong to one manuscript when examining the binding holes of nearly all parchment fragments in the Arnarnagæan collection (McKinnell 1970). His careful analysis provides an invaluable foundation for understanding the physical structure of the fragments. His proposed sequence of the leaves, however, necessarily remained tentative, as he did not address the narratological relationships between them. This opens the way for a renewed study that combines codicological evidence with a materially informed narratological approach, allowing the manuscript to be examined as a coherent, intentionally composed compilation.

The reconstructed *Melabók* presented here consists of twenty-four remaining parchment leaves that are archived under three separate shelf-marks: AM 445b 4to, AM 564a to, and AM 445c I 4to. The original format of the parchment may have been folio, even though it is catalogued today as 4to. The leaves appear to have been trimmed and possibly rebound, although we have no information as to when, or by whom, this was done. We also know nothing about when these leaves were bound together in the first place. However, some of the sagas follow each other on one leaf or bifolio, as can be seen in Table 1, so there is no doubt about certain text connections (such as genealogy/*Landnáma*; *Flóamanna saga*/*Eyrbyggja saga*; *Bárðar saga*/*Þórðar saga*/þættir). Others leave space for debate. The texts that are preserved in the manuscript are as follows:

| Reconstructing Melabók | Manuscript folio |
|--|-------------------------|
| Ættartölur (Genealogies) | AM 445b 4to f.1ra–1va16 |
| Landnámabók Melabók | AM 445b 4to f.1, f.2 |
| -----End of fragment ----- | |
| Flóamanna saga | AM 445b 4to f.4–f.5rb |
| Eyrbyggja saga | AM 445b 4to f.5rb–f.11v |
| ----- End of fragment ----- | |
| Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss | AM 564 a 4to f.1–f.2r |
| Þórðar saga hreðu | AM 564 a 4to f.2v–f.4r |
| Bergbúa þáttir | AM 564 a 4to f.4r–f.4v |
| Kumlbúa þáttir | AM 564 a 4to f.4v |
| Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar | AM 564 a 4to 4v |
| ----- End of fragment ----- | |
| Vatnsdæla saga | AM 445b 4to f.3 |
| ----- End of fragment ----- | |
| Gísla saga | AM 445c I 4to ff. 2r–5v |
| ----- End of fragment ----- | |
| Víga-Glúms saga | AM 445c I 4to f.1 |
| Víga-Glúms saga | AM 564 a 4to ff.5r–7r |
| Harðar saga (most likely later addition) | AM 564 a 4to f.7r–7v |

Table 1: Reconstruction of *Melabók* (AM 445b 4to, AM 564a 4to, and AM 445c I 4to).²⁵

25 This reconstruction has been examined and deemed possible on codicological grounds by Vasare Rastonis, conservator at the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík, to whom I am grateful.

I follow McKinnell's sequence with only one exception. He placed AM 445b 4to f.3 (*Vatnsdæla saga*) in between *Flóamanna saga* and *Landnáma Melabókar* but admits that it could have been somewhere else within the codex (McKinnell 1970, 331–34).

If a landscape-oriented narratological approach towards the design of the remaining fragments is taken, we see that a more or less circular order from the southwest to the northwest is established by the regions that form the main places of action of the respective saga plots.²⁶ Thus, from a compositional perspective, a position of the *Vatnsdæla saga* fragment after the þættir would be more plausible. From a codicological view both positions are possible but must remain speculative. However, an overall consideration of all texts together makes the position of *Flóamanna saga* as the first saga after the genealogies and the name-giving *Melabók* redaction of *Landnámabók* in the compilation more likely. If this sequence is considered plausible, it can help us to better understand the overall conception of the codex.

Melabók as a Genealogically and Spatially Structured Compilation

In the current state of reconstruction, the compilation starts with a previously unexplored genealogy that connects many historical figures featured in the compiled texts, culminating in a marriage between one of Snorri goði's daughters and Þorgrímr sviði (see AM 445b 4to f.1v l.16). Þorgrímr sviði is also the father of Sigríðr Þorgrímsdóttir, who, together with Ámundi Þorsteinsson Síðu-Hallssonar, is one of the two main ancestral figures at the heart of this genealogy, alongside Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson, whose dream is also recorded in the compilation. The people of Melar descend from this line, so this deviation in the marriage record is not trivial; it constructs a lineage linking the *Melamenn* directly to Snorri goði, maybe legitimising their political status in the west. This is crucial since directly on the verso side follows the so-called *Melabók* redaction of *Landnáma* (see Figure 17).

26 The term material narratology was coined by Lena Rohrbach and aims to incorporate the crucial aspects of material philology into a historically informed narratology; for a more detailed discussion of the approach, see Kauffeldt 2025.

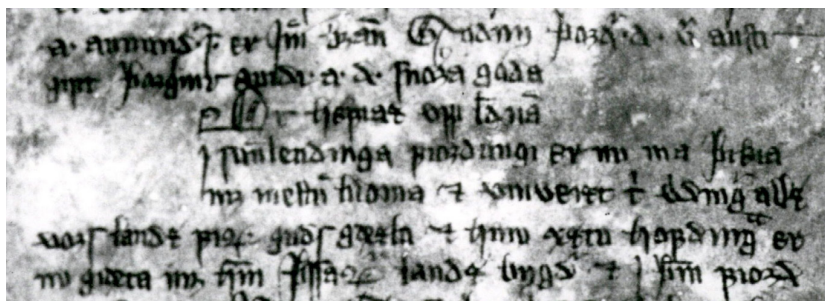


Figure 17: AM 445b 4to f.1va. Digital reproduction courtesy of Sprogssamlinger, University of Copenhagen.

The name *Melabók Landnámu* was given to this redaction by later scholars, because many of the genealogies it preserves can be traced to the people of Melar (*Melamenn*) in the thirteenth-century. It has been assumed that either Snorri Markússon (d. 1313) or his son Þorsteinn böllóttir (d. 1353) – who was the abbot of Helgafell at the time – was responsible for the composition of this redaction (see Jakob Benediktsson 1968, LXXXIV).

Grammatically, the Icelandic term *Melabók Landnámu* implies that *Melabók* is a type or subset of *Landnáma*. This is not incorrect regarding this section, but it places emphasis on the textual affiliation to the *Landnáma* tradition rather than the compilation it belongs to. It frames the register of settlement included in *Melabók* as defined by its connection to *Landnáma*, which narrows the perspective on its actual transmission context and obscures its relationship to the other texts in the codex. Most significantly, this phrasing reflects how scholarship has treated this redaction – as a derivative witness to *Landnáma* as a whole, as seen in the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition (see Jakob Benediktsson 1968). That edition constructs a synthetic text by combining all known redactions. While this could be useful for comparison, it conceals the manuscript's original function.

I argue instead that we should refer to this section as *Landnáma Melabókar*. This genitive reversal is more than a linguistic detail; it challenges how we understand textual affiliation. It reflects the material reality of the manuscript by positioning *Landnáma* as the text and *Melabók* as its manuscript context – not the reverse. This shift underscores that the redaction deserves recognition as a distinct textual tradition within its compilation, not merely as an abbreviated or fragmentary version of a normative

Landnáma. Indeed, I would argue that there is no such thing as a “Melabók redaction” of *Landnáma* apart from the compilation of which it forms part. While this may sound radical, it simply reverses the logic of the *Íslensk fornrit* edition, which extracts and reassembles variants in a decontextualized way. Instead, I propose we understand this redaction as part of a materially and narratively unified compilation – one shaped by its function as a narrative prologue to the sagas that follow, and by its position within the codex.

This redaction begins not by situating Iceland within the Nordic realm nor with Ingólfr Arnarson’s settlement of the island, as might be expected, but with the settlement of the southern quarter. This indicates that the purpose is not to provide a comprehensive national history but rather to foreground specific regional and familial narratives. Its position immediately following the genealogy leaves no doubt that these texts were intended to belong together. The section begins with the common formulation “HER hefiaz upp landnam j Svinlendinga fjiordungi ...” (AM 445b 4to f.1va l.17)²⁷ and is marked by a faded initial. It is clear that nothing is missing but that this redaction is meant to begin with the settlement of Skógar that is marking the border of the Sunnlendingafjórðungur. Although the fragment is damaged and the full geographic extent cannot be reconstructed – the remaining fragment ends in the Westfjords – the intention is clear: to anchor the manuscript within a specific topographical world. The redaction is not merely shorter in that it does not elaborate on the respective settlements and for the most part only mentions names and places – it is selective. It is telling that no edition of *Landnáma Melabókar* includes the preceding genealogy that links the first settlers of the respective regions to the people of Melar in Borgarfjörður. This omission reflects the fact that the compositional logic of the manuscript – how the texts were deliberately structured and interconnected – has not yet been fully examined.

The southernmost location in Iceland in all the compiled texts is found in *Flóamanna saga*. But the events that are placed in Iceland in the region of Flói feature only as a narrative framework while the main plot follows one person, Þorgils örrabeinsfóstri, to Norway, the British Isles, and Greenland. Whereas the title *Flóamanna saga* suggests a regional saga focused on the people of Flói, the alternative, lesser-known title reflects

27 The *Melabók* redaction of *Landnáma* that is preserved in AM 445b 4to is transcribed and published in: Finnur Jónsson 1900, 235–42.

the saga's now more familiar character as a heroic narrative. The oldest title that has come down to us is *Sagan af Þorgils Þórðarsyni kölluðum örrabeinsfóstra*, in ÍB 45 4to from 1683.²⁸ As a heroic saga, it stands out from the collection of regional sagas, but a position at the beginning of the compilation would make sense if it were understood as an exposition of the narrative (and the genealogical) space of the entire compilation.²⁹ The opening passage in Norway mentions specific places where battles took place, not just regions (as in the exposition of other sagas). Chapter two introduces Ingólfr's family from Dalsfjörður á Fjöllum (Dalsfjord in Vestlandet north of the Sognefjord). Ingólfr's genealogy differs from that in *Sturlubók*, from which the rest of the passage is taken; instead, the genealogy resembles the *Melabók* redaction of *Landnáma*. This adjustment suggests that the fragments were not put together later but were intended as a compilation from the beginning. This may also explain why the account of Ingólfr's settlement, attested in *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* redactions, is omitted in *Landnámu Melabókar*: the narrative is instead incorporated within *Flóamanna saga*.

The compilation then continues with *Eyrbyggja saga*, where Snorri goði plays a central role. Its narrative is spatially anchored almost entirely along the southern shore of Breiðafjörður, with the single exception of one farm on the south coast of Snæfellsnes. Most likely, *Eyrbyggja saga* was followed by *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, which complements the saga sites of *Eyrbyggja saga* and concentrates on the region under the Snæfellsjökull. *Bárðar saga* is consecutively followed by *Þórðar saga hreðu* (see AM 564a 4to f.1–4). The two sagas connect through the person of Miðfjarðar-Skeggi, who marries the daughter of Bárðr in Greenland and brings her back to the Miðfjörður region in the north of Iceland. The codex preserves the so-called *fragmented version of Þórðar saga hreðu*, which contains episodes and additional regional information as well as a genealogy that is not found in other medieval versions of the saga.³⁰ The two texts follow each other on

28 The beginning of the saga is missing in AM 445b 4to. A copy that presumably derives from Membr. Res. No. 5 (AM 517 4to) also lacks a title. Therefore, we cannot determine with certainty the saga's original name at the time it was written in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

29 For further discussion of *Melabók* as a spatially anchored codex see Kauffeldt 2025.

30 Elisabeth I. Ward (2012) has conducted a detailed study of the different textual traditions of *Þórðar saga hreðu*.

f.2 of AM 564a 4to. *Þórðar saga* is followed by three þættir: *Bergbúa þáttir*, *Kumlbúa þáttir*, and *Draumr Þorsteins Síðu-Hallssonar*. We go back to the Westfjords with *Gísla saga* and on to the Húnavatns region with *Vatnsdæla saga*, followed by *Víga-Glúms saga*. The beginning of *Harðar saga* seems to be a later addition and not part of the original plan for the compilation (see Stefán Karlsson 1970 b, 302).

The sequence of the texts within the codex suggests that it was designed as a compilation – understood as a meaningful combination and variation of texts that refer to each other – from the outset. Despite the presence of three different hands in the codex, the texts were not assembled at random but were deliberately selected and arranged. There is no doubt that *Flóamanna saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga* were meant to follow each other, and all three hands are present on the respective leaves (AM 445b 4to f.4r–f.11v; see also McKinnell 1970, 327).

With the exception of *Flóamanna saga*, all these sagas respectively concentrate on Snæfellsnes, the Westfjords, Húnaþing, and Eyjafjörður in Iceland. The regions marked out by the naming of places and the routes between them do not overlap but complement each other to build a coherent space that is briefly introduced by the borders given in the *Landnáma* redaction. Since this redaction bears the name *Melabók* after the people of Melar and the compiled saga versions and interpolated genealogies (for example in *Þórðar saga*) appear to be connected to this text, it seems reasonable to expand the name to include the whole compilation.

Methodological Implications of a Material-Narratological Approach

Much work has been done on the textual variations of sources, in the sense that we analyse how a text changes in different manuscripts. This is important since in that way we can understand that there is no such thing as one solid text, but rather a lot of variants and iterations of single episodes. Much less work has been done to understand the interplay of individual texts in their respective transmission contexts. Are the variants in different manuscripts perhaps due to the respective context, that is, to the other texts found in the compilation? Do they complement each other? Are omissions in individual texts because this information can already be found elsewhere in another text? Is additional or divergent information necessary to fulfil the particular purpose of the compilation?

I think that the composition of *Melabók* is to be understood in exactly this way. The individual elements of the compilation do not stand independently; rather, they are closely interconnected. An analysis that takes the material-narratological approach seriously must consider all the texts preserved within the compilation while also limiting its reading to the portions of the sagas actually present in the surviving fragments – as the compilation's original extent remains uncertain. A crucial first step in such an analysis is to place the material transmission itself at the centre – and this is precisely why it is so important to end the misconception of (*Pseudo-*)*Vatnshyrna*.

Some variants of the sagas preserved in the manuscript discussed here have been labelled the 'long' or 'fragmented' version of a particular saga because they include material not found in other versions or omit passages present elsewhere. However, the notion of a 'long version' relies on the assumption that passages attested in other, mostly later manuscripts must also have been part of this earlier version – rather than recognising that the missing passages in the surviving fragments might simply not have been included, and that the manuscript represents an entirely distinct redaction of the same narrative, historical, or spatial complex.

By taking the whole compilation into account, further research might show that certain saga redactions are 'custom-made' for the purpose of the specific manuscript.³¹ This may also have been the case with the source Arngrímur used and called *Watzhyrna*, so that the attribution of the four quotations to individual sagas is misleading and rather points to a specific redaction of familiar legal and genealogical material.

Conclusion II: Untangling *Watzhyrna*, *Vatnshornsbók*, and *Melabók*

Stefán Karlsson demonstrated that Guðbrandur Vigfússon mistakenly identified AM 564a 4to as part of Membr. Res. No. 5, but he did not question the assumed connection to Arngrímur's *Crymogæa*. Guðbrandur's construction of **Vatnshyrna* has thus set a research confusion in motion that continues today. The confusion also remains because Stefán does not

31 An in-depth material-narratological analysis of *Melabók* is in progress as part of the author's doctoral dissertation.

doubt that Arngrímur used one of the two manuscripts as his exemplar and that the three sagas must therefore have been all together in at least one of the two manuscripts. It is thus time to move beyond this foundational assumption that either Membr. Res. No.5 or *Melabók* was the source that Arngrímur Jónsson referred to as *Watzhyrna*.

In the following discussion, I will thus evaluate Guðbrandur's arguments for this equation in detail.

He argues that there is little probability for the existence of two vellum manuscripts that

1. have the same name
2. were both commissioned by Jón Hákonarson
3. have the same format (folio)
4. both preserve *Kjalnesinga saga*.

With regard to point (1), it is not certain that the names in question refer to the same place. While Guðbrandur equates them, there is no strong evidence that Arngrímur's use of *Watzhyrna* reflects the later designation *Vatnshornsbók*, which derives from the last known location where Membr. Res. No. 5 was kept in Iceland.

Notably, in 1538, Bishop Jón Arason of Hólar sold the estate Vatnshorn in Línakradalur to a woman named Guðrún Jónsdóttir. Her name is recorded in the register of *Diplomatarium Islandicum* with the nickname *Vatnshyrna*.³² The estate belonged to the church holdings of Viðidalstunga, which was still within the domain of Jón Hákonarson's family.³³ Línakradalur is mentioned

32 *Diplomatarium Islandicum*. Íslenzkt Fornbréfasafn, Vol. 10, 1169–1542. Reykjavík, 1911–1921, 803 and 900.

33 Ibid, 380–81:

“breff vm vatzhorn. Vier Jon med gudz nad biskup a holum giorum godum monnum kunnigt med þessu voru opnu brefi ad vier haufum gefit og golldit Gudrunu Jonsdottur vegna einars Jonssonar brodur hennar jordina vatzhorn fyrir xxc er liggur j linakradal j widudalstungu kirkiu sokn med aullum þeim gognum og giædum sem greindri jordu a ad fylgia med logum. Og til meiri audsyningar og sanninda hier vm setium vier vort jnsigli fyrir þetta bref er giort var a mel j midfirdi manudaginn næstan epter natiuitatem marie virginis anno christi saluatoris m d xxx og viij ar.”

(letter on Vatnshorn. We, Jón, by the grace of God bishop at Hólar, make known to honourable men by this open letter that we have given and paid to Guðrún Jónsdóttir, on behalf of Einar Jónsson, her brother, the land Vatnshorn for 20 [hundred], which lies in Línakradalur, in the parish of Viðidalstunga, with all those rights and privileges that belong to the said land and are to follow according to law. And for greater clarity and confirmation

only in the so-called longer redaction of *Þórðar saga*, so we cannot know whether it was preserved in *Melabók* as well. However, it lies at the centre of the geographical space delineated in all the sagas concerning Þórður *hreða*. It is striking that the *Melabók* redaction of *Þórðar saga* (“fragmentary version”) was supplemented with a genealogy tracing down to Jón Hákonarson of Víðidalstunga. This connection hardly seems coincidental.

Arngrímur grew up in the north as part of the household of Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson and was the headmaster of the Latin school at Hólar when he wrote *Crymogæa*. It therefore cannot be ruled out that he obtained a manuscript from a farm in the north rather than from the Dalir region. One possible scenario is that Arngrímur was working with a damaged manuscript – similar to AM 564a 4to – in which no clear textual boundaries were discernible. He or others may have named it after the farmstead from which this manuscript originated or which was central to the narrative, possibly Vatnshorn in Línakradalur. Árni Magnússon supposed that the name *Watzhyrna* used by Arngrímur derived from the farmstead he may have borrowed it from, without specifying which Vatnshorn may have been meant (see Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, XI). Even if Árni’s naming of Membr. Res. No. 5 as *Vatnshornsbók* pointed to Vatnshorn in Haukadalur, this does not necessarily mean that Arngrímur had the same place in mind.

As for point (2), the connection to Jón Hákonarson is based on the genealogies included in the paper copy of *Flóamanna saga* (AM 517 a 4to) – believed to be a copy of Membr. Res. No. 5 – as well as in the fragment of *Þórðar saga* preserved in AM 564a 4to. But the association of the *Flóamanna saga* copy with Membr. Res. No. 5 has been challenged in the work of Már Jónsson.³⁴ The connection of either manuscript to Jón Hákonarson, therefore, cannot be assumed without reservation. Moreover, it is entirely possible that Jón commissioned multiple codices, as the content reconstructed for both manuscripts overlaps in only three sagas – and even these are preserved in differing redactions.

With regard to point (3), the fact that the manuscripts share the same format is not, in itself, a persuasive argument. The folio format was com-

of this, we place our seal on this letter, which was made at Melur in Miðfjörður Wednesday next after the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, in the year of Christ our Saviour 1538).

34 Even if Stefán Karlsson dismissed Már’s critique (see Stefán Karlsson 2000, 358), the dispute shows how contested the copy attribution still is.

mon for saga compilations in the late medieval period, and its occurrence here cannot be regarded as a meaningful point of identification.

Turning to point (4), Guðbrandur's claim that *Kjalnesinga saga* was part of both manuscripts is equally problematic. The fragments he refers to (AM 564a 4to and AM 445c I 4to, fol. 1) do not, in fact, preserve the saga. His assumption rests solely on the fact that Arngrímur cites a text later identified by scholars as *Kjalnesinga saga*. Since Guðbrandur's broader argument depends on identifying Arngrímur's *Watzhyrna* with Árni Magnússon's *Vatnshornsbók*, and on his erroneous combination of Membr. Res. No. 5 with AM 564a 4to and AM 445c I 4to, fol. 1, he appears to project a prior assumption onto the material – deriving his conclusion from premises that are themselves unproven. This form of circular reasoning cannot serve as a valid basis for establishing the manuscript's identity and must therefore be rejected as methodologically unsound.

For the sake of completeness, it should also be noted that Guðbrandur Vigfússon combined AM 564a 4to and Membr. Res. No. 5 because he believed this to be the only possible evidence of a manuscript that contained all three of the sagas he assumed to be cited by Arngrímur. But there was in fact another manuscript – AM 471 4to (1450–1500) – which was known to him only in its seventeenth-century rebound form.

The manuscript is a palimpsest, and the part containing the beginning of *Bárðar saga* was separated and is now preserved in AM 489 I 4to, together with other sagas. A new table of contents was created for this reorganised codex (AM 471 4to) on the page that preserved the end of *Bárðar saga*. Even if it was already rebound in Arngrímur's time, the existence of the original manuscript demonstrates that other compilations were extant that included the same three sagas Arngrímur is allegedly citing. The older manuscript (AM 471 4to + AM 489 I 4to) contained, among others, *Bárðar saga* and *Þórðar saga hreðu* (placed consecutively, as in AM 564a 4to), followed by *Króka-Refs saga* and then *Kjalnesinga saga*, which Guðbrandur Vigfússon was evidently unaware of.³⁵ This argument carries weight only within the internal logic of Guðbrandur Vigfússon's own

35 Even if a collation of the texts cited by Arngrímur Jónsson with those found in these two codices reveals significant textual differences, later studies ought to have taken this manuscript into account. More importantly, the information Arngrímur provides about Þórður in his Latin text differs considerably from the information available in all other known versions of the saga.

reconstruction and loses its relevance once the foundational assumptions behind his identification are called into question.

Embracing the Limits of Material Sources

In light of the analysis above, it appears that Arngrímur Jónsson used the term *Watzhyrna* to refer to a saga, not a manuscript. The reason why Arngrímur chose the name *Watzhyrna* remains uncertain.

A direct connection between Árni Magnússon's *Vatnshornsbók* – which he knew had come from the Vatnshorn estate in Haukadalur and had been copied for him – and *Crymogæa* cannot be sufficiently demonstrated. The continued use of the name *Vatnshyrna* is therefore misleading and should be avoided.

The manuscript fragments that John McKinnell has termed *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* are better referred to as *Melabók*, since no secure link to Membr. Res. No. 5 (formerly *Vatnshyrna*) can be established. Although three sagas appear in both, they differ markedly in content and redaction. The recurrence and development of the genealogical material within the narrative texts suggest a carefully conceived compilation, in which the sagas were varied and arranged with deliberate thematic and genealogical coherence. *Melabók* thus represents a complex and regionally grounded compilation that connects individuals and places in the west and northwest of Iceland.

By contrast, the original scope and structure of Membr. Res. No. 5 remains unknown, and any assumptions about its lost content must therefore be avoided.³⁶

By challenging long-standing assumptions and offering a material-narratological reading of the extant fragments, I hope this study paves the way for a more grounded and nuanced understanding of medieval Icelandic manuscript culture and the principles that informed the compilation of saga codices.

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36 The relationship between the paper copies and Membr. Res. No. 5 requires further investigation.

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SUMMARY

What's in a name? Revisiting *Crymogæa*, *Vatnshyrna*, and *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*

Keywords: *Vatnshyrna*, *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*, *Melabók*, Arngrímur Jónsson, *Crymogæa*, saga compilations, manuscript reconstruction, Icelandic manuscript culture

The compilation known as *Vatnshyrna* has long occupied a significant yet problematic position in Old Norse-Icelandic studies. This article revisits the research history and reconstruction of *Vatnshyrna* and *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*. These are thought to be two of the largest compilations of *Íslendingasögur* from the medieval period. Since the nineteenth century, scholars have assumed that *Vatnshyrna* was a codex referred to by Arngrímur Jónsson in his 1609 work *Crymogæa* and that it could be identified with the manuscript *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5, also known as *Vatnshornsbók*. This assumption was implemented by Guðbrandur Vigfússon in 1860 and has profoundly shaped scholarship since, despite being based on speculative and circular reasoning. Although Stefán Karlsson demonstrated that Guðbrandur was mistaken in identifying AM 564a 4to as part of Membr. Res. No. 5, he did not question the assumed connection to Arngrímur's *Crymogæa*, which contributed to further confusion in subsequent scholarship.

By examining how Arngrímur Jónsson engages with his sources in both form and content, I argue that his source *Watzhyrna* more likely refers to a single text – possibly a misunderstood or defective manuscript – rather than to a codex containing at least three distinct sagas. This interpretation challenges the long-standing search for a lost compilation and calls for a shift in approach. I advocate a material-narratological perspective that takes seriously both the textual variants

found within the surviving compilations and the nature of the sources Arngrímur himself used. I argue for retiring the name *Vatnshyrna* in favour of more materially grounded designations. To avoid confusion, the burnt codex Árni Magnússon called *Vatnshornbók* should be referred to as *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5, as this shelf-mark is the only certain point we have regarding the content of the manuscript. The fragments previously grouped under the name *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* – namely AM 564a 4to, AM 445b 4to, and AM 445c I 4to – should instead be referred to collectively as *Melabók*. This name, already attached to one of the fragments, more accurately reflects the narrative structure of the manuscript and avoids the confusion that has plagued the name *Vatnshyrna*. The article also proposes that *Melabók* should be understood not merely as a container of saga texts but as a carefully constructed compilation with a clear regional and genealogical coherence. The genealogies presented in the opening pages are echoed and elaborated throughout the sagas, suggesting that the selection and redaction of texts was done with a deliberate structural vision. Unlike *Vatnshyrna*, whose content and composition remain unknowable, *Melabók* offers a tangible and interpretable body of texts, which can now be examined as a whole.

By challenging long-standing assumptions and offering a material-narratological reading of the extant fragments, I hope this study paves the way for more grounded and nuanced understandings of medieval Icelandic manuscript culture and the principles that informed the compilation of saga codices.

ÁGRIP

Hvað binst við nafn? *Crymogæa*, *Vatnshyrna* og *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna* enn og aftur

Efnisorð: *Vatnshyrna*, *Pseudo-Vatnshyrna*, *Melabók*, Arngrímur Jónsson, *Crymogæa*, safnrit handrita, endurgerð handrita, handritamenning

Safnritið sem þekkt er undir heitinu *Vatnshyrna* hefur lengi haft mikilvæga en flókna stöðu í rannsóknum á forníslenskum sögum. Þessi grein fer í saumana á rannsóknarsögu og endurgerð *Vatnshyrnu* og *Pseudo-Vatnshyrnu* sem taldar eru með stærstu safnritum Íslendingasagna frá miðöldum. Frá því á 19. öld hafa fræðimenn talið víst að *Vatnshyrna* hafi verið handrit sem Arngrímur Jónsson vísaði til í *Crymogæu* árið 1609 og ætti við handritið *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5, einnig þekkt sem *Vatnshornsbók*. Guðbrandur Vigfússon gekk út frá þessari forsendu árið 1860 og hún hefur mótað fræðin síðan enda þótt hún byggist á tilgátum og hring-skýringum. Stefán Karlsson sýndi að vísu fram á að Guðbrandur hefði haft rangt fyrir sér þegar hann taldi AM 564a 4to vera hluta af Membr. Res. No. 5 en Stefán efaðist ekki um tengingu Guðbrands við *Crymogæu* Arngríms. Það hefur stuðlað að áframhaldandi ruglingi í síðari rannsóknum.

Með því að skoða hvernig Arngrímur Jónsson vann úr heimildum sínum, bæði að formi og efni, færi ég rök fyrir því að tilvísun hans til *Watzhyrnu* eigi frekar við

einn texta – hugsanlega vegna misskilnings um handritsbrot – en til handrits sem hafi geymt að minnsta kosti þrjár aðskildar sögur. Þessi túlkun ögrar hinni langvarandi leit að týndu safnríti og kallar á breytingu í nálgun. Ég mæli með efnis- og frásagnarfræðilegu sjónarhorni sem tekur alvarlega bæði textabrigði í varðveittum handritum og eðli þeirra heimilda sem Arngrímur notaði. Ég legg til að nafnið *Vatnshyrna* verði lagt af í þágu heita sem byggjast á traustum efnislegum grunni. Til að forðast rugling legg ég til að brunna handritið sem Árni Magnússon kallaði *Vatnshornsbók* verði tengt við *Membrana Reseniana* No. 5 þar sem þessi tenging er eini öruggi punkturinn sem við höfum varðandi efni handritsins. Brot sem áður voru flokkuð sem hluti af *Pseudo-Vatnshyrnu* – þ.e. AM 564a 4to, AM 445b 4to og AM 445c I 4to – ætti þess í stað að nefna sameiginlega *Melabók*. Þetta heiti, sem þegar er tengt einu brotinu, endurspeglar betur frásagnarskipan handritsins og forðast þann rugling sem fylgt hefur nafninu *Vatnshyrna*.

Í greininni er jafnframt lagt til að *Melabók* verði ekki aðeins lesin og túlkuð sem ósamstætt safn sögutexta heldur sem úthugsað safnrít með skýru svæðisbundnu og ættfræðilegu samhengi. Ættartölurnar í upphafi enduróma og eru útfærðar í sögunum. Það bendir til þess að val og ritstýring textanna hafi byggst á heildstæðri sýn á samsetningu verksins. Innihald og samsetning *Vatnshyrnu* verður aldrei þekkt en með því að sameina þessi brot undir heitinu *Melabók* fæst áþreifanlegt og túlkanlegt safn texta sem nú er hægt að skoða í heild sinni.

Með því að ögra langlífum forsendum sem byggðust á tilgátum og hring-sönnunum og beita þess í stað efnis- og frásagnarfræðilegri túlkun á hin varðveittu handritsbrot vona ég að þessi rannsókn ryðji braut fyrir heimildamiðaðan og dýpri skilning á íslenskri handritamenningu miðalda og þeim grundvallarsjónarmiðum sem mótuðu samsetningu handrita fornsagnanna.

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ANNETT KRAKOW

FATE, SEXUAL DESIRE,
AND NARRATIVE MOTIVATION
IN *HRÓLFS SAGA KRAKA*

Introduction

The legendary Danish king Hrólfr kraki is believed to have lived in the sixth century (Landolt 2000, 159–60).¹ The transmission history of the tales about him, his ancestors, and his champions is intricate and fascinating at the same time. It begins with the two Old English poems *Widsið* and *Beowulf*.² Whereas *Widsið* only briefly mentions Hrōþwulf (i.e. Hrólfr) and his uncle Hrōðgār (i.e. Hróarr), *Beowulf* is more comprehensive and also includes mention of characters known from the Nordic tradition on Hrólfr kraki. Texts from the medieval North, which tell of Hrólfr and his champions, include, among other things, three works composed at the beginning of the thirteenth century: Saxo Grammaticus' Latin *Gesta Danorum* and two Icelandic works often attributed to Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* and *Ynglinga saga*.³ Moreover, *Skjöldunga saga* is assumed to have been composed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. This saga on the Danish kings from the Skjöldung dynasty, to which Hrólfr belonged, is only preserved in two fragments from about 1300 and in a Latin

- 1 This article is based on a paper I gave in September 2023 at the conference “Sense and Sexuality: Erotic Discourses in/of History” in Katowice, Poland. I would like to thank David Schauffler for proofreading my article.
- 2 *Widsið* is preserved in a manuscript dated to the tenth century (Hill 1983, 1), *Beowulf* in a manuscript dated to the first decade of the eleventh century (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008, xxvii). For an overview and brief comparison of the sources on Hrólfr kraki in Old English, Old Norse, and Latin, see Landolt (2000, 158–160).
- 3 *Gesta Danorum* is assumed to have been composed around 1200 (Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, xxxiv–xxxv), *Skáldskaparmál* (part of the *Prose Edda*) and *Ynglinga saga* (part of *Heimskringla*) in the 1220s (Faulkes 2005, xiv–xv; Finlay and Faulkes 2016, ix). For a list of texts from the medieval North, which mention Hrólfr, see also Shippey (2010, 24–27).

summary known as *Rerum Danicarum fragmenta* by Arngrímur Jónsson from the late sixteenth century (Bjarni Guðnason 1982, xxiii–xxiv, xxxvi).

Slightly younger are the earliest manuscripts of the text that this article will be primarily concerned with: *Hrólfs saga kraka*. Although the extant manuscripts of the saga do not predate the seventeenth century, a *Hrólfs saga kraka* is known to have existed in the Icelandic monastery Møðruvellir “in or just after 1461” (Slay 1960b, 132). Desmond Slay has extensively investigated the manuscripts of the saga and arrived at the conclusion that they are all copies of a single, now lost manuscript from an earlier period, probably from the sixteenth century (1960b, 132).⁴ *Hrólfs saga kraka* has been the subject of studies focusing on, among other things, *formaldarsögur*, analogies between Beowulf and Hrólfr’s retainer Bǫðvarr, notions of kingship, the bridal-quest motif and maiden kings, and more generally sexual themes in the saga.⁵

In this article, I would like to continue earlier research on sexual themes and female characters in *Hrólfs saga kraka* and analyse episodes in which sexual desire motivates further events and thus can be seen as a crucial element in the construction of the saga’s plot. The sexual desire of two characters, Helgi and Hvít, has severe consequences for other characters in the saga (including Hrólfr), and therefore the analysis will concentrate on them. Another aspect that in particular contributes to narrative motivation in the saga is the concept of fate. This is explicitly addressed in several passages in the saga. The analysis will also pay attention to instances in which the notion of fate and the consequences of the characters’ sexual desire intersect. The narrative function of fate and sexual desire for narrative motivation in *Hrólfs saga kraka* will be at the core of the analysis.

4 See also Lansing (2012, 405–6, 427–29), who includes an overview of all fifty-one manuscripts of the saga, including three, which were not known to Slay.

5 For a recent discussion of Beowulf and Bǫðvarr, see Grant (2024). For opposing views on Hrólfr and the notion of a model king, see especially Ármann Jakobsson (1999) and Valgerður Brynjólfssdóttir (2003). For an overview of sexual themes in the saga, see Ármann Jakobsson (2003) and Phelpstead (2003). For a comprehensive bibliography on *Hrólfs saga kraka*, see the website *Stories for All Time: The Icelandic formaldarsögur*.

The structure of *Hrólfs saga kraka* and general remarks on narrative motivation

The structure of *Hrólfs saga kraka* can be described as episodic and including different strands. This is a feature it shares with a number of medieval works. Carol Clover (1982, 16) has argued that, in terms of composition, Icelandic sagas “conform to the principle of coherent multiplicity rather than unity; [...] conceive of a plot as parallel and interlocking subplots; and [...] weave together simultaneous lines of action.” Especially the second compositional principle of subplots is characteristic of *Hrólfs saga kraka*. Narrator formulas mark the boundaries between the five major sections of the saga, with each of these sections following a different strand or subplot, which at times interlock.⁶ Although Hrólfr is named in the title, he will not be a central character in the saga until the final section. However, the preceding sections are all linked to him because they tell either of other members of his family or of his retainers.

The first section (chapters 1–4) describes the dynastic conflict of the Danish kings: how Fróði kills his bother Hálfdan and pursues the latter’s sons Hróarr and Helgi with the intention of killing them. The second section concentrates on the lives of the two brothers, Hróarr and Helgi. It is in this section that Helgi’s sexual encounters with Ólǫf, Yrsa, and an unnamed elfin woman occur and that Hrólfr is born. Hrólfr is the son of Helgi and Yrsa – Yrsa is both Hrólfr’s mother and his half-sister. This section ends with Helgi’s death in battle against the forces of the Swedish king Aðils, who has married Yrsa in the meantime.⁷ Section three introduces Svipdagr, who joins the retinue of the Swedish king but leaves because Aðils fails to acknowledge his faithful service in the successful defence of the land. Svipdagr then departs for Denmark, where he becomes

6 In a subchapter entitled “The Language of Stranding”, Clover (1982, 85–90), gives examples of formulas for introducing, temporarily suspending, retrieving, and terminating strands.

7 At the end of chapter 12, the narrator declares: “Og lýkur hier þætti Helga kongz” (Here ends the tale of King Helgi; Slay 1960a, 36; Byock 1998, 24). According to Byock (1998, ix), the second section ends after chapter 13. He does not elaborate on his decision, but it might be that it was motivated by the fact that this chapter tells of Yrsa’s grief for Helgi and that the major character of the third section is only introduced in chapter 14. His indication of chapters for section four is also slightly different from that based on narrator formulas in the saga (Byock 1998, x).

a retainer of King Hrólfr. The next section (chapters 17–23) begins the narrative strand on Bǫðvarr by first telling of his parents and the curse that Hvít, the queen of Norway, has put on his father Björn and which leads to his death. After having taken revenge for his father's death, Bǫðvarr comes to King Hrólfr and earns his respect. The final section continues the narrative strands begun in earlier sections and weaves them together. Instigated by Bǫðvarr, Hrólfr takes revenge for the killing of his father and defeats the Swedish king Aðils. In this, he is supported by his retainers and his mother Yrsa. Afterwards, Hrólfr's half-sister Skuld senses an opportunity to overcome Hrólfr and plans an attack against him with her husband. Hrólfr is occupied with Yule celebrations and does not pay attention to their military preparations. Skuld is also skilled in magic, and her invocations of enchantments during the fierce, final battle of the saga contribute to its outcome: Hrólfr and his men are killed.

In this short summary, some motivations for the events and actions of characters have been indicated. The motivation of events transforms a 'story' (understood as a series of events) into a 'plot' by offering an explanatory framework for those events (Martínez and Scheffel 2019, 116–117). Motivation more narrowly understood as causality is also crucial for a well-known definition of plot by E. M. Forster from 1927 (Richardson 2005, 48–49), and this view is also voiced in some definitions of narrative, as Brian Richardson (2005, 50) has summarised: "While many definitions of narrative limit themselves to representations of two or more events in a time sequence, others argue for the necessity of some kind of causal connection." Already in Aristotle's *Poetics* (4th century BCE) "[t]he definition of beginning, middle and ending implies the importance of causal links between the parts of a tragedy" in order to form a unified whole, as noted by Jonas Grethlein (2023, 142, see also 34–35, 116) among others. This aspect of unity together with a manageable length ("to view it all at once"; Fyfe 1932, ch. 7 [1451a1]) and plausibility (i.e. necessity, probability) characterise Aristotle's understanding of *mýthos* (Baumbach 2019, 239–240). Aristotle defines *mýthos* (i.e. plot) as "the arrangement of the incidents" (Fyfe 1932, ch. 6 [1450a1]). Although he "points out that the criteria of probability and necessity apply to characters as well as to plot [...] he discusses motivation chiefly as an issue of plot" as Grethlein (2023, 143) stresses. Thus, the caus-

al links between events and scenes are prioritised over “the psychological grounding” of decisions and actions by characters (Grethlein 2023, 143).⁸

Causal motivation is one of three types of motivation distinguished by Matías Martínez and Michael Scheffel (2019, 118–127), the other two being final motivation and compositional or aesthetical motivation. With causal motivation, an event is explained as a likely or possible effect of a cause. Final motivation is relevant in texts where the storyworld is governed “von einer numinosen Instanz [...]. Der Handlungsverlauf ist hier von Beginn an festgelegt” (by a numinous entity [...]. Here, the course of the action is fixed from the start; Martínez and Scheffel 2019, 119; Matthews 2012, 76). They point out that causal and final motivation can be included in one and the same narrative, with causally motivated events and actions subordinate to this numinous force, for example God’s providence in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, an epic poem from the seventeenth century (Martínez and Scheffel 2019, 119). The third type, compositional or aesthetical motivation, encompasses the artistic dimension; motifs and details mentioned should be functionally relevant for the course of events or semantically related to the narrative as a whole or large parts of it (Martínez and Scheffel 2019, 121–22). Finally, they stress that narrative motivation – any one of the three types – contributes to creating coherent narratives (Martínez and Scheffel 2019, 127). Martínez and Scheffel’s categories have been used by, among others, Alastair Matthews in his analysis of the German medieval *Kaiserchronik*. Matthews (2012, 75–76) suggested refining Martínez and Scheffel’s category ‘final motivation’ by differentiating between, on the one hand, “final motivation in the strict sense (predetermination)” and, on the other hand, “‘divine causality’ (the intervention of a numinous force as a causal factor in the narrative)” for cases in which, in the *Kaiserchronik*, “God’s role in the narrative of history may be to act as one causal force alongside other, more familiar ones.” This distinction also appears to be useful for analysing final motivation in *Hrólfs saga kraka* and will be drawn upon below.

8 Grethlein (2023, 141–142) also points out that motivation is employed genre-specifically (i.e. differently in Classical Old Comedy than in Hellenistic New Comedy and the Ancient Greek Novel) and that “Aristotle’s ideas about motivation were stricter than the practice of the tragedians is”.

Apart from that, it should be borne in mind that the plot construction of this saga was restricted by the circumstances of its ending – according to tradition, Hrólfr fell with all his men in battle. Such “[o]ral storytelling and retelling of pre-existing stories” is characteristic of medieval literature and “has considerable consequences for motivation: an immanent motivation is always already present in the plot, and a poet is given only limited leeway to take the motivation into his own hands again”, as Harald Haferland (2023, 347–348) puts it. Haferland (2023, 349, 356) has also drawn attention to how narrative schemata such as revenge or courtship contribute to structuring the plot and making it more predictable.⁹ In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Óðinn’s and Skuld’s decisions taken against Hrólfr can be interpreted as revenge, which is employed in the plot to strengthen the focus on the end, i.e. on Hrólfr’s downfall. Haferland (2023, 355–356) operates with the term ‘finality’ to describe those plots in which “a story’s end appears to be emphasized, foreseeable, and pre-programmed”.¹⁰ This focus on the plot and the orientation towards the ending can lead to the inclusion of scenes and decisions of characters that seem not to be causally or psychologically motivated (such as in the *Odyssey*, when Penelope plans to marry again despite signs of her husband’s return; Grethlein 2023, 127–133, 143). In such cases, one can speak of “motivational gaps” (Haferland 2023, 360) which result from what Clemens Lugowski once called “Motivation von hinten” (motivation from behind, Haferland 2023, 360; retroactive motivation, Grethlein 2023, 124).¹¹ For Grethlein (2023, 126, cf. also 141), ‘retroactive motivation’ is a feature of medieval narrative, together with “thematic isolation and suspense as to how”. The latter is linked with a point mentioned above, the familiarity with the subject matter of a story being retold. With the outcome known, suspense will primarily be generated by how this outcome is achieved.¹² This can also be said of *Hrólfs saga kraka*, where

9 See also Schneider (2019, 258–260), who discusses three “Gravitationszentren, [...] von denen aus Kohärenz inhaltlich-thematisch organisiert werden kann [...]: Schema – Szene – (figurative) Bedeutung” (centres of gravity, [...] from which coherence can be organised in terms of content and theme [...]: schema – scene – (figurative) meaning).

10 Haferland (2023, 356) defines ‘finality’ as “a characteristic of plots, while final motivation describes the connection of narrative steps”.

11 Lugowski discussed this kind of motivation in *Die Form der Individualität im Roman*, published in 1932; cf. Grethlein (2023, 124–125).

12 Cf. also Grethlein (2023, 126–127, quotation at 130): “As in many medieval narratives, this suspense does not consist in the uncertainty of the outcome. Foreshadowing as well as the

the narrative threads connected with fate and sexual desire, among other things, help to enrich narrative motivation and suspense as to when and how the consequences will affect Hrólfr.

God, Óðinn, and fate in *Hrólfs saga kraka*

In contrast to other texts about Hrólfr, *Hrólfs saga kraka* adds an additional interpretational perspective to Hrólfr's failure in the final battle:

Og för þetta eptir lýkendum sagði meistarinn Gallterus, að mannlígur mættur kunni ei að standast við þvílykum fianda krapte, vtann mættur gudz hefði á möte komid, og stod þier það eitt fyrir sigrinum Hrolfur k(ongur) sagði meistarinn að þu hafðer ecki skyn á skapara þínum. (Slay 1960a, 123)

(‘And events turned out as expected,’ said Master Galterus. ‘Human strength cannot withstand such fiendish power, unless the strength of God is employed against it. That alone stood between you and victory, King Hrolf,’ said the Master; ‘you had no knowledge of your Creator.’ Byock 1998, 78)

It was, so to speak, ‘predetermined’ that Hrólfr could not win because he was no Christian, and the authority indicated for this evaluation, Master Galterus, is only mentioned in this passage of the saga. Master Galterus has been identified with Walter of Châtillon (Lat. Galterus de Castellione), who composed a Latin epic on Alexander the Great around 1180, which was translated in prose form into Old Norse as *Alexanders saga*, maybe in the 1260s (Würth 1998, 101–03, 117). Finnur Jónsson (1904, xxvii) called this passage in *Hrólfs saga kraka* “det besynderlige ‘citát’ i sagaens slutning” (the strange ‘quotation’ at the end of the saga), and in an earlier publication, he had treated the reference to Master Galterus as a sign that a copyist of *Hrólfs saga kraka* wanted to imitate a stylistic feature of *Alexanders saga*. In *Alexanders saga*, the author’s “subjektive bemærkninger [...] altid betegnes ved disse ord (‘siger’ osv.)” (subjective remarks [...] are always marked with these words (‘says’, etc.); Finnur Jónsson 1901,

familiarity of the myth allow no doubts to be raised about Odysseus’ final triumph.”

833). A content-oriented approach can complement the observations of Finnur Jónsson. According to Stefanie Würth (1998, 104–105), Walter of Châtillon intended to show that Alexander's life was influenced by fate and *fortuna* and that hubris led to the ruler's downfall. She has suggested that the reference to Master Galterus in *Hrólfs saga kraka* was included to present Hrólfr “als nordisches Ebenbild des großen Alexanders” (as a Nordic version of the great Alexander; Würth 1998, 181), but she does not elaborate on that idea.¹³ If one wanted to find parallels, one could point to the numinous force that guides the path of life, or the instances in which Hrólfr's actions could be interpreted as a display of hubris, for example his tricking of Skuld's husband into subservience or his ignorance of the impending danger at Yule. For Marianne Kalinke (2003, 170), the reference to Galterus with its “interpretation of what Hrólfr's life and death are all about is a lame afterthought, an imposition of a Christian veneer that negates everything that has gone before”. She sees, however, points of comparison between Alexander and Hrólfr in “the single-minded pursuit of wealth and fame and pleasure” (Kalinke 2003, 170).

Apart from the Christian God, *Hrólfs saga kraka* includes several passages in which other forces are referred to, which shape the course of events. Broadly, these forces can be subsumed under the notion(s) of fate. Following a definition by John Lindow (2020, 927), “fate may be defined as what must happen to a person or persons, beyond his or her control, usually beyond his or her knowledge” and that “[a]t least in the Old Norse textual tradition, fate is closely associated, although not exclusively, with what must last happen to a person, namely death”. Fate also appears to be “associated with the agency of supernatural beings and the gods” (Lindow 2020, 927). During the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1950s and 1960s, a number of scholars assumed “that the Germanic concept of fate was unique and that it was central to the lives of the various Germanic peoples”, to quote Lindow (2020, 948). Since then, this view of a special form and significance of fate for pre-Christian Germanic peoples has been modified by the acknowledgement of influences from classical and Christian sources (Lindow 2020, 927, 948–949; Simek 2004, 8–9). Moreover, it has to be taken into account that assumptions about the concept of fate in pre-Christian times are made based on texts from later centuries, which

13 If not indicated otherwise, my translation.

may be informed by a Christian perspective (Simek 2021, 380). Old Norse texts drawn upon in the scholarly discussion on fate include primarily eddic poems and prose narratives on the gods, norms, and heroes from the legendary past as well as *Íslendingasögur* (Lindow 2020, 927–937, 945; for fate in *Íslendingasögur*, see Gropper 2017, 200, 202–207 and Vésteinn Ólason 1998, 81, 170–179, 186–190).

In accordance with the characteristics of the notion of fate mentioned above, *Hrólfs saga kraka* includes examples in which fate is associated with the divine power of Óðinn and the agency of Skuld, a character who by name is linked to supernatural beings (norms and valkyries – see below in the section on the elfin woman). Apart from that, the saga includes general references to fate by using the respective Old Norse terms. Following Helmer Ringgren (1967, 8, 15), the forces that shape the course of events could be termed personal if a god is involved, and impersonal if this is not the case. Ringgren stresses that it is the accessibility of a relationship that differentiates personal and impersonal powers: “[i]f man’s fate is decreed by a god, it is possible to enter into relationship with him, and sacrifices, prayer and obedience may be thought to avert an evil destiny or create a good one, and so forth” (Ringgren 1967, 8). In the saga, it is stated that Hrólfr and his men did not worship the gods, “helldur trudu þeir á mätt sinn og megn” ([r]ather, they put their trust in their own might and main; Slay 1960a, 112; Byock 1998, 71). The formula ‘trúa á mátt sinn ok megin’ may appear to be old and pre-Christian (among other things due to the alliteration), but as Gerd Wolfgang Weber (1981, 489–491) has argued, it is rooted in the Christian tradition and influenced by the high-medieval Latin prose style. For Weber (1981, 477–478), rejection of worship, trust in one’s own power, and the belief in fate or luck constitute what he calls the “Topos der Irreligiosität” (topos of irreligiosity). This topos offers a typological interpretation of the past employed by Christian authors to idealise pre-Christian legendary heroes such as Hrólfr kraki (Weber 1981, 474–475; see also Simek 2004, 9 and Simek 2021, 284–285). Weber (1981, 478–479; emphasis in the original) suggests that both heroic legend in general and the tradition about Hrólfr in particular already included “*einzelne Signale*” (single *signals*), which made it easier to interpret Hrólfr typologically in the saga, for example the death of King Aðils during a sacrifice for the Dísir (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 2002, 57–58) and Uppsala as a pre-Christian reli-

gious centre or the “Topos vom treulosen Kriegsgott Óðinn” (topos of the faithless god of war Óðinn).

Although Hrólfr and his men have not actively sought to enter into a relationship with Óðinn, they are not as indifferent to his power as it may seem. Earlier in the saga, one learns about their encounters with the farmer Hrani. After two encounters with Hrani, which help them to prepare for the fight against the Swedish king Aðils, they meet him for a third time. Now, however, Hrólfr and his men reject Hrani's gift of three weapons. Only after having left do they realise that this farmer was, in fact, Óðinn and that the refusal may have negative effects, as Bǫðvarr says: “munu vær sigri hafa neitad” ([w]e may have denied ourselves victory; Slay 1960a, 109; Byock 1998, 69). He suggests to Hrólfr to keep a low profile because he is afraid that Hrólfr might not gain victory from then on. Although Hrólfr agrees with Bǫðvarr that it was a mistake to reject Hrani's/Óðinn's gifts, he tries to downplay the significance of Óðinn's power by classifying Hrani as “jllur andi” (an evil spirit) and stating shortly afterwards that “audna rædur huorð mannz lifje, enn ecki sä jlli andi” ([f]ate rules each man's life and not that foul spirit; Slay 1960a, 109; Byock 1998, 69). Here, Hrólfr indicates a difference between Óðinn's influence and that of *audna*, a term that denotes ‘fate, destiny, fortune’ and ‘good luck’ (cf. *ONP*).¹⁴ Óðinn is mentioned once more in the saga. In the final battle, an enraged Bǫðvarr suspects Óðinn – although he cannot see him – of fighting on the enemy's side and calls him, among other things, “herianz sonurinn enn fvle og ötrue” (this foul and unfaithful son of the evil one) and “þad jlla eyturkuykindi” ([t]hat vile, poisonous creature; Slay 1960a, 122; Byock 1998, 77).¹⁵ This negative, demon-like characterisation of Óðinn, who has

14 Ferrari (2012, 280–281) has interpreted Hrólfr's comment in the following way: “*Audna*, in the king's words, is a substitute for the true Christian God, whom, according to the epistemic constraints of the fictional world of the saga, the characters cannot know [...]”. Given the comment by Master Galterus at the end of the saga, I am sceptical of equating *audna* with God.

15 An encounter with a farmer, whose gifts of protective war gear are refused by Hrólfr, is also included in *Rerum Danicarum fragmenta*. Hrólfr realises shortly afterwards that the farmer was, in fact, Óðinn and that the refusal is synonymous with a denial of future victory. Remaining quiet can only be a temporary solution and postpone Hrólfr's defeat. In contrast to the saga, Hrólfr does not question Óðinn's power and neither does he or a retainer verbally abuse the god in the account *Rerum Danicarum fragmenta*. In the final battle, Óðinn fights in human form in the ranks of Hrólfr's enemies, and even dead bodies come to life again, because “*Satana scilicet in eadem ingresso*” (Satan had entered into them), in

turned against Hrólfr, in conjunction with the allusion that Hrólfr and his men have similarities with noble heathens because they do not worship the gods, “makes it possible for Christians to praise the otherwise pagan king”, as Annette Lassen (2022, 102) has stated. One can add that the supposed comment by Master Galterus that Hrólfr would have needed God’s help to win likewise offered the saga audience a further clue to put this pre-Christian king into a Christian frame of reference.

Hrólfr assumes that apart from Óðinn, there is another, impersonal power that seems to be independent of this god. In this case, i.e. “[i]f the power of destiny is regarded as impersonal, [...] [t]he decree of destiny cannot be changed or averted and it is no use praying or offering sacrifices, for there is no one to hear or to receive and to react”, as Ringgren (1967, 8) has pointed out. Other characters in the saga do not make such a distinction. They refer more generally to fate and good luck, leaving it open whether this fate is related to Óðinn’s will or not. Hrólfr has been quoted above as stating that *auðna* (fate, good luck) determines human lives and not Óðinn. This term is also employed by Hrólfr’s mother Yrsa after Hrólfr and his twelve champions have successfully defied King Aðils’ attempts to kill them: “hefur nu meira mätt audna þijn enn tröllskapur hanz” (at this very moment your good luck has more power than his sorcery; Slay 1960a, 103; Byock 1998, 65). Apparently, Yrsa does not know that Hrólfr had encountered Hrani/Óðinn before and followed his advice to take only his twelve best men with him to King Aðils. Thus, Hrólfr’s success in this case is connected to a power of fate that is personal rather than impersonal.

After Hrólfr and his men have rejected the gift of weapons from Hrani/Óðinn, one can find some references to the impossibility of averting the consequences for Hrólfr. They are often included in the direct speech of the characters.¹⁶ Bǫðvarr advises Hrólfr to remain quiet in or-

order to cause a terrible storm directed towards Hrólfr and his men (Bjarni Guðnason 1982, 36; Miller 2007, 21). The dead rising up has a parallel in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, where Bǫðvarr suspects that they fight against them (Slay 1960a, 120). For the literary portrayal of Óðinn in *Skjöldunga saga* and *Rerum Danicarum fragmenta*, see also Lassen (2022, 99–111).

- 16 This concurs with a tendency noticed by Peter Hallberg (1973, 148, 150; emphasis in the original) of “the frequency and distribution of the ‘fortune words’” in several subgenres of Old Norse literature: “those words are strongly ‘over-represented’ in direct speech”. Hallberg (1973, 151) suggests that this may reflect the authors’ “feeling that this vocabulary mainly belonged to an old native tradition, somewhat weakened and perhaps even a little old-fashioned in the authors’ own days”.

der to avoid being attacked, but he seems not to be convinced of his own advice and voices a premonition “ad skamt muni til störra tíjdinda fyrir oss öllum” (that it is but a short time before momentous events affect us all; Slay 1960a, 109; Byock 1998, 69). Skuld notices that Hrólfr always stays at home and interprets his behaviour as a sign that he himself fears that he will not be victorious again: “[s]etur hun hier til enn mesta seid ad vinna Hr(olf) kong brödur sinn, so ad j filgd er med henni alfar og nornir og annad ötöluligt jllþydi” (Skuld, to overpower her brother King Hrolf, fashioned a spell of high potency, which summoned elves, norns and countless other vile creatures; Slay 1960a, 111; Byock 1998, 71). In fact, the potency of Skuld’s *seiðr* is so strong that humans have no chance against it. But still, Skuld deplores what will happen: “er ad slijkum hellst skade, enn þö skal til skarar skrijda allt ad einu” (the loss of such men is a dreadful misfortune. Nevertheless, all now moves towards the same end; Slay 1960a, 115; Byock 1998, 73). The term *seiðr* has the meanings “(performing of) sorcery, spell, incantation” (ONP) and as Stephen Mitchell (2020, 655) states “[c]ertainly by the time of most written records from Old Icelandic, it is one of the dominant terms for witchcraft and sorcery”. *Seiðr* has attracted a lot of scholarship which, among other things, has also tried to establish possible relations to shamanism and Sámi traditions and explore how the archaeological evidence can complement the textual sources (cf., e.g., Mitchell 2020, 667–668 and Price 2019, 43–54, 330–342). Magic (and *seiðr* as a part of it) has also been analysed as a motif and device in plot construction in the literature from the medieval North, among others by Stephen Mitchell (2011, 74–116) for a variety of (sub-)genres, by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2013, 47–58) for *Íslendingasögur*, and by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (2014) for *fornaldarsögur*. Given the fact that *Hrólfs saga kraka* is often counted among the *fornaldarsögur*, the results concerning the narrative functions of magic in this group of sagas are specifically relevant for the present article. Stephen Mitchell (2011, 103, see also 85) has pointed out that magic occurs more frequently “the greater the distance between the time of composition and the setting of the saga”, with magic often being linked to paganism. Mitchell’s observation is also taken up by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (2014, 52, see also 42) as the third point in her list of functions of magic in *fornaldarsögur*: “a) Provide the hero with [...] an opponent in the plot. b) Bolster the hero’s moral standing, e.g. by

presenting magic in contrast to the heroic ideal. c) Present a picture of pre-Christian times. d) Spice the narrative, so enhancing its entertainment value". *Hrólfs saga kraka* includes characters with the ability to work magic, such as Aðils, Skuld, and Hvít, who are opponents of Hrólfr and Bǫðvarr. Function b may be subject to discussion since scholarship has come to different conclusions as to whether or not Hrólfr corresponds to the ideal of a king. Function c is detectable in the saga: magic is among the means used to characterise the past as pre-Christian and, according to the comment by Galterus at the end of the saga, Skuld's magic is invincible for non-Christians. The last function certainly also applies to the saga. Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (2014, 47–48) mentions, among other things, curses as a device to advance and determine plot development. In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, this is particularly noticeable in the curse uttered by Hvít (see below).

Working magic and divination can also be interpreted as expressions of "[a] cult pertaining to fate" (Lindow 2020, 947). In the saga, Skuld's *seiðr* helps to realise the fate laid out for Hrólfr and his men: inevitably, they will face defeat. Bǫðvarr does not want to accept the situation. At the beginning of the final battle, he is absent. Instead of him, a mighty bear is seen fighting in the ranks of King Hrólfr. Skuld is unable to work her trick while the bear is there. The bear is obviously evoked by Bǫðvarr to fight on the battlefield, while Bǫðvarr himself stays behind in the king's room.¹⁷ He fights Skuld with her own means but is disturbed by another of Hrólfr's champions. By coming to him, Hjalti ignores King Hrólfr's conviction that Bǫðvarr knows best how to help them. Hjalti arrives at a most unfortunate moment and is rebuked for that by Bǫðvarr: "nær mundi nu lagt hafa ädur huðrir sigrast hefði [...] Og vill nu draga til þess sem verða vill að einginn ræð skule duga" ([i]t was nearly decided which side had gained the victory [...] Now events will run their course, turning out as they will, and no action on our part will affect the outcome; Slay 1960a, 119; Byock 1998, 75). Bǫðvarr's attempt to change the future predestined by the refusal of Hrani's/Óðinn's gift has thus failed. From his words, one can get the impression that Hjalti's disturbance is why Bǫðvarr could not win the contest of powers against Skuld.

Hjalti's behaviour during the Yule celebrations and the battle that

17 For a discussion of how this episode in the saga was influenced by the traditions of the animal-warrior and the animal-double, see Ramos (2015, 59, 64, 72–73).

follows is noteworthy. During the celebrations, he goes to his mistress, and on his way to her, he sees that Skuld is preparing an attack. He does, however, only warn Hrólfr and the others after returning from the visit to his mistress (Slay 1960a, 112–113). Maybe his behaviour is linked to his understanding of fate (here, death in the upcoming battle) as something that cannot be averted and, therefore, believes it is unimportant to raise the alarm immediately or to disturb Bǫðvarr. His comments on fate suggest that what is going to happen does not come as a surprise: “Hafa hier og storar bendingar fyrir borid, þótt vier hǫfum dulist við langa tíjma, og er mior meiri grunur að hier muni störir tilburdir eptir koma” (We have for a long time, despite many clear indications, ignored what was coming. Now I have reason to suspect that momentous events [...] are about to take place; Slay 1960a, 114; Byock 1998, 72). Hjalti makes a similar remark after Bǫðvarr has joined them on the battlefield,¹⁸ and finally he states, “eckir er forlöginn hægt að beygia né á möti nátturunne að standa” ([i]t is not possible to bend fate nor can one stand against nature; Slay 1960a, 122; Byock 1998, 77).¹⁹ From these words one could infer that Hjalti thinks that one has to accept fate and, in consequence, that Bǫðvarr’s evocation of the bear was in vain right from the beginning.

The numinous forces presented in this section contribute to narrative motivation in the saga, as becomes obvious through events and in the comments of several characters. Óðinn’s impact on Hrólfr and his men can be seen as an example of what Matthews (2012, 76) has classified as “divine causality”. Hrólfr’s death in battle is not planned or predetermined by Óðinn at their first encounter; it is Hrólfr’s behaviour that forms the basis for Óðinn’s reactions. The first two encounters had positive effects because Hrólfr took Óðinn’s advice seriously; the third time, however, he did not. It is more difficult to establish whether the saga includes Matthews’ (2012, 76) other category, final motivation understood as predetermination. Hrólfr seems to assume that another abstract force exists that determines life and is more influential than Óðinn: *auðna*. It remains, however, unclear whether to Hrólfr *auðna* implies predetermination or whether he

18 He says: “hefur oss leingi fyrir bodad þessum tíjdindum sem nú eru framm kominn” (we have long been forewarned about the events now occurring; Slay 1960a; Byock 1998, 77).

19 The term used by Hjalti is *forlög*. It can be translated as ‘law, fate, destiny’ and, as Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon (1874, 164) have noted, “the word is not very freq. in old writers”.

sees it as another force that causally motivates events, yet in a stronger way than Óðinn. As mentioned before, other characters do not make such explicit statements. From Hjalti's comments and behaviour, one could infer that he equates fate with an ill-starred future that is the result of Óðinn's decision ('causal divinity'). The alleged quotation by Master Galterus with its reference to the Christian God and his suggested superiority over the enemy's power discusses a hypothetical case. Therefore, Master Galterus' words do not imply the assumption that all events in the saga are subject to God's predetermination.

Sexual desire and motivation: Helgi and Ólǫf

Helgi's involvement with Ólǫf, Yrsa, and the elfin woman are presented as causally linked in the saga. The outcome of his encounter with Ólǫf leads to his marrying Yrsa, and the dissolution of this marriage paves the way for the encounter with the elfin woman and the birth of Skuld. Skuld plays a crucial role in Hrólfr's life, as could be seen in the section above. In the saga, she is one of Hrólfr's antagonists and takes power – albeit for a short time only – after his death. Therefore, one could say that Helgi's encounters with Ólǫf and Yrsa have two functions in the plot: to introduce Hrólfr and to form a prelude for the introduction of Skuld.

Helgi's interest in Ólǫf is aroused by his wish to increase his fame and importance by conquering a powerful queen. The verb 'conquer' is here used without its romantic connotations for several reasons, as a look at the saga makes clear:

Fyrir Saxlandi riedi j þann tijma su drottning er Olof hiet. Hun var á þá leid sem herkongar. Hun för med skiöld og bryniu og suerdi girt og hialm á hǫfdi. Þanninn var henni hättad, væn ad jfirliti enn grimm j skapi og störmannlig. Þad var mäl manna ad sã væri kostur bestur j þann tijma á Nordurlöndum er menn hǫfdu spurn af, enn hun villdi þö önguan mann eiga. Helgi kongur friettir nu til drottningar þeirrar enu störlātu, og þötti sier mikill frami j aukast ad fá þessarar konu, huört sem henni væri þad viliugt eda ei. Og eitt huört sinn för hann þangad med mycklu herlidi. (Slay 1960a, 16–17)

(‘At that time a queen named Olof ruled over Saxland. Like a warrior king, she dressed in a coat of mail, carried sword and shield, and wore a helmet. This was her nature: beautiful in looks, yet cruel and arrogant in temperament. Those who knew about such matters said that Olof was the best match in all the northern countries, but she had no intention of marrying any man. King Helgi heard about this proud queen. It seemed to him that marrying the woman, whether she was willing or not, would increase his fame and importance. So one day he set off with a large company of armed men and, without warning, he landed in the country ruled by the powerful Queen Olof.’ Byock 1998, 11)

Ólof is described in military terms as a king over an army (*herkóngr*). In this saga character, the attributes of a warrior woman have been combined with another type of character attested in Old Norse literature, that of a *meykóngr*, a maiden king in bridal-quest narratives. In particular Marianne Kalinke has studied such narratives, which were especially popular in Iceland in the fourteenth century. In bridal quests, the hero’s effort to obtain a bride is the generating force of the plot and, as Kalinke stresses, marriage is the goal, never the sexual union alone (Kalinke 1990, viii, 1, 22). She has paid special attention to bridal quests in which the future bride is a maiden king, that is a female character who rules over a country. Such a woman is portrayed as arrogant because she rejects her suitors and also abuses them physically and psychologically; moreover, her reaction appears to be an overreaction and unjust because the suitor, in general, has honourable intentions (Kalinke 1990, 66, 78f.). The abused suitor then attempts to outwit the maiden king, including by displaying unchivalrous behaviour, in order to make or “persuade her to accept him in marriage”, for instance by taking advantage of her greed (Kalinke 1990, 66). Kalinke (2014, 275, 284) assumes that the origin of the maiden-king narrative or “romance”, as she calls it, emerged from the combination of motifs from two sagas, which “presumably circulated in Iceland at around the same time”, *Clári saga* and *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*. To this type of narrative, *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar* (of which the oldest manuscript fragments date from c. 1300) seems to have contributed the figure of the maiden king and the nature of the conflict between her and the suitors: Þórbjörg rejects Hrólfr

Gautreksson because of his lower status (Kalinke 2014, 277, 279, 282–283). In *Clári saga*, which presents itself as having a Latin source, one can find “the motif of the arrogant woman who rejects and mistreats her wooers” and the motif of the rejected wooer’s vengeance, for which his disguise and the woman’s avarice are crucial (Kalinke 2014, 280, 281–282, 284, quotation at 282).²⁰ Kalinke (2014, 273–274) also mentions that a woman’s mistreatment of her suitors is not unique to maiden-king narratives, as the example of Sigríðr Tóstadóttir shows. In *Heimskringla*, Sigríðr is said to be a haughty woman who, as the widow of the Swedish king, burns two petty kings (one of them being the father of the future Saint Óláfr) who have come to woo her.²¹ In the debate on the origin of the maiden-king motif Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2012, 231, 233–234, quotation at 237) has stressed that it should be seen “as a more original creation, borrowing aspects from a large literary stock consisting of folktales, native tradition and foreign narratives” and mentions in particular autonomous female figures from Old Norse literature such as the shieldmaiden Brynhildr from heroic legend). She is critical of Kalinke’s emphasis on the possible contribution of *Clári saga* and focuses instead on why maiden-king narratives may have gained popularity. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2012, 240) suggests that the maiden-king narratives “can be seen as a native response to romance, featuring less idealistic forms of wooing, love, sex and other gender relations than the refined examples the translated texts (for example *Parcevals saga* [...]) offer”. Building upon Henric Bagerius’ analysis of sexuality and aristocratic identity in late-medieval Icelandic literature, she understands maiden-king narratives as expressions of “anxieties about the erosion of gender roles and a fixed social order”, but eventually “[t]he dominant patriarchal order that insists and depends on women’s compli-

20 Earlier, Kalinke (1990, e.g. 66, 68, 104, 106–107) also saw *Clári saga* as a formative example and assumed this saga to be a translation of a Latin text. The assumption that it is a translation was challenged later on by Hughes (2009, 136) who in his analysis arrived at the conclusion that *Clári saga* “is an indigenous Icelandic composition, in its present form from the second quarter of the fourteenth century”. For a summary of different positions on *Clári saga*, cf. Sif Rikharðsdóttir (2010, 418–420).

21 In *Haralds saga gráfeldar*, she is described as “svarkr mikill” (a very haughty woman), and in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* the burning is explained as follows: “Sigríðr sagði þat, at svá skyldi hon leiða smákonungum at fara af öðrum löndum til þess at biðja hennar” (Sigríðr said that thus would she make petty kings stop going from other countries to ask to marry her; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 2002, 215, 289; Finlay and Faulkes 2016, 131, 179).

ance is reaffirmed, encouraging women in the audience to conform to their traditional subservient gender roles” (Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2012, 242).²²

The typical characteristics of a maiden king can also be found in the description of Ólǫf: she is a beautiful woman, the best match, but with the drawback of being arrogant, cruel, and not wanting to marry. Given the surprise attack on her country, Ólǫf knows she has no chance to gather forces against Helgi, and thus she cannot prevent his ‘wooing’. Being confronted with the nuptial scenario, she criticises the speed of events and twice reminds him to behave honourably, but Helgi tells her that his behaviour is justified because of her arrogance and pride, and “ad vid buum nu saman slijka stund sem mier lijkar” (that we remain together for as long as it pleases me; Slay 1960a, 18; Byock 1998, 12). In what follows, the common pattern of bridal-quest episodes is again discernible: the suitor believes that the maiden king will spend the night with him on his terms, but he is taught otherwise (Kalinke 1990, 75–76). Ólǫf disgraces Helgi while he is asleep, shaving off all his hair, smearing him with tar, stuffing him into a sack, and having him taken to his ship, where his men discover him.²³ Ólǫf’s reaction is drastic but not groundless, because Helgi is not a suitor with honourable intentions. From the start, as can be found in the text, he is determined to impose his will on Ólǫf. Her subsequent behaviour is commented on by the saga narrator, who states that “hefur hennar ofsi og öjöfnudur alldrei verid meiri enn nu” (her arrogance and her overbearing manner had never been greater) and summarises the negative public opinion about her: “[Þ]ikir öllum hin mestu ödæmi er hun skyllði hafa gietad spottad slijkan kong” (Everyone thought it a flagrant misdeed to have mocked such a king in this way; Slay 1960a, 20; Byock 1998, 13).

22 Bagerius (2009, 14, 17–18, 77–78, 83, quotation at 17) analysed sexuality in selected *fornaldarsögur* and *riðdarasögur* (mainly indigenous ones) as “sociala markörer” (social markers), especially for the Icelandic elite, in the context of societal changes in Iceland beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century with the Icelanders’ acceptance of paying taxes to the Norwegian king. See also Sif Ríkharðsdóttir (2010, 429–430), who suggests interpreting the final submission of the maiden kings in these sagas “undir ríkjandi hugmyndir um kynhlutverk og stöðu kvenna” (to the prevailing ideas of gender roles and the position of women) as reactions to societal discussions about a possible threat posed by powerful and independent women.

23 Shaving and tarring also occur in *Sigurðar saga þögla*, *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, and *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*; cf. Kalinke (1990, 77); Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2013, 167).

The vengeance Helgi has in mind is to accomplish the sexual union he did not at the first meeting with Ólǫf. Helgi knows that she is greedy and, using the pretext of a supposedly great treasure, he manages to lure her into a forest. He does not accept her offer to make up for her earlier behaviour by having him wed her honourably. Instead, he rapes her for many nights in a row and leaves her pregnant with a child, Yrsa, that she named after a dog and neglects. In his study on rape in saga literature, Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist (2015, 431) summarised that “rape was considered primarily an offence against the woman’s male relatives and only secondly against the woman herself”. According to *Grágás*, the Icelandic law collection (manuscript dated to the thirteenth century), full outlawry was the punishment for a rapist of a free woman who had a permanent place of residence (Charpentier Ljungqvist 2015, 433). In Ólǫf’s case, there is no male relative mentioned who would seek legal action. In the saga, rape is used as a means of revenge, and in this way, “[t]he gender hierarchy is reestablished in accordance with the medieval patriarchal gender order”, in Charpentier Ljungqvist’s (2015, 436–437) interpretation.²⁴

It has already been mentioned that some episodes and characters from *Hrólfs saga kraka* are also included in earlier, mostly medieval texts. This also applies to the Helgi-Ólǫf episode. Comparing this episode in the earlier texts with the extant version of *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Marianne Kalinke’s (1990, 97–98) suggestion that the episode has been modified in *Hrólfs saga kraka* under the influence of maiden king-narratives seems to be plausible. In some of these earlier texts, only the rape and the child resulting from it are mentioned, and there are differences concerning Ólǫf’s civil status. In *Gesta Danorum* (Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, 106), where she is called Thora, she is single and a virgin. In other texts, she is said to have been married. The episode is narrated in the greatest detail in *Rerum*

24 See also an article by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (2016) on gender-based violence and social status in *fornaldarsögur* and indigenous *riddarasögur*. She concludes that in *fornaldarsögur*, violence and sexual compulsion are often directed against women of lower social rank, whose fathers sometimes even give them to visiting men of higher social standing: such episodes “are, in general, standardised and must have been regarded as an apt literary motif that the saga authors used when their heroes sought for hospitality in the north” (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2016, 200, see also 198, 203). In contrast, “in the indigenous *riddarasögur*, women of high social standing are sexually violated by men of similar social standing”, with the rape of a maiden king presented as being socially accepted (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2016, 203).

Danicarum fragmenta (Bjarni Guðnason 1982, 23–24), where she is called Olava and married to the king of Saxland. In her husband's absence, Helgo (i.e. Helgi) attacks the country and wants to sleep with her. In this narrative, one can find elements that are also included in the saga: Olava shaves Helgo, puts tar and feathers on his head, and has him taken back to his ship. A year later he returns, abducts her, takes her into the deep forest, and sleeps with her for three nights, leaving her pregnant with Yrsa.

Sexual desire and motivation: Helgi and Yrsa

In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Yrsa grows up believing that her parents are a farmer and his elderly wife. The queen neglects Yrsa completely. One day when Yrsa is thirteen years old, she is tending a herd when Helgi, disguised as a beggar, sees her and is immediately struck by her beauty. He asks her about her family, and she answers to the best of her knowledge that she is a poor man's daughter. Love suddenly awakes in Helgi, he abducts the girl despite her protests and marries her. In her *Motive der Weltliteratur*, Elisabeth Frenzel (2008, 169–170) notes that literary works rooted in the heroic period tend to present abductions in such a way that the woman either had agreed to the abduction before or agrees to it afterwards. In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, the abduction is caused by one-sided desire on Helgi's part, but eventually, the relationship of Helgi and Yrsa is characterised by reciprocal love. The verbal expressions used are *ást* and *ástarhugr*; both words can mean 'love' and 'affection', and the phrases *unna mikit*, 'to love a lot' and *unna mest* 'to love the most' (cf. *ONP*).²⁵ Later, when Yrsa is already married to Aðils, Helgi pays them a visit and is eager to spend as much time as possible in conversation with Yrsa (Slay 1960a, 34). These expressions are short and laconic, but they are also typical of how love is expressed in several saga subgenres. Their formulaic and slightly distanced character should not deceive the saga audience. Daniel Sävborg (2007, 147–148), who has studied the depiction of love and formulaic language especially in *Íslendingasögur*, has stressed that such a limited number of plain and unexciting set phrases, as well as references in the sagas to sitting together for a long time talking, making it a habit to visit, or giving the wooed woman a present in the form of a piece of clothing, are "en

25 Examples from the saga: Helgi is said to love Yrsa (Slay 1960a, twice at 23, 35), reciprocal love (Slay 1960a, twice at 29), Yrsa states that she loved Helgi (Slay 1960a, 36).

litterär markering, ett meddelande från författaren till läsaren, och inte en mimetisk beskrivning av ett psykologiskt fenomen” (a literary marker, a message from the author to the reader, and not a mimetic description of a psychological phenomenon). Put differently, these formulae and motifs are signals to the audience, who have to interpret or decode them appropriately as referring to love.

Yrsa’s mother Ólǫf keeps quiet about the kinship ties when she learns about their marriage, but the saga narrator conveys her hopes to us: “að þetta mundi H(elga) k(ongi) vera til harmz og suivirdingar, enn til einskiz frama nie jndiz” (that these events would bring grief and dishonour to King Helgi and that neither success nor joy would come out of them; Slay 1960a, 23; Byock 1998, 16). Predictions in literary texts tend to come true, and *Hrólfs saga kraka* with its tragic ending is no exception. The causal chain of action initiated by Helgi’s bridal quest for Ólǫf and the subsequent rape has its next link in the incest of father and daughter. Elisabeth Frenzel (2008, 397) concludes in her article on the incest motif in world literature that even if it is committed unknowingly, “bleibt der Inzest jedoch Indiz für einen Fluch, der auf einem Menschen oder einem ganzen Geschlecht liegt; er fungiert als eine Art Archetyp unbewusster Sünde” (incest, however, remains an indication of a curse that lies on a person or a whole family; it functions as a kind of archetype of an unconscious sin). She adds that once the person who has committed the incest becomes aware of what they have done, the trajectory of the plot changes and turns against that person. Frenzel (2008, 391–392) also draws attention to the ambivalence inherent in incest: on the one hand, it is a taboo; on the other, it was a privilege of the gods and some secular ruling dynasties such as the Ptolemies. In literary works, revealing their true parentage can also lead to a happy ending if the two lovers learn that they are not related and thus did not commit incest (Frenzel 2008, 395–396). The incest motif can occasionally be found in Old Norse literature. If it occurs, it tends to be incest between siblings, such as in *Völsunga saga* (Signý and Sigmundr) and in *Jómsvíkinga saga* (Arnfinnr and his sister), or in the world of the gods, where Njǫrðr and his sister are said to be the parents of Freyr and Freyja, who, in turn, are accused of incest in the eddic poem *Lokasenna* (Gundersen 1962, col. 370–371; Jochens 1998, 23).²⁶ *Hrólfs saga kraka*

26 Examples in which the incest involves a foster-mother and a son include *Orvar-Odds saga* and *Mírmanns saga*, and in *Postala sǫgur* a mother is said to encourage her son to have a

includes incest between father and daughter, but in both the saga and the earlier texts on Hrólfr that include the incest, neither Helgi nor Yrsa commit it knowingly.

In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Ólǫf keeps her knowledge of the incestuous relationship secret for some time. When she reveals it, the couple already have a son, Hrólfr. What causes Ólǫf to come forward is that it displeases her to hear that Helgi and Yrsa loved each other dearly and were content with their marriage. Ólǫf pays Yrsa a visit, and the meeting between the two is cold. Yrsa has not forgotten the bad treatment at Queen Ólǫf's court and suspects that the farmers are not her true parents. What Ólǫf tells her comes as a shock, and she wants to separate from Helgi, but Helgi wants them to continue their marriage. Eventually, Yrsa leaves him and follows Ólǫf home to Saxland. Yrsa's behaviour reflects the interpretation of incest as a taboo, as unacceptable behaviour that is punished according to the law (for the laws, see Gundersen 1962, col. 372–374; Magnús Már Lárusson 1962, col. 374–376; Jochens 1998, 37, 42).

In an earlier source, *Gesta Danorum*, the incest motif is even more loaded. In this text, the raped maiden Thora plans the incest: “Siquidem filiam nubilis etatis de industria littori immissam concubitu patrem maculare precepit” (She deliberately sent her daughter, now of marriageable age, down to the shore, instructing her to defile her father in fornication; Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, 106–107). The narrator of *Gesta Danorum* explicitly and comprehensively condemns Thora's revenge, but:

Magnum sed uno expiabile scelus, quod concubitus noxam fausta proles deterisit neque opinione tristius quam fructu iocundius fuit. Siquidem genitus ex Vrsa Rolpho ortus sui infamiam conspicuis probitatis operibus redemit, quorum eximium fulgorem omnis eui memoria specioso laudum preconio celebrat. Fit enim, ut letis lugubria finiantur et in speciosos exitus turpiter auspicata concedant. (Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, 108)

(“The impiety was great, but redeemed in one way: offensive as the union was, it was cleansed by a blessed offspring, a happy consequence to a miserable, disreputable affair. For Yrsa's son Rolf

sexual relationship with her; Jochens (1998, 192, 204–205); Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2013, 75, 114).

rescued his birth from discredit by striking and meritorious deeds; their remarkable splendour was proclaimed and trumpeted by all succeeding ages. Gloom occasionally ends in joy and inauspicious beginnings give place to brilliant conclusions.' Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, 109)

The narrator of *Gesta Danorum* does not see the incest as a curse; it is no obstacle for Hrólfr's future. His deeds can compensate for the stigma of his parents' incest. The incest is, nevertheless, referred to again later in *Gesta Danorum* and causes uneasiness: Rolou (i.e. Hrólfr) reminds his mother that she is at the same time his (half-)sister, and Atislus (i.e. Aðils) criticises the two of them for sitting too close together because this would be inappropriate for siblings (Friis-Jensen and Fisher 2015, 112). Atislus' criticism could perhaps be understood as an insinuation of potential incest between brother and sister.

In *Hrólfs saga kraka*, incest can be said to be a curse on an individual or a family, as in Frenzel's observation quoted above. In the saga, the motif is used for narrative 'compression' and motivation: it prepares the audience for the possible tragic future of Helgi and Hrólfr and is thus also linked to the notion of fate that is taken up later in the saga.

Sexual desire and motivation: Helgi and the elfin woman

Helgi's encounter with the elfin woman has no counterpart in the other preserved texts on Hrólfr. This encounter takes place after the separation from Yrsa. The elfin woman comes to him on a Yule evening, asking for shelter. She looks like a poor being with ragged clothes. She wants to lie next to Helgi "þui lýf m(itt) er j vedi" (for my life is at stake; Slay 1960a, 32; Byock 1998, 22). Helgi feels repelled by her but consents to her wish. When he turns around after a while, she has transformed into a beautiful woman dressed in silk. It turns out that by allowing her to lie close to him, he has released her from a curse her stepmother had put on her. She wants to leave, but Helgi does not allow her to. His lust leads him to have intercourse with her, and the next morning, she presents him with the future scenario: he has to visit their daughter after a year has passed, "enda muntu giallda ef þu giörir ei so" ([u]nless you do so, you will pay for it; Slay 1960a, 33; Byock 1998, 22). Helgi forgets about the arrangement,

and three winters later, the elfin woman brings their daughter to him and repeats her earlier prediction: “Þat skaltu vita k(ongur) s(agdi) hun að ættmenn þ(ijnir) munu þess gjallda er þu hafdir það að ǫnguo er eg bauð þier” (‘You must know, King, that your kinsmen will pay for your ignoring my request’; Slay 1960a, 33; Byock 1998, 22–23). In her analysis of *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Johanna Denzin (2008, 209) has argued that it “does function as a romance, albeit as a tragic romance”, as it “relates the stories of five failed romances”, one of them being Helgi’s encounter with the elfin woman.²⁷ In Denzin’s (2008, 215) view, “Helgi had the potential to be a true romance hero in that he embodied on a basic level great intellectual and physical ability”, and this episode with the elfin woman, which is not included in earlier preserved texts on Hrólfr kraki, “could be interpreted as a desire on the part of the author to emphasize Helgi’s deficiency as a romance protagonist”. If romance is understood to also refer to ‘love’ and a sexual relationship based on mutual consent, the episode with the elfin woman is certainly further evidence that Helgi only takes into account his own needs. However, according to tradition, Helgi’s son Hrólfr was to die in a fierce battle, and therefore the inclusion of the episode with the elfin women serves, in my opinion, first and foremost to intensify the plot construction, which is geared towards Hrólfr’s death.

Some scholars have drawn attention to the name chosen for the daughter. Skuld is the name of one of the norns²⁸ from Norse mythology associated with the future (comp. the verb *skulu*), and *skuld* itself means ‘debt, due’ (cf. Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1874, 559; Ármann Jakobsson 2003, 182; Kalinke 2003, 163; Simek 2021, 321, 404). In *Gylfaginning*,

27 Denzin (2008, 209): “On a very basic narrative level, *Hrólfs saga kraka* relates the stories of five failed romances: King Helgi and Queen Ólöf, Helgi and a mysterious elfin-woman, Helgi and his daughter Yrsa, and the romance of Böðvarr’s grandparents and his parents.” Referring to Hermann Pálsson and Marianne Kalinke, she states that some *fornaldarsögur* can be defined “as secular romances” and lists Hermann Pálsson’s criteria (Denzin 2008, 207–209, quotation at 207). Despite this definition, she also seems to base her analysis on other meanings of the term romance, which makes it difficult to know what is meant by ‘romance’; cf. also Sävborg (2012, 157–158).

28 For example, in *Gylfaginning* ch. 15: “[...] Urðr, Verðandi, Skuld. Þessar meyjar skapa mönnum aldr. Þær kǫllum vér nornir” ([...] Weird, Verdandi, Skuld. These maidens shape men’s lives. We call them norns; Faulkes 2005, 18; Faulkes 1987, 18). In *Völuspá* st. 20, the term *nornir* is not used, Skuld, Urðr, and Verðandi are called “meyjar margs vitandi” (girls, knowing a great deal; Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason 2014, 295; Larrington 2014, 6).

“norn in yngsta er Skuld heitir” (the youngest norn, called Skuld) is mentioned together with the valkyries Guðr and Rota, and the three of them “riða jafnan at kjósa val ok ráða vígum” (always ride to choose who shall be slain and to govern the killings; Faulkes 2005, 30; Faulkes 1987, 31). Elsewhere, Skuld is also the name of a valkyrie (in *Völuspá* and *Skáldskaparmál*), which is why Karen Bek-Pedersen (2011, 79; see also 114) arrives at the conclusion that “(i)t may simply have to be granted that Skuld spans that grey area where *nornir* and *valkyrjur* overlap”. In some texts, the conceptualisation of norns appears to intersect with that of other female mythological figures such as *disir*, *spákonur*, and *völur* (Dillmann 2002, 393; Simek 2021, 321). After the conversion to Christianity, the term *norn* seems to have gradually shifted in meaning towards “‘Zauberin’ oder ‘Hexe’” (‘sorceress’ or ‘witch’), as François-Xavier Dillmann (2002, 393) argues, and one of his examples for this change is the character of Skuld in *Hrólfs saga kraka*. As mentioned above, Skuld is said to be in the company of elves and norns and works *seiðr*. The name Skuld with its connotations of fate, battle, and death underlines this character’s role as an antagonist to Hrólfr.

The aftermath of Helgi’s encounter with the elfin woman serves further narrative ‘compression’ in the saga because the strand about the elfin woman and Skuld is explicitly linked by the narrator with Hrólfr’s death. Hrólfr will eventually pay with his life for his father’s breach of the contract. His fate is interwoven with Skuld’s; he is literally overpowered by the ‘debt’. In the saga, a further element was added to motivate Skuld’s antipathy to Hrólfr.²⁹ It is narrated that Hrólfr tricked Skuld’s husband Hjørvarðr into paying tribute. Hrólfr asks Hjørvarðr to hold his sword, while he “brä brökabellte sijnu [...] ad sä skal vera vndirmadur annarz jafnann sijdann, er tekur vid suerdi annarz, medan hann bregdur bröka bellte” (unfastened his belt [...] ‘[...] he who holds the sword of a man who is undoing his belt, will from then on be the lesser of the two’; Slay 1960a, 51; Byock 1998, 34). Hjørvarðr is subordinated and humiliated, and perhaps, this deception on Hrólfr’s part can be interpreted as an “example of symbolic homosexual domination”, as Carl Phepstead (2003, 12–13) has suggested.³⁰ As has been mentioned above, *Hrólfs saga kraka* is episodically

29 For a comparison of the saga and the earlier texts concerning Skuld and Hjørvarðr, see Valgerður Brynjólfssdóttir (2003, 143–144).

30 Kalinke (2003, 163) has suggested that the deception in the saga “is a variant of a motif in the *Nibelungenlied*, where a gesture of subservience [...] carries the same meaning and

structured. In part, this may be related to the long history of the tradition about Hrólfr. In his analysis, Tom Shippey (2010, 19) judges that *Hrólfs saga kraka* “as a whole is not well-structured” and “consists of [...] not very well integrated units”. In his view, the saga author attempted “his best to thread items together”, for example by including the story of the elfin woman and her daughter and of Hjörvarðr, “thus providing a double motivation ahead of time for the Last Battle” (Shippey 2010, 20–21). One can agree with this observation on motivation and add that these motivations work well within the plot and help to emphasise the orientation towards the known ending of Hrólfr’s life.

Sexual desire and motivation: Hvít and Björn

The last example of sexual desire and motivation in *Hrólfs saga kraka* involves Hvít, the daughter of the king of the Finns. A marriage is arranged between her and the widowed elderly Norwegian king. Hvít takes an interest in her stepson Björn and approaches him with sexual advances in her husband’s absence, but Björn is not interested at all and slaps her hard (Slay 1960a, 55). Hvít punishes him for rejecting her and puts a curse on him: “Nu listur hun til hanz með vlfhanska, og s(egir) hann skyldi verda að einum hyðbyrne ölmum og grimmum [...] allrei skaltu vr þessum alogum fara” (Then she struck him with her wolfskin gloves, telling him to become a cave bear, grim and savage [...] You will never be released from the spell; Slay 1960a, 55–56; Byock 1998, 37). Hvít represents the figure of the wicked stepmother who works magic (just like the stepmother who had put a curse on the elfin woman), but even more, she represents the figure of the scorned woman, who can also appear “in der zugespitzten Variante der verschmähten Stiefmutter” (in the extreme variant of the scorned stepmother; Frenzel 2008, 159). Although Hvít is not Björn’s biological mother, she can be said to fulfil the role of a ‘substitute’ and, thus, her sexual advances could also be understood as attempted incest.

Like Helgi, Hvít takes revenge for being sexually rejected, and her revenge also has consequences for the plot, although these may not be as obvious as in Helgi’s case. By the spell, Björn is transformed into a bear,

has equally dire consequences as in *Hrólfs saga kraka*; the situation she refers to is when “Siegfried stands by the stirrup of Gunthers’s horse”.

but during the night, he becomes a human again. When these events take place, he has already been in a love relationship with Bera for a long time. Bera recognises Björn despite his appearance as a bear, and she becomes pregnant by him before he is killed on the initiative of Hvít. During her pregnancy, Bera is forced by Hvít to eat a small bit of meat of the killed bear, i.e. of Björn.³¹ In consequence, two of the three sons she gives birth to have animal traits: Elgfróði is an elk below the navel and Þórir has the feet of a dog (Slay 1960a, 61). The third son, Bǫðvarr, has no such traits. After killing Queen Hvít in revenge for her deeds, Bǫðvarr visits his brother Elgfróði. Elgfróði advises him to enter the service of King Hrólfr, but he notes a flaw Bǫðvarr has: “ecki ertu so sterckur frændi sem þier hæfir. Frodi nam sier blöd j kalfanum og bad hann drecka” (‘Kinsman, you are not as strong as you should be.’ Frodi drew blood from his own calf, telling Bodvar to drink of it; Slay 1960a, 70). By drinking some of his brother’s blood, Bǫðvarr gains extreme strength. It is precisely this strength that distinguishes him from others among Hrólfr’s retainers. It has been mentioned above that Bǫðvarr possesses the power to evoke a bear in the final battle. As Eduardo Ramos (2015, 57–58), among others, has stressed, in *Hrólfs saga kraka*, Bǫðvarr is not a *berserkr* (as in *Skáldskaparmál*), but “[l]ike a *berserkr* animal-warrior, the bear shows immunity to enemy attacks”. He suggests that this episode has to be seen in connection with the influence of chivalric literature, which demanded another type of hero than a *berserkr*, and thus “the bear episode in *Hrólfs saga kraka* allows for the presence of an animal-warrior through the use of an animal-double without disturbing the courtly environment in which the saga is set” (Ramos 2015, 73, see also 71). For Ramos (2015, 71–72), the purpose of the inclusion of the story about Bǫðvarr’s parents is to underline his relationship with these fierce animals. The relationship of Bǫðvarr’s family with bears is also discernible in their names. As was the case with Hrólfr’s half-sister Skuld, here too the names are telling: *björn* means ‘bear’, *bera* ‘she-bear’,

31 For David Varley (2015, 47), “Hvít’s use of meat parallels the use and function of the motif of the magic potion.” Hvít and female characters like Borghildr in *Völsunga saga* are for Varley (2015, 42) representative examples of “regal witches who marry into royal lines”: such a figure inverts the expected behaviour of a queen and uses potions or poison “to strike down her enemies in her husband’s court, in the very centre of patriarchal royal hegemony”. It should be noted, however, that Hvít only resorts to the working of magic after Björn has rejected her advances.

and Bǫðvarr's byname *bjarki* is assumed to mean 'little bear' (cf. *ONP*; Byock 1998, xxvii). Based on the saga's account of Bǫðvarr's parents, it could be argued that the two extraordinary qualities in Bǫðvarr – his strength and his power to fight as an 'animal-double' (to use Ramos' term) in the form of a bear – are causally linked to Hvít's curse of his father Björn and the piece of meat taken from his killed body.³² Thus, the effects of Hvít's revenge leave an impact that is apparent later in the plot, most notably in the final battle.

Final remarks

The analysed examples of narrative motivation from *Hrólfs saga kraka* include final and causal motivation. Motivation has to take into account the ancient tales about Hrólfr according to which he died in the final battle. If the traditional end is not to be changed, narrative motivation in the saga has to be adapted in accordance with Hrólfr's death. In the saga, an attempt was made to include final motivation understood as predetermination – Master Galterus' comment that Hrólfr failed because he was no Christian. This perspective is, however, only briefly mentioned and does not seem to offer a convincing frame of interpretation. Another force that probably could be understood to be related to predetermination is *auðna*, but this remains ambiguous in the saga. It could also be seen as a divine causal force, albeit a stronger one than Óðinn, in Hrólfr's view. Causal motivation is visible in the 'domino effect' that Helgi's attempt to conquer Ólqf has: his attempt causes her to mock him; her mocking leads to the rape, to her revenge in the form of keeping quiet about the incest between Helgi and Yrsa, and to the birth of Hrólfr. The revelation of the incest and the separation of Helgi and Yrsa likewise leads to a chain of cause and effect, culminating in the confrontation between Skuld and Hrólfr in the final battle. Thus, these episodes are oriented towards the focal point of the plot – the ending – and contribute to the saga's 'finality' (to use Haferland's term). Like Helgi's, Hvít's sexual desire is also presented

32 There is a similar interpretation in Varley (2015, 47): "[T]he saga [...] implies that Bǫðvarr's own supernatural abilities are also a consequence of his unusual heritage; they are powers that are the product of external interference, and which are conveyed through the medium of his mother's body."

as a cause for later events and the emergence of Bǫðvarr, a character of special importance in the final battle. Fate and the consequences of sexual desire as personified by Skuld are explicitly intertwined when Skuld and Bǫðvarr comment on fate and try to take advantage of it (Skuld) or avert it (Bǫðvarr). Magic is also referred to in other places in the narrative, yet in this particular case, it creates suspense as both Skuld and Bǫðvarr employ it in order to overcome each other in the final battle. Fate and sexual desire are not just individual motifs in *Hrólfs saga kraka* but motivations contributing to a cohesive saga plot and creating suspense as to how the known ending, Hrólfr's death, will come about.

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SUMMARY

Fate, sexual desire, and narrative motivation in *Hrólfs saga kraka*

Keywords: narrative motivation, fate, sexual desire, narrative strands, transmission history

This article discusses how fate and sexual desire are used for narrative motivation in *Hrólfs saga kraka* (oldest manuscripts from the seventeenth century). In the analysed examples, focus is put on final and causal motivation. In the saga, an attempt was made to include final motivation understood as predetermination, when Hrólfr's defeat in battle is explained by his not being Christian. The concept of *auðna* is more ambiguous. It seems to be perceived as a (divine) causal force and a stronger one than Óðinn. Causal motivation is especially prominent in the section about Hrólfr's father, Helgi. His unsuccessful attempt to marry Ólǫf causes a 'domino effect': by raping Ólǫf, he fathers Yrsa, and later with Yrsa he fathers Hrólfr. The revelation of the incest and the separation of Helgi and Yrsa likewise leads to a chain of cause and effect, culminating in the confrontation between Skuld and Hrólfr in the final battle.

ÚTDRÁTTUR

Örlög, girnd og drifkraftur frásagnar í *Hrólfs sögu kraka*

Efnisorð: drifkraftur frásagnar, örlög, girnd, frásagnarþræðir, varðveislusaga

Greinin fjallar um hvernig fyrirbærin örlög og girnd eru notuð sem drifkraftur frásagnar í *Hrólfs sögu kraka* (elstu handritin eru frá sautjándu öld). Í dæmunum sem hér eru tekin til athugunar beinist athyglin að lokaframvindu og orsakasamhengi frásagnarinnar. Í sögunni mótast lokaframvindan af forlagahyggju þegar skýringin á ósigri Hrólfs í orrustunni reynist vera sú að hann er ekki kristinn. Hugtakið *auðna* er margræðara. Í sögunni virðist það merkja guðdómlegt orsakavaldandi afl sem þó er öflugra en Óðinn. Orsakasamhengi frásagnarinnar er sérlega áberandi í kaflanum um föður Hrólfs, Helga. Misheppnuð tilraun hans til að kvænast Ólǫfu hefur keðjuverkandi áhrif; með því að nauðga Ólǫfu getur hann Yrsu og síðar, með Yrsu, getur hann Hrólfr. Þegar upp kemst um sífjaspellin og í kjölfar aðskilnaðar Helga og Yrsu er rakin keðja orsaka og afleiðinga sem leiðir til átakanna milli Skuldar og Hrólfs í lokaorrustunni.

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PIERGIORGIO CONSAGRA

NORNA-GESTS ÞÁTTR AND
HELGA ÞÁTTR ÞÓRISSEONAR IN
ICELANDIC MANUSCRIPTS

A Literary Diptych Lost in Time

Introduction

Norna-Gests þáttir (NP) and *Helga þáttir Þórisseonar* (HP) are two medieval Icelandic texts embedded within *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. In these short stories, Óláfr Tryggvason – the first Norwegian king to actively attempt the Christianisation of his kingdom – is confronted with both the pagan past and present of Norway while carrying out his missionary endeavour.¹ The two *þáttir* appear to have a special status within this larger context: although they function as digressions from the main narrative and have no direct impact on its development, they remain inextricably tied to the narratological framework of Óláfr Tryggvason's biography. Further, when one considers the term traditionally used for labelling the two texts, *þáttir* ('episode'), it will be clear that the intrinsic nature of these two tales is more complex than one would think.

Scholarship on the *þáttir* – both as a literary form and as a literary genre – gained momentum in the twentieth century,² yet there seems to be no unanimous agreement on the matter: *þáttir* are numerous and vary in length, can be ascribed to various literary genres, and exhibit different degrees of interdependence with the sagas in which they are embedded. While it could be said that a *þáttir* is shorter than a saga and typically em-

1 For a summary of NP, see Harris (1987), Sauer (1992), Würth (1993), and Consagra (2025a); for HP, see Hermann Pálsson (1985), Power (1993), and Consagra (2024a). A chronological reconstruction of the events in the two *þáttir* is provided below.

2 For a detailed overview of the research history on *þáttir*, see Würth (1991), Harris and Rowe (2005), and Rowe (2017).

bedded within a longer narrative, exceptions to this description do exist.³ Moreover, a closer look at the development and usage of the term *þáttir* in medieval Icelandic manuscripts reveals considerable variation over time.⁴ In short, there is no overarching or widely accepted definition of these texts.

The most fruitful approach to *þættir* has been to analyse them not as isolated narratives, but in relation to the broader manuscript contexts in which they appear.⁵ Recent scholarship has, for instance, examined *Flateyjarbók* in detail.⁶ Not only is it one of the most splendid manuscripts of the Icelandic Middle Ages, but it also serves as a fascinating example of how complex the interpolation of *þættir* and other texts into sagas can be. *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* occupies the first part of this magnificent codex, alongside other texts, including the above-mentioned *NP* and *HP*.

Beginning with *Flateyjarbók*, the purpose of this article is to assess the presence of these two *þættir*, first in Icelandic parchment manuscripts, then in younger paper manuscripts. It will be argued that these texts were originally intended to function together as a literary diptych embedded within the narratological framework of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, demonstrating how they are related by means of medieval compilation practices by being interdependent on the one hand and, on the other, by being carefully inserted together in a broader literary context. Although previous scholarship has recognised the close relationship between the two *þættir*, no study has yet thoroughly examined this connection through the lens of the manuscripts in which they appear. After elucidating the relationship between *NP* and *HP*, it will be argued that, while originally intended as interdependent texts, they became separated from one another during later stages of their manuscript transmission. Ultimately, this study aims to offer a comprehensive account of the transmission history of these two *þættir* across the centuries.⁷

3 To name but one example, *Þorsteins þáttir þæjarmagns* is considerably longer than *Illuga saga Gríðarfóstra*. The degree of a *þáttir*'s independence from the context in which it appears can also vary greatly; *Þorsteins þáttir þæjarmagns* again serves as a good example, as it functions as a stand-alone text in most of the manuscripts where it is preserved.

4 Cf. Lindow (1978).

5 As advocated by Ármann Jakobsson (2013) and previously emphasised by Lindow: "[I]t may be best to regard [the *þættir*] simply as anecdotes that made sense to medieval authors in the contexts in which we find them recorded" (1993, 661).

6 See in particular Würth (1991), but see also Rowe (1998; 2003; 2005) and Kaplan (2004; 2011).

7 Writing this article would not have been possible without the support of my doctoral

A Complicated Relationship

As testified by the oldest manuscripts examined below, *NP* and *HP* are two *þáttir* embedded within a *konungasaga*, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. When printed for the first time, they appeared together in some of the earliest printed works of Old Norse literature, initially in Iceland (*Saga þess háloflega herra K. Óláfs Tryggvasonar*, edited by Jón Snorrason in 1680), and later in Sweden (*Nordiska Kämpa Dater*, edited by Erik Julius Björner in 1737). However, when examining paper manuscripts and later printed editions, *NP* and *HP* are rarely found side by side and are by and large associated with the corpus of *fornaldarsögur*,⁸ meaning that they appear outside their original context of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. Furthermore, it will also be possible to observe that *NP* appears more frequently than *HP*, both in paper manuscripts and printed editions.⁹ The unbalanced presence of these two *þáttir* is further paralleled by how much interest scholars have shown in these texts, which has been greater for *NP*.¹⁰

The relationship between these two *þáttir*, as it appears, is quite complex and has evolved over time. Overall, it could be maintained that *HP* has received comparatively limited attention and literary comment, despite Andrew Hamer's description of it as "a sophisticated piece of litera-

committee. I am especially grateful to my main supervisor, Annette Lassen, who not only read numerous drafts but also kindly provided images of several manuscripts I needed to consult. I also wish to thank Margaret Cormack for her insightful comments, and the anonymous peer reviewers for their valuable feedback and constructive suggestions.

- 8 Advancing new hypotheses concerning the literary form (*þáttir*) and genre (*fornaldarsögur* and *fornaldarþáttir*) of these texts is not among the aims of the present article as it would require a separate study. The debate surrounding these two main categories, form and genre, has been long and heated in medieval Icelandic scholarship – one can only hope that this contribution may in some way offer new insights on the matter from the perspective of a case-study focused on two *þáttir* commonly ascribed to *fornaldarsögur*. For further discussion of the challenges involved, see Bampi (2017) and the references in previous footnotes.
- 9 Regarding paper manuscripts, see the table at the end of this article (from *η* to *ν*): *NP* appears in fourteen manuscripts, while *HP* is found only in three (*η*, *ω*, and *σ*). For a detailed discussion of the editorial history of the *fornaldarsögur* corpus, see Lavender (2015), where it will be possible to ascertain the more pervasive presence in print of *NP* compared to *HP*.
- 10 For *NP*, see Hollander (1916); Panzer (1925); Harris (1980; 1987); Harris and Hill (1989); Sauer (1992); Würth (1993); Cipolla (1996a; 1996b); Imhoff (2007); McDonald Werronen (2011); Uspenskij (2012); Quintana (2013); Consagra (2025a). For *HP*, see Hamer (1973); Hermann Pálsson (1985); Power (1985; 1993); Rowe (2004); Kalinke (2011); Consagra (2024a; 2024b).

ture” (1973, 194). Furthermore, as Elizabeth Ashman Rowe has remarked, “*Helga þáttir* is considerably enriched when its pairing with *Norna-Gests þáttir* is taken into account” (2004, 468). She highlights how the two *þáttir* are connected through both parallels and contrasts, suggesting that *HÞ* may function as a “negative exemplum” of *NÞ*. This is particularly evident in the portrayals of the two eponymous characters, Norna-Gestr Þórðarson and Helgi Þórisson. The former is an old, generous warrior who decides of his own volition to visit Óláfr Tryggvason, whereas the latter is a greedy young trader who would rather dwell in Glasisvellir, a pagan realm far from the Christian king. At the end of their lives, they experience two specular destinies: both Norna-Gestr and Helgi die in circumstances that seem to be juxtaposed, the former in salvation and the latter in damnation.¹¹

In light of these observations, made some thirty years apart, a *recensio* of all Icelandic manuscripts containing *NÞ* and *HÞ* is necessary in order to shed light on the relationship between the two texts and its development throughout time. The investigation in the following sections will begin with the earliest vellum manuscripts, arguing that by considering the material and literary contexts in which they are first found, the two *þáttir* were originally intended to function as a pair.¹² Subsequently, this relationship will be further supported by an intertextual reference connecting the texts, followed by a chronological reconstruction of the events they depict. Following the thread that connects *NÞ* and *HÞ*, this article will then turn to an examination of the paper manuscripts.

The Oldest Parchment Manuscripts of *Norna-Gests þáttir* and *Helga þáttir Þórissonar*

If one examines the earliest attestations of *NÞ* and *HÞ*, there are four Icelandic vellum manuscripts in which both texts appear:¹³

- 11 For a reading of *HÞ* as a spiritual conflict between Christianity and paganism, see Consagra (2024b).
- 12 Due to space constraints, a detailed literary analysis of *NÞ* and *HÞ* cannot be provided here. This topic will be addressed in greater depth in a forthcoming article, which forms part of my doctoral dissertation.
- 13 All manuscript shelf-marks and dates referred to henceforth are those provided in the catalogue entries of the following databases: *Handrit* (handrit.is), *ONP: Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (onp.ku.dk), *Stories for All Time: The Icelandic Fornaldarsögur* (fasnl.net), and

α) GKS 1005 fol. (also known as Flateyjarbók), preserved at Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum (the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies) in Reykjavík, Iceland, and dated to the late fourteenth century, between 1387 and 1395. *NÞ* begins on line 34, column b of folio 45v and ends on line 57, column b of folio 47r; *HÞ* begins on line 57, column b of folio 47r and ends on line 49, column b of folio 47v.

β) AM 62 fol., preserved at Den Arnemagnæanske Samling (the Arnemagnæan Collection) in Copenhagen, Denmark, and dated to the late fourteenth century, between 1370 and 1400. *NÞ* begins on line 1, column b of folio 29r and ends on line 23, column a of folio 31v; *HÞ* begins on line 24, column a of folio 31v and ends on line 13, column b of folio 32r.¹⁴

γ) AM 309 4to (also known as Bæjarbók í Flóa), preserved at Den Arnemagnæanske Samling and dated to the late fifteenth century, around 1498. It is a copy of α. *NÞ* begins on line 29, column b of folio 23v and ends on line 24, column b of folio 25r; *HÞ* begins on line 24, column b of folio 25r and ends on line 8, column b of folio 25v.

δ) AM 54 fol. is preserved at Den Arnemagnæanske Samling and is dated to the late fourteenth century. However, the section of the manuscript containing *NÞ* and *HÞ* is a significantly younger supplement, written in the early sixteenth century, around 1510. *NÞ* begins on line 22, column a of folio 74v and ends on line 48, column a of folio 76r; *HÞ* begins on line 49, column a of folio 76r and ends on line 13, column b of folio 76v.

The Skaldic Project (skaldic.org). I would like to thank all the institutions across Europe that have provided me with scans of the manuscripts essential for this investigation. My sincere thanks go to Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum (Reykjavík, Iceland), Den Arnemagnæanske Samling (Copenhagen, Denmark), Kungliga biblioteket (Stockholm, Sweden), Universitetsbiblioteket (Oslo, Norway), Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn (Reykjavík, Iceland), and to all the helpful individuals at these institutions who assisted me in the demanding endeavour of collecting the necessary material. It should be noted that, given the number of manuscripts examined and their geographical dispersion across Europe, it was not feasible to account for codicological features such as quire structure, as doing so would have exceeded the scope of the present study.

14. It should be mentioned here that, in contrast to α, β does not label *NÞ* and *HÞ* as þættir, as Würth also points out: “Auch im AM 62 fol. überliefert, dort aber nicht als þáttir bezeichnet” (1991, 35).

This list provides an overview of how the two *þættir* are materially engaged with each other. First, the two texts consistently appear one next to the other, and they are always embedded within the narratological framework of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. Second, *NP* always precedes *HP*, never the other way around, and no other texts are interposed between them. This suggests that the two *þættir* never originally existed as independent narratives. On the contrary, it may be argued that the compiler or editor of the longest saga about Óláfr Tryggvason created and inserted these two stories as a metaphorical diptych, intended from the outset to be two inseparable parts of a whole.¹⁵

A diptych is an object composed of two panels that together form a paired set, a concept well known in medieval religious figurative art. It is likely that a scribe, editor, compiler, or any erudite individual in fourteenth-century Iceland would have been familiar with this idea. This seems especially plausible given that the anonymous person responsible for interpolating *NP* and *HP* was engaged in an endeavour of considerable religious significance: the creation of the longest saga about the first Norwegian king who actively attempted to convert his country to Christianity and who was, also in part, responsible for Iceland's conversion. It was the Icelanders, in fact, who regarded Óláfr Tryggvason as the "Apostle of the North" and who, from as early as the twelfth century, began a long tradition of saga writing about him. This tradition ultimately culminated in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, where he was no longer portrayed merely as a historical character of Scandinavian historiography but reimagined as a saintly figure through whose influence Iceland had embraced Christianity. In light of this, supposing a skilful and creative compilation practice on the part of the individual who embedded these texts within the broader context of Óláfr Tryggvason's biography does not appear too implausible.¹⁶

15 In this case in particular, in the D redaction of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. Ólafur Halldórsson argued that α and β , the oldest manuscripts containing the D redaction, stem from the same source: "Texti ÓlTr í 62 er náskyldur þeim sem varðveittur er í Flateyjarbók, en þó er hvorugt handritið skrifað eftir hinu, heldur eiga þau sameiginlegt foreldri" (1963, 85).

16 A similar parallel in the Old Norse literary world has been suggested by Hallvard Lie, who argued that "Skaldenes karakteristiske syntaks betegner et språkkunstnerisk entrelacfenomen i nærmeste slekt med samtidens ornamentale kunstform" (1982, 224). Just as skaldic poetry – with its intricate *kenningar* and syntax – mirrors the complex interlacing of wood, stone, or metal typical of Viking Age visual art, so too might the literary composition of *NP* and *HP* evoke the diptychs used in churches across Scandinavia and Iceland following their conversion to Christianity.

To further substantiate the extant relationship between the two *þættir*, there is an additional element that emerges only through a close examination of the text of *NP*. As briefly noted by Hamer (1973, 204), when one carefully reads the tale of Norna-Gestr, there is one passage that, if interpreted in the light of the previous observations, serves to corroborate the connection between the two *þættir* suggested here:

Svá segja menn, at Gestr þessi kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis Óláfs konungs til hans. Á því ári kómu ok til hans þeir menn, er Grímar hétu ok váru sendir af Guðmundi af Glasisvöllum. Þeir færðu konungi horn tvau er Guðmundr gaf honum. Þau kólluðu þeir ok Gríma. Þeir hófðu ok fleiri erendi til konungs, sem síðar mun sagt verða.¹⁷

[People say that this Gestr came in the third year of King Óláfr's reign. In that same year, there also came to him those men who were both called Grímr (pl. *Grímar*), who had been sent by Guðmundr of Glasisvellir. They brought to the king two horns, which Guðmundr had given him; these horns were both called Grímr as well. The two envoys also had other errands for the king, which will be told later.]

17 Henceforth, references to the manuscripts (my transcription) will be reported in footnotes according to the following nomenclature: *number* (folio/page); *r/v* (side, if foliated); *a/b* (column, if present); *number* (line). When necessary, quotes will be reported in standardised Old Icelandic (my standardisation) and/or in English (my translation). *α*: <lua feigia menn at g(estr) þessi kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis ol(afs) konungf til hans | a því are komu ok til hans þeir menn er grímar hetu ok voru sendir af guðmunde | af glafif uðllum þeir færðu konungi hornn ij er guðmundr gaf honum þau | kolluðu þeir ok gríma þeir hófðu ok flæire eyrende til konungf sem síðar mun | sagt uerða> (f. 46ra7–11). *β*: <sva fl(egia) menn at þessi geftr kæmi til olafs konungf a iij ári ríkis ol(afs). a því ári er ok | fl(agt) at þeir menn kæmi til konungf er grímar h(etu) ok sendir af guðmundi af glafif | völlum. þeir færðu konungi horn ij er guðmundr gaf konungi þau koll(udu) þeir ok gríma | þeir hófðu ok fleiri eyrendi til ol(afs) konungf sem síðan mun sagt verða> (f. 29rb27–30). *γ*: <lua feigia menn at g(estr) þessi kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis ol(afs) konungf til hans | a því ári komu ok til hans þeir menn er grímar hetu ok voru sendir af guðmun || dí af glæfif uðllum. þeir færðu konungi horn ij er guðmundr gaf honum. þau | kolluðu þeir ok gríma. þeir hófðu ok fleiri erendi til konungf sem síðar mun | sagt verða> (ff. 23vb56–24ra3). *δ*: <suo feigia || menn ad þessi g(estr) kæmi til k(onungs) a þriðia are ríkis hans. a því are er ok fl(agt) ad | þeir menn kæmi til k(onungs) er grímar nefnduz sendir af guðmundi a glæfis | völlum. þeir færðu k(onungi) horn tuo er go(dmundr) gaf k(onungi) þau kollodo ok þeir gríma | þeir hófðu ok flæire erendi til O(lafs) k(onungs) sem síðar mun fl(agt) verða> (f. 74va47–b4).

The incident referred to in this passage of *NP* alludes to a scene that takes place in *HP*, in which Guðmundr of Glasisvellir sends his two envoys to visit Óláfr Tryggvason. This cross-reference, which may well go unnoticed, takes on a different significance when considered in light of the manuscripts discussed above, thus representing another piece of evidence attesting the close relationship between *NP* and *HP*. Not only does this passage provide chronological coordinates that situate the stories of Norna-Gestr and Helgi Þórisson within a specific moment of King Óláfr Tryggvason's reign,¹⁸ but it also inextricably links the two *þáttir* through a cross-reference that functions as a hinge, connecting the two panels of the metaphorical diptych outlined above. While convenient for the purposes of the present investigation, the internal chronology of the two *þáttir* nonetheless warrants specific consideration.

An Entangled Series of Incredible Events

The events depicted in *NP* and *HP* may appear implausible to a modern reader and fall short of contemporary standards of historical credibility. Consequently, as previously noted, the two *þáttir* have generally been considered as belonging to the corpus of *fornaldarsögur*. However, as testified by the oldest manuscripts that preserve them, *NP* and *HP* are embedded within one of the *konungasögur* – a saga genre traditionally regarded, in contrast to legendary sagas, as historical. It is important not to assume that events that might sound incredible to modern readers were perceived in the same way by a medieval audience. In particular, within the context of the saga on the first Norwegian king who promoted Christianity – arguably closer to hagiography than to historiography – the question of truth-

18 Norna-Gestr is said to arrive at Óláfr Tryggvason's court in the third year of his reign, which Adele Cipolla (1996a, 174 n.34) interprets as 997–998. The two envoys from Glasisvellir are reported to arrive at the Norwegian court at Álfreksstaðir on the eighth day of Christmas of that same year. As will be demonstrated below, their visit must have been conceived as preceding Norna-Gestr's arrival. If the opposite were true, it would imply that Óláfr Tryggvason was present in both Álfreksstaðir and Þrándheimr on the eighth day of Christmas in the following year – an impossibility, given the considerable distance between the two locations and the fact that the king was not credited with the gift of ubiquity. Although the reference in the *þáttir* is slightly ambiguous in this respect, the chronological reconstruction provided below will clarify the sequence of events.

value may well have receded into the background.¹⁹ Jón Þórðarson, the scribe who was hired to write most of Flateyjarbók, offers an explanation for the inclusion of *exempla* (*ævintýri*) in his work as part of the introduction of a *þáttir* belonging to another king's saga:

En þó at hér standi í mörg þau ævintýr, sem eigi þykkir skilvísliga við söguna koma í upphafi, ok koma þó öll í einn stað niðr, áðr lúki, því at þau hníga ok hallast öll til vegs ok virðingar hinum heilaga Ólafi, annathvært sakir jarteignagörðar eðr frægðar ok framaverka, einarðar eðr öruggleiks, sem enn mun lýsast í eftirfaranda efni ok ævintýri.²⁰

[Although here stand many tales which may not appear relevant to the saga at the beginning, they all come to the same place before their endings, for they all kneel before the Holy Óláfr and contribute to his honour and dignity, either by means of miracles, or glory and feats, fairness or fearlessness, upon which light is going to be shed in the following material and tales.]

Although this explanation is provided in the context of Óláfr helgi's biography, there is no reason to consider it unsuitable for texts embedded within the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason as well; after all, the biographies of both Norwegian kings in Flateyjarbók were copied by Jón Þórðarson. Moreover, if *NP* and *HP* are understood as *exempla*, their function within the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason becomes even more evident from a religious perspective.²¹

19 Cf. O'Connor, who argues that "[N]eat boundaries were much more messy in the Middle Ages, and *historia* could cover a multitude of sins [...] In Iceland, texts like the longer versions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* show that *historia* could embrace wonder-tales" (2009, 366). For a discussion of the relationship between legendary sagas and historical writings, see Lassen (2012), and for how *NP* might have been perceived as "historical" in the Middle Ages, cf. Sverrir Jakobsson (2005, 209–213). On the comparison between *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and hagiography, cf. Würth: "Die politische *ævisaga* wandelt sich zur *lífs saga* eines potentiellen Heiligen" (1991, 56) and Zernack (1998).

20 The passage cited is from the introduction to *Ásbjarnar þáttur Selsbana* (Flateyjarbók II, 322).

21 Ciklamini (1997) offers a comparison of certain Old Norse texts to medieval *exempla*. I am currently preparing a separate article that specifically compares *NP* and *HP* with the broader tradition of the European *exemplum*.

Be that as it may, verifying the historical veracity of the two *þettir* is not among the aims of this article, nor is determining whether they were regarded as historically authentic by a medieval audience. What can be stated with certainty, however, is that the episode in *HP* referred to above – the visit of the two envoys from Glasisvellir to Óláfr Tryggvason – allow us to pinpoint the time of Norna-Gestr's arrival at the king's court. If textual cues are followed, it becomes possible to reconstruct the internal chronology of the two *þettir* as follows:²²

996 – (*HP*) During the summer, Helgi meets Ingibjörg, the daughter of Guðmundr of Glasisvellir, in a forest near Finnmörk. They spend three days together, eating, drinking, and sharing a bed. When they part, Ingibjörg gives Helgi two chests, one filled with gold, the other with silver, on the condition that he tell no one of their origin. Helgi uses part of the treasure to embellish his ship with a dragon head and hides the remaining gold and silver aboard. Around Christmas that year, a violent storm strikes the harbour, threatening the ship. As Helgi and his brother Þorsteinn go to ensure it is secure, they hear a crack, and two men abduct Helgi. After this, the storm subsides. When Helgi's father, the *hersir* Þórir, learns of the event, he visits Óláfr Tryggvason to seek help in finding his son.

997 – (*HP*) On the eighth day of Christmas,²³ three men arrive at King Óláfr Tryggvason's court in Álreksstaðir: one is Helgi, the other two are both named Grímr, and claim to have been sent by Guðmundr of Glasisvellir with his greetings and an offer of friendship. They present

22 Cf. *FASN* I, 305–335 (*NP*) and *FASN* IV, 345–353 (*HP*). It should be noted that the chronology adopted here follows the modern Gregorian calendar, in which the year begins on 1 January. This choice was made to ensure clarity and avoid potential misunderstandings. However, in order to provide the reconstruction presented below, it was necessary to consult sources that could provide insight into how the calendar year was structured in medieval Iceland, as the Gregorian calendar was not introduced until the sixteenth century. See in particular Larsson (1883, 9) and Beckman and Kålund (1914–1916, 8). Moreover, an earlier passage of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* in *Flateyjarbók* offers insight into the timing of *jól* celebrations: “Hann [Hákon konungr] skipaði þat í lögum at hefja jólahald þann tíma sem kristnir menn [...] en áðr var jólahald haft miðsveitarnótt, ok váru þá haldin þriggja náttu jól”, *Flateyjarbók* I, 56.

23 This is the event from *HP* referred to in the cross-reference examined above in *NP*, and it is said to have occurred on 1 January. As demonstrated in the previous note, *jól* was celebrated at the same time by both pagans and Christians during this period, so it can be reasonably assumed that the eighth day of Christmas corresponds to 1 January. As will be shown below, this same date recurs several times in the chronological structure of the two *þettir*.

the king with two exquisitely crafted golden drinking horns, which are also both named Grímr.²⁴ King Óláfr welcomes his guests and offers them seats, while the bishop blesses the horns. Upon seeing this, the two envoys angrily stand up, pour the drinks onto the floor, and extinguish the lights in the hall. A loud crack is then heard, after which the guests from Glasisvellir, along with Helgi, vanish. When a light is kindled, three men are found lying dead on the floor of the hall, with the two golden horns placed beside them. King Óláfr remarks that he has heard of Guðmundr of Glasisvellir, noting that he is skilled in the magical arts and considered dangerous. Following the incident, the king instructs his men to keep the horns and continue drinking from them, as they no longer pose any threat.

(NP) At an unspecified point in the same year, probably prior to wintertime,²⁵ Norna-Gestr arrives late in the day at Óláfr Tryggvason's court in Þrándheimr, where he is welcomed among the *gestir*, the lower-ranking members of the king's retinue.²⁶ That night, the Christian king witnesses an elf or spirit entering the house, despite the doors being locked. The next day, Óláfr learns that Norna-Gestr is not baptised, only prime-signed, which explains how the spirit was able to enter the house

24 As this episode demonstrates, the *þátrr* plays on the names of the two emissaries and the two horns, all of which are called Grímr. Jaqueline Simpson has drawn a parallel between *HP* and *Þorsteins þátrr bæjarmagns*: "These horns [the Grímar] come and go mysteriously like the Hvítar Horns of *Þorsteins þátrr [bæjarmagns]*, and, like them, are bound up with the fate of Óláfr Tryggvason; they are in possession of Guðmundr of Glæsisvellir, and at the same time it is clear from the fact that they are both named Grímr and are carried by two men also named Grímr that they must be rationalized and reduplicated variants of Grímr the Good [...]. Both stories seem to imply some form of perilous test administered by an established king to a younger rival; if the latter survives, possession of the horn is the symbol of his victory" (1963, 510). Cf. footnote 26 for similar wordplay in *NP*.

25 This can be inferred from Norna-Gestr's request to remain at the king's court. All redactions preserved in vellum manuscripts, though varying slightly, convey the idea that Norna-Gestr asks Óláfr for permission to stay among his men. The custom whereby strangers might request hospitality at court for the duration of a winter, in exchange for entertainment, is attested in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus (Boberg 1966, 214, P320.1.; 215, PP337.). *α*: <hann bidr konung at dueliázft þa læingr med hirdinn | e> (f. 45vb56–57); *β*: <hann bidr konung | at dveliaz þar vm hrid> (f. 29rb15–16); *γ*: <hann bidr konung at dueliáz þar le | ngr med hirdinne> (f. 23vb48–49); *δ*: <hann bidur konung ad hann megi du | eliazk med hird> (f. 74va37–38).

26 It is interesting to note here the interplay between the character's name, Norna-Gestr, his request to be a *gestr* (guest) at the king's court, and the position he is granted among the *gestir* – that is, not among the *hird*, the king's retinue. Cf. footnote 24 regarding wordplay in *HP*.

during the night. When Norna-Gestr asks to remain at the king's court, his request is granted on the condition that he undergoes baptism.

998 – (*NP*) Shortly before Christmas, Úlfr inn rauði returns to Óláfr Tryggvason's court bearing many gifts. He had spent the summer running errands for the king and defended Vík against Danish attacks in the autumn.

(*HP*) On the eighth day of Christmas,²⁷ while King Óláfr Tryggvason is attending mass, three men appear at the church's entrance.²⁸ Two of them leave immediately, but the third, recognised as Helgi, remains. It soon becomes apparent that he is blind. King Óláfr and Helgi Þórisson engage in a conversation in which Helgi recounts the events of the preceding years, including his encounter with Ingibjörg in the woods and his subsequent abduction during the storm. Óláfr Tryggvason then asks about Guðmundr's realm, and Helgi replies that he has never seen a better place. The king wonders why Helgi has returned twice from Glasisvellir if it was so delightful; Helgi explains that it was the power of the king's prayers that brought him back. Helgi reveals that, during his visit to the court the previous year, the two envoys had been sent by Guðmundr of Glasisvellir to deceive Óláfr Tryggvason. However, their plan failed because the king recognised the danger and acted wisely by having the horns blessed. Helgi further explains that he was sent away from Glasisvellir this year because Ingibjörg was no longer able to sleep with him without suffering when she touched his naked body, and because Guðmundr could no longer withstand King Óláfr Tryggvason's prayers. Furthermore, Ingibjörg had clawed out Helgi's eyes, claiming that the women of Norway would not have enjoyed him for long. After this conversation, Þórir reunites with his son and thanks the king for rescuing him from "the hands of the trolls". Helgi then remains at the king's court for another year.

(*NP*) On the same day, on the eighth day of Christmas,²⁹ while Óláfr Tryggvason is at his court in Þrándheimr, Úlfr inn rauði presents him

27 This should correspond to 1 January, following the chronological framework outlined above.

28 Although the *þáttr* does not specify the location of this event, it must have occurred in Þrándheimr, unlike the previous year's incident, which explicitly took place in Álreksstaðir. This is supported by the subsequent episode reported in *NP* on the same day (see the following footnote).

29 This scene described in *NP* takes place on 1 January in Þrándheimr, the same day and location as the episode previously recounted in *HP* (see preceding two footnotes).

with the golden ring *Hnituðr* as a gift. This splendid artefact, said to have once belonged to King Hálfir,³⁰ is passed around among the men attending the celebration. While everyone is impressed by its beauty, Norna-Gestr does not seem to find anything extraordinary in it, claiming to have seen finer gold. The other *gestir*, appalled by this reaction, challenge him to a wager to determine whether he has truly seen gold more magnificent than that of *Hnituðr*. After this, Norna-Gestr performs *Gunnarsslagr* and *Guðrúnarbrögð in fornu* on his harp. The following day, Norna-Gestr presents a golden piece from Sigurðr Fáfnisbani's saddle ring, which proves to be of superior quality to the ring *Hnituðr*. King Óláfr Tryggvason, acting as judge, declares that Norna-Gestr has won the wager. Intrigued by this turn of events, the king asks to hear more of his guest's story. Norna-Gestr begins to recount his adventures as a retainer of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, reciting stanzas from *Reginsmál* as part of his narration.³¹ During his performance, he also explains how he came into possession of the precious item that secured his victory in the wager. On the following day, Norna-Gestr continues with the tale of the aftermath of Sigurðr's death, quoting verses from *Helreið Brynhildar* as well.³² After this, King Óláfr Tryggvason asks his guest about the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók, whom Norna-Gestr claims to have met during his lifetime. His account corresponds to a scene also found in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*.³³ Finally, the guest explains the origin of

30 This is Hálfir Hjörleifsson, the eponymous hero of *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*, a *fornaldarsaga* (FASN II, 93–134). In this context, the reference appears to serve as a deliberate contrast to another renowned legendary saga, *Völsunga saga* (FASN I, 107–218). Norna-Gestr not only recounts this story but also presents an even more splendid and prestigious artefactual witness, superior to the ring *Hnituðr*, said to have belonged to none other than Sigurðr Fáfnisbani himself, the main character of *Völsunga saga*. Later in *Flateyjarbók*, another *þáttir* embedded within *Óláfs saga helga*, *Tóka þáttir Tókasonar* (FASN II, 135–141), will also mention King Hálfir, see Consagra (2025b).

31 Norna-Gestr recites fourteen stanzas from *Reginsmál*. The first six, corresponding to stanzas XIII–XVIII, are composed in *fornyrðislag*, while the remaining eight, corresponding to stanzas XIX–XXVI, are in *ljóðaháttir*.

32 *Helreið Brynhildar* is recited by Norna-Gestr almost in its entirety – that is, thirteen stanzas, with the exception of *helmingr* 7. All of the stanzas are composed in *fornyrðislag*.

33 The events reported here by Norna-Gestr broadly correspond – with some variation – to chapters XIV and XV of *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* (FASN I, 219–285), in which Ragnarr's sons set out to raid Rome but encounter an old man along the way. When they ask him how long the road to Rome is, he shows them his worn shoes, prompting them to realise that the journey is too long and abandon their plan. In *NP*, Óláfr Tryggvason remarks that this old man must have been a spirit sent by God to protect one of Christianity's most sacred places (FASN I, 332).

his name: at his birth, a Norn cursed him so that his lifespan would last no longer than the burning of a candle placed beside his cradle. To protect him, his mother extinguished the flame and hid the candle. Because it remained unlit, Norna-Gestr lived for over three hundred years, allowing him to encounter figures such as Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók, and other illustrious kings. Upon completing his tale, Óláfr Tryggvason offers to have him baptised, and Norna-Gestr accepts. Later, at an unspecified point in the year, the candle is rekindled and he dies, thus fulfilling the prophecy uttered by the Norn when he was a child.

999 – (*HP*) Helgi Þórisson dies at King Óláfr Tryggvason's court, thus fulfilling Ingibjörg's vengeful prophecy. The *þáttir* concludes by noting that Óláfr Tryggvason took with him the two horns gifted by Guðmundr when he set out to sea for the last time. These mysterious objects vanished along with the king when he disappeared from the ship *Ormrinn langi*.³⁴

As can be surmised from the sequence of events outlined above, the chronology of *NP* and *HP* can hardly be considered haphazard. The scenes in the two *þáttir* occur in close temporal succession, culminating in the deaths of Norna-Gestr and Helgi, a reference to the battle of Svǫldr, and Óláfr Tryggvason's disappearance from the ship *Ormrinn langi*. While, as noted above, the events in these *þáttir* may be difficult to regard as historically credible by modern standards, this paper does not seek to assess their historicity. Rather, the primary concern is how these two *þáttir*, influenced by legendary material and likely intended as *exempla*, are related to one another and ultimately integrated within *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*.

To summarise, three main elements – supported by observations from previous scholars – strongly indicate a close interrelation between *NP* and *HP*. First, the oldest parchment manuscripts containing the two *þáttir* (α , β , γ , and δ) consistently present them together, embedded within *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, in the same sequence and without any other text interposed between them. Second, all these manuscripts feature the same cross-reference, thereby inextricably connecting the two stories through an allusion from the former to the latter. Third, the intertwined chronology of events in both tales further reinforces their close connection.

34 According to the biography of the Norwegian king, this event is said to have taken place in September of the same year, during the battle of Svǫldr. See footnote 24 for a commentary on the disappearance of the horns.

Consequently, it is reasonable to hypothesise, as argued above, that the two *þættir* were originally conceived as two metaphorical panels forming a unified literary diptych. While the relationship between the two texts was clear during the first phase of their textual transmission (here represented by α , β , γ , and δ), this connection appears to have been lost in younger manuscripts, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

Two Parchment Manuscripts of *Norna-Gests þáttir* without *Helga þáttir Þórissonar*

In addition to the four codices mentioned above, there are two other parchment manuscripts that warrant separate examination:

ε) GKS 2845 4to, preserved at Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, between 1440 and 1460. *NP* begins on line 5 of folio 13r and ends on line 18 of folio 19v; it is immediately followed by *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar*, but *HP* is not included in this manuscript.

ζ) AM 567 V 4to, preserved at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, dates from the latter half of the fifteenth century, between 1450 and 1500. This fragmentary codex preserves only the second half of *NP*, which begins on line 1 of folio 1r and ends on line 22 of folio 6r, and the beginning of *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar*. Consequently, *HP* is absent where it would normally be expected.

These are the only other parchment manuscripts containing one of the two *þættir* examined in this article: both preserve *NP* without including *HP*. In each case, *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar* immediately follows the tale of *Norna-Gestr*.³⁵

The reason for excluding ϵ and ζ from the previous group of manuscripts is that neither contains *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* nor any other version of Óláfr Tryggvason's biography. The former is a composite

³⁵ The fact that *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar* follows *NP* in both manuscripts, which date relatively close to each other in the fifteenth century, is tantalising; however, further exploration of this point lies beyond the scope of the present article.

collection of various texts (*NP* is preceded, for example, by *Bandamanna saga*, an *Íslendingasaga*),³⁶ while the latter is too fragmentary to determine whether it ever included any version of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*.³⁷ The nature of these manuscripts notwithstanding, the central question here is whether the previously discussed cross-reference – the one pointing to the events of *HP* – appears in these two versions of *NP*. On folio 13v, ϵ reports the same passage as found in the other vellum manuscripts examined previously.³⁸ However, in this case, the cross-reference does not lead to any other text, as *HP* is not included in the manuscript; the statement “síðar mun sagt verða” (‘will be told later’) thus hangs unresolved – like a diptych left with one panel and its hinges, but missing the second part. In the case of ζ , a lacuna covers the first part of *NP*, making it impossible to ascertain whether the cross-reference to *HP* had ever been included.

It may therefore be inferred that ϵ and ζ mark the beginning of a second phase in the transmission of *NP*, in which the *þáttir* has gained the status of an independent text. This is evidenced by two main points: first, *NP* is no longer embedded within *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*; second, *HP* is not transmitted alongside it. Both features stand in clear contrast to what was observed in the first phase of transmission, as represented by α , β , γ , and δ .

That *þáttir* began to circulate as independent texts as early as the fifteenth century has already been noted in scholarship, and it is therefore not unusual in itself.³⁹ However, if *NP* and *HP* were originally intended

36 Cf. Jón Helgason (1955).

37 It is therefore impossible, at present, to put forward any definitive suggestion in this regard; however, it seems highly unlikely that ζ originally contained any version of Óláfr Tryggvason’s life. *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar*, like *NP* and *HP*, is embedded in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, but it appears later in the narrative (in *Flateyjarbók*, for instance, *NP* and *HP* are found on ff. 45v and 47v, whereas *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar* appears on ff. 69v–71r).

38 ϵ : <suo feigia menn at a(estr) þessi kæmi a þridia ari rikif ol(afs) | konungf a þuí ari komo ok til hans tueir menn er grimar hetu ok uoru fendir | af godmundi af glafif uollum þeir færdu konungi horn tau [sic!] er god | mundr gaf honum þau kailludu þeir ok gríma þeir hofdu ok fleiri er | inndi til konungf fem siþar mun fagt uerda> (f. 13v11–15).

39 Cf. Lönnroth, who maintains that “[T]he word *þáttir* was never used in the sense of an independent short story until the 15th century” (1975, 423). Würth quotes Lönnroth and concurs, arguing that “Eine selbständige Überlieferung der *þáttir* [der *Flateyjarbók*] setzt erst im 15. Jahrhundert ein” (1991, 37). More recently, Ármann Jakobsson has similarly stated that “[I]n the fifteenth century [...] signs of a new independence of the *þáttir* started to appear” (2013, 283).

to function as a pair, it is significant to emphasise that gaining the status of independent text entails the loss of the larger literary framework provided by *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. To return to the metaphor of the diptych, the two panels begin to appear as stand-alone, separate units – though some vestige of their connection still remains. The following sections will examine paper manuscripts in order to clarify how the relationship between *NP* and *HP* evolved during this second phase of transmission, when the two began to appear separated from each other and from their original context. This will be done primarily by tracing the intertextual reference from *NP* to *HP* discussed above.

Paper Manuscripts from the Seventeenth Century

No sixteenth-century manuscripts containing *NP* or *HP* have survived – if they ever existed at all. To find further witnesses beyond the parchment manuscripts examined so far, one must turn to seventeenth-century paper manuscripts:

η) AM 313 4to, preserved at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling and dated around 1657, is the only surviving seventeenth-century paper manuscript containing both *NP* (between pages 170 and 199) and *HP* (between pages 301 and 310). Although both *þættir* are included, they do not appear consecutively; rather, around one hundred pages separate them.⁴⁰

θ) AM 202 i fol., preserved at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, contains two versions of *NP* (θ^1 and θ^2), originally from different manuscripts but both dated to the seventeenth century. In θ^1 , *NP* begins on folio 1r and ends on folio 8v; in θ^2 , it begins on folio 9r and ends on folio 12v.

ι) AM 65 fol. is preserved at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling and is dated between 1625 and 1672. *NP* begins on folio 348r and ends on folio 363v.

κ) Holm Papp. 5 4to is preserved at the Kungliga biblioteket (the Swedish Royal Library) in Stockholm, Sweden, and is dated between 1630 and

40 *Indriða þáttir ilbreiðs* (pp. 201–236), *Þorsteins þáttir uxafóts* (pp. 239–276), and *Sörla þáttir* (pp. 277–299) are the texts inserted between *NP* and *HP* in this codex.

1670; it is a copy of ϵ . $N\mathcal{P}$ is preserved between line 15 of folio 122r and line 14 of folio 126v.

λ) Holm Papp. 22 fol. (known as Húsafellsbók) is preserved at the Kungliga biblioteket and is dated shortly before the middle of the seventeenth century. $N\mathcal{P}$ begins on line 21 of folio 72r and ends on line 10 of 73v.⁴¹

μ) Holm Papp. 15 4to, preserved at the Kungliga biblioteket and dated between 1650 and 1700, is, like κ , a copy of ϵ . $N\mathcal{P}$ begins on folio 9r and ends on folio 14r.

ν) AM 348 4to is preserved at Den Arnamagnæanske Samling and is dated between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, between 1688 and 1730. $N\mathcal{P}$ is preserved between folia 1r and 25v.

As can be observed, of these seven manuscripts, only η contains both $N\mathcal{P}$ and $H\mathcal{P}$. Upon close examination, it is evident that the previously discussed cross-reference from $N\mathcal{P}$ to $H\mathcal{P}$ is included in η , although this comes with two caveats. First, the reference is shorter and less detailed than the other versions – whether preserved in older, contemporary, or younger manuscripts. Second, the sentence explicitly refers to $H\mathcal{P}$ by mentioning its title (*Saga Helga Þórissonar*), a feature not paralleled in any of the other manuscripts examined in this study.⁴²

Among the various codices discussed here, λ stands out as an exception, as it preserves a significantly abridged version of $N\mathcal{P}$ – more akin to a summary than a full rendering. The cross-reference to $H\mathcal{P}$ is virtually absent; the only narrative detail provided concerns the timing of Norna-Gestr's visit, with no mention at all of the events recounted in $H\mathcal{P}$.⁴³

41 It should be noted here that none of the databases consulted for this investigation list this manuscript among those containing $N\mathcal{P}$; its existence came to my attention purely by chance.

42 η : <So feigja menn að geftur þefse | hefde komet á þridia áre rykis olafs kongs | á þui fama áre komu Grymar þeir er fende | Godmundur kongur a Glæfers uollum fém | seiger J fogu Helga þorer fónar> (p. 172, 17–21). It is worth noting that the reference mentions a “saga” of Helgi Þórisson, whereas the text is elsewhere more commonly referred to as a *þáttur*. A look at the titles of both *þáttir* in η reveals that they are designated as “sögu þáttur”: <Saugu þáttur Af norna Giefte> (p. 170) and <Hier Biriast sögu þáttur af þorfeine og Helga Norskum> (p. 301).

43 λ : <Gestur kom til k(onungs) a | þridia áre Rijki hans> (f. 72r32–33).

A particularly interesting case is θ , which uniquely contains two versions of *NP* originating from different sources. The first version, θ^1 , includes the phrase “síðar mun sagt verða” (‘will be told later’),⁴⁴ thereby referring to a subsequent text. In contrast, the second version, θ^2 , does not allude to any forthcoming account, although its reference remains similar to the others in mentioning events from *HP*.⁴⁵ Instead, θ^2 provides chronological information that aligns well with the reconstruction of events presented above. Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain whether either θ^1 or θ^2 was originally preserved alongside *HP* in their respective manuscripts.

Of the remaining manuscripts, ι , κ , μ , and ν all include the cross-reference to the events of *HP* as described above, without any significant variation. With regard to κ and μ , this outcome is to be expected, given that they are copies of ϵ . Although the sources for ι and ν are unknown, their cross-references are almost identical to those found in κ and μ .⁴⁶

Finally, it is necessary to mention another seventeenth-century paper manuscript:

- 44 θ^1 : <Suo segia menn ad Gieftur | þesse kiæme á þridia Are rykif Olaffs k(onungs) Tryggva sonar | A því Are komu og til hans tveir menn er Grymar hietu | og voru fender aff Godmunde a Glæfesuöllum þeir | færdu konge tvo horn er Godm(undur) gaff honum þau koll | udu þeir og Gryma þeir höfðu og fleyre erende til kongs | sem fydar mun sagt verda> (f. 1v10–16).
- 45 θ^2 : <fo segia menn ad G(estur) þessi kiami á 3^{ia} rijkis ári Ólafs k(onungs) á því fama ari komu 2 | menn til hans er Grimar hetu og voru fendir af Godmundi á Glæfisvöllum, þeir færdu k(onungi) horn 2 er Godmundur gaf | honum þeir kolludu þau og Grima. þeir höfðu og fleire erindi til k(onungs). Anno 998 var artal 3^{ia} árs rijkis | Ol(afs) k(onungs)> (f. 9r22–25).
- 46 ι : <Suo feigia menn ath Gefstur þesse kiæme | a þridia Are rikis Olafs konungs. A því | are komu oc til hans tveir menn er Grimar | hietu. Oc voru fennðir af Godmunde a | Glæfes völlum: þeir færðu konge tvo | horn er Godmundr gaf honum: þau kaull | udu þeir oc Grima. þeir haufðu oc fleire | eyrende til kóngs sem sþar mun sagt | verda> (f. 349v4–12). κ : <So Seigia menn ad giestur | þessi kiæmi a 3^a ári rijkis olaff kongs á því sama ári komu og til | hans ij menn er Grijmar hietu. og voru sendir aff Godmundi af Glæsis völlum þeir | færdu kongi horn ij er Godm(undur) gaff honum þau kölludu þeir og Grijma þeir hoff | du og fleiri erende til kongs sem sijdar mun sagt verda> (f. 122v8–12). μ : <So segia menn ad giestur [kom] a þridia ari riis olafs konungf á | því ari komu og til hans 2 menn er Grijmar hietu og varu fendir af godmundi af | Glæfis völlum þeir færdu konungi horn tvo er Godmundur gaf honum þau | Kolludu þeir og Grijma þeir hofðu og fleiri erindi til konungs sem sijdar mun sagt verda> (f. 9v3–6). ν : <fva segia | menn at G(estr) þessi kæmi a þridia | ari rikis Ol(afs) konungs til hans, a því | ari komu ok til hans þeir menn er || grimar hetu, ok voru fendir af Guðm | undi a Glafis völlum þeir færðu konungi | horn ij er Guðm(undur) gaf honum þau kol | luðu þeir grima. þeir hofðu ok fleiri | eyrendi til konungs sem sþar mun | sagt verða> (ff. 2v15–3r6).

ω) Holm Papp. 9 4to, preserved at the Kungliga biblioteket, is the only codex in which *HÞ* is attested without *NÞ*, representing the sole witness of *HÞ* as an independent *þáttir*. However, since the manuscripts surveyed in this study are analysed primarily through the cross-reference from *NÞ* to *HÞ* – which is unidirectional – it is not necessary to discuss this codex further.

Paper Manuscripts from the Eighteenth Century Onwards

There are seven additional, younger manuscripts containing *NÞ* and *HÞ*, dated from the early eighteenth century through to the early twentieth century:

ξ) NB, Ms. fol. 246 II (also catalogued as UB 246 fol.) is preserved at Universitetsbiblioteket (University Library) in Oslo, Norway, and dates from the eighteenth century. It is a copy of θ^1 , with *NÞ* beginning on page 1 and ending on page 34.

ο) NKS 1223 fol., preserved at Det Kongelige Bibliotek (the Danish Royal Library) in Copenhagen, Denmark, is dated to the eighteenth century. *NÞ* begins on page 1 and ends on page 18; it is followed by a Danish translation of the text.

π) NKS 1150 fol., preserved at Det Kongelige Bibliotek and dated between 1750 and 1799, is a copy of ι . *NÞ* begins on page 1 and ends on page 45.

ρ) NKS 1766 4to, preserved at Det Kongelige Bibliotek, is dated between 1750 and 1799. *NÞ* begins on page 77 and ends on page 146.

σ) Lbs 2145 8vo, preserved at Landsbókasafn Íslands (the National Library of Iceland) in Reykjavík, dates from circa 1801. It is the only known nineteenth-century paper manuscript to contain both *NÞ* (pages 295–324) and *HÞ* (pages 325–330), with the two texts preserved consecutively.

τ) Lbs 1496 4to, preserved at Landsbókasafn Íslands, dates from circa 1883. *NÞ* begins on page 5 and ends on page 33.

v) SÁM 4, preserved at Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, is dated between 1890 and 1910. *NP* begins on page 521 and ends on page 548.

Examining the cross-reference to *HP* in these manuscripts, one observes that ξ , o , π , ρ , σ , and v are nearly identical.⁴⁷ Of these, only σ preserves both *þættir* together. However, a closer inspection of the cross-reference in τ reveals a slight divergence from other attestations.⁴⁸ Instead of alluding to events that “síðar mun sagt verða” (‘will be told later’), as is commonly found in most other manuscripts, τ uniquely states that the events concerning the envoys from Glasisvellir are recounted “í öðrum stað” (‘in another place’).

47 ξ : <Svo segia menn að Geftr | þessi kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis Ólafs | konungs Tryggvafonar. á því ári komu | til hans tveir menn er Grímar hetu | og voru sendir af Goðmundi á Glæfis- | völlum. þeir færðu konungi tvo horn | er Goðmundr gaf honum þau kolluðu | þeir og Gríma. þeir höfðu og fleiri | erendi til konungs sem síðar mun | sagt verða> (p. 3, 16–25). o : <Sva segia menn at geftr þessi kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis | Ólafs kongs til hans, á því ári komu ok til hans þeir | menn er grímar hetu ok voru sendir af gudmundi á glæfis- | völlum, þeir færðu kongi horn tvö er gudmundr gaf | honum, þau kölluðu þeir gríma, þeir höfðu ok fleiri | eyrendi til kongs sem síðar mun sagt verða.> (p. 2, 11–16). π : <Sva segia menn | at geftr þessi kæmi á || þriðja ári ríkis Ólafs Konungs | á því ári komu ok til hans | tveir menn er Grímar hetu | ok voru sendir af Goðmundi á | Glæfis völlum, þeir færðu | konungi tva horn er Goðmun | dr gaf honum þau kolluðu | þeir ok gríma. þeir höfðu | ok fleiri eirindi til konungs | sem síðar mun sagt verða.> (pp. 4–5, 23–10). ρ : <Sva segia menn | ath Gestur þessi kæmi | á þriðja ári ríkis Ólafs | kongs. á því ári komu | og til hans tveir menn | er Grímar hetu. og voru | sendir af Goðmundi á Glæ- | fisvöllum. Þeir ferdu kóngi || tvö horn er Goðmundur | gaf honum. þeir kaulluðu | þeir og Gríma. þeir höf- | du og fleiri eyrindi til kongs | sem síðar mun sagt verða.> (pp. 84–85, 11–5). σ : <fo segia menn | gestur þessi kiami til konungs á 3ia | ári Rykis hans | á því ári komu til hans þeir | menn er Grímar hietu og voru fen- | dir af Godmunde á Glæfersvö- | lllum, þessir færðu konungi horn tvo er | Godmundur fendi honum, þa koll | udu þeir gríma, þeir höfðu og | fleire Eyrendi til konungs sem syðar mun | sagt verrða> (p. 298, 3–13). v : <Sva segja menn, at Gestr þessi kæmi á þriðja | ári ríkis Ólafs konungs; á því ári komu ok til hans | tveir menn, er Grímar hétu, ok varu sendir af Goðmundi á Glæsisvöllum; þeir færðu konungi | horn tvo, er Goðmundr gaf hanum; þau kölluðu | þeir ok Gríma; þeir höfðu ok fleiri erendi til | konungs, sem síðar mun sagt verða> (p. 523, 15–21).

48 τ : <Suo segja menn at Gestr þessi | kæmi á þriðja ári ríkis Ólafs konungs; á því ári komu ok | til hans tveir menn er Grímar hétu, ok voru sendir af | Goðmundi á Glæsisvöllum; þeir færðu konungi horn tvo, er | Goðm(undur) gaf honum, þau kölluðu þeir ok Gríma; þeir höfðu | ok fleiri erendi til konungs, sem segir frá í öðrum stað> (p. 7, 10–15).

Other Manuscripts of *Norna-Gests þáttur* and *Helga þáttur Þórissonar*

In accounting for all manuscripts containing *NP* and *HP* examined in the present study, it has occasionally been necessary to exclude certain witnesses. What follows is a brief overview of these manuscripts, along with the reasons justifying their exclusion from this investigation.

A) Five manuscripts contain *NP* and *HP* (either both together or only one of the two), but all are translations into other languages: i) GKS 1015 fol. I, dated circa 1661, contains a Danish translation of both *NP* and *HP*; ii) GKS 1017 fol. I, dated between 1650 and 1750, likewise contains a Danish translation of both texts; iii) Rostock 78/2, dated to the eighteenth century, preserves a Swedish translation of *NP*; iv) MS 3714, dated circa 1891, contains a French translation of *NP*; v) BL Add. 45317, dated between 1850 and 1890, includes an English translation of *NP*.

B) Three manuscripts were copied from printed editions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and are therefore not considered relevant evidence: i) Lbs 4661 4to, dated to the first half of the nineteenth century, is a copy of Carl Christian Rafn's edition of *fornaldarsögur*; ii) NKS 1685 b 4to, dated between 1800 and 1849, is a copy of Erik Julius Biörner's *Nordiska kämpa dater*; iii) Ms Germ q. 935, dated between 1805 and 1810, is likewise a copy of Biörner's work.⁴⁹

49 To this list must be added a manuscript containing *NP* from a private collection (hereafter labelled KP I). I am indebted to my dear friend Kári Pálsson, the owner of the manuscript, who kindly allowed me to examine this paper manuscript from his collection and to include it in this study. After a closer examination together with Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, we concluded that this manuscript was written by Snæbjörn Kristjánsson in 1881. Unfortunately, it was not possible to ascertain whether any of the texts contained therein were copied from a printed edition; however, judging by its content, this seems likely. The manuscript includes *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, *Norna-Gests þáttur*, *Sörla þáttur*, *Ragnarsona þáttur*, *Völsunga saga*, and *Hrólfs saga kraka* – the same texts, albeit in different order, as those featured in the first volume of *Fornaldar Sögur Norðrlanda*, published by Carl Christian Rafn in 1829–1830. Be that as it may, the relevant point here is that the manuscript contains *NP* (pp. 57–82) without *HP*, although the cross-reference from the former to the latter is attested: <Svo seigia menn að Gestur þessi kjæmi á þriðja | ári ríkisstjórnar Olafs konungs á því ári kómu og til | hans 2 menn er Grímar hétu og voru sendir af | Goðmundi á Glæsisvöllum þeir færðu konungi | horn 2 er Goðm(undr) gaf honum þau

C) A small group of manuscripts are described in catalogues and databases as containing *NP*; however, closer examination reveals that they do not.⁵⁰

Outlining the Manuscript Transmission

As argued throughout this paper, *NP* and *HP* are two *þættir* originally conceived as inseparable parts of a literary diptych embedded within the longest version of the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason. This interpretation is supported by the earliest manuscript witnesses – α , β , γ , and δ – in which *NP* and *HP* invariably appear together, with the former directly preceding the latter and no other texts interposed between them. Furthermore, as discussed above, the two narratives are closely linked one to the other by means of a cross-reference, providing additional evidence that they are inextricably intertwined and were not haphazardly inserted as unrelated *þættir* into a larger saga narrative. Although the events recounted in the tales of Norna-Gestr and Helgi Þórisson are not to be understood as historical in the modern sense, they are clearly structured and organised according to an internal chronology that can hardly be considered as unintentional. In this way, they are carefully integrated into the narratological framework of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*.

If one examines ϵ , a fifteenth-century parchment manuscript containing *NP* without *HP*, the reference to the absent *þáttir* is nevertheless preserved – though it ultimately leads nowhere, as if one were left with a single panel of a diptych, complete with its hinges, but lacking its counterpart. Although ζ has a lacuna covering the section where the cross-reference to *HP* would have appeared, it can be assumed with reasonable certainty that

kölluðu þeir og | Gríma þeir höfðu og fleiri erindi til konungs sem sið | ar mun sagt verða> (p. 59, 13–19).

- 50 i) AM 202 g fol., dated between 1600 and 1683. The scribe began to write *NP* but subsequently crossed it out entirely and replaced it with *Rauðúlfs þáttir*; ii) JS 33 4to, dated between 1730 and 1745. According to Páll Eggert Ólason (1927, 496), this manuscript was said to contain *NP* between folia 49r and 51r. Upon examination, however, I discovered that the text in question is different: the first part is a scene from *Óláfs saga helga* commonly known as “Óðinn kom til Óláfs konungs með dul ok prettum”, and the second part is *Tóka þáttir Tókasonar* – these two texts were mistakenly identified as *NP* by the catalogue’s compiler; iii) Lbs 3713 4to, dated between 1776 and 1825. According to the catalogue, this manuscript should contain *NP* between folia 77v and 78r, but it actually includes the same texts as JS 33 4to (“Óðinn kom til Óláfs konungs með dul ok prettum” and *Tóka þáttir Tókasonar*).

it may once have included it, in keeping with the pattern observed in the majority of instances.

An examination of the parchment manuscripts of *NP* and *HP* already reveals a division in the transmission history of the two *þattir*. A first phase – represented by α , β , γ , and δ – reflects a period close to the time when *NP* and *HP* were originally committed to writing, during which they were consistently transmitted together. In contrast, a second phase – represented by ε and ζ – suggests that the connection between the two texts had begun to fade, resulting in their separate transmission. This trend appears to continue in the paper manuscripts as well.

Overall, it may be concluded that nearly all versions of *NP* preserved in the twenty Icelandic manuscripts examined in this study – comprising six parchment and fourteen paper manuscripts, spanning from the late fourteenth century to the early nineteenth century – contain a reference to events that take place in another *þáttir*, namely that of Helgi Þórisson. Whereas the relationship between the two *þattir* appears to have been recognised in the earliest manuscripts of the first phase of transmission – namely α , β , γ , and δ , which consistently preserve them together – the same cannot be said of the second phase. In this later group, only two manuscripts contain both *þattir*: η and σ . *HP* is thus preserved in just seven manuscripts overall (including the unique case of ω , where it appears without *NP*), a marked contrast to the significantly broader transmission of *NP*. The remaining fourteen manuscripts – two on parchment (ε and ζ) and twelve on paper (θ , ι , κ , λ , μ , ν , ξ , $\omicron$, π , ρ , τ , and υ) – preserve only *NP* without *HP*. Nonetheless, the cross-reference between the two texts often survives, functioning like a metaphorical hinge still attached to one panel of this literary diptych, bearing witness to their original connection. In most of the manuscripts examined above (α , β , γ , δ , ε , θ^1 , ι , κ , μ , ν , ξ , $\omicron$, π , ρ , σ , and υ), the reference takes the form of a remark that the related events “will be told later”, regardless of whether *HP* is actually included. In a few other cases, there may be no explicit mention of another text, yet the arrival of Norna-Gestr at Óláfr Tryggvason’s court is still consistently linked to the visit of the two envoys from Glasisvellir, as attested by θ^2 . Despite these variations in form, the cross-reference to *HP* is thus regularly preserved in manuscripts that transmit *NP*.

As observed above, η represents a unique case in directly mentioning a “Saga Helga Þórissonar”. Such an explicit reference to the title of *HP* is unparalleled among the other manuscripts examined in this study. Nonetheless, since η contains both *NP* and *HP*, and the events are reported roughly one hundred pages later, this variation is unsurprising. Another notably distinct version of *NP* is preserved in λ , which offers a considerably shorter rendition of the *þáttir* and contains no reference whatsoever to the tale of Helgi Þórisson. This is the sole instance in which the visit of the two envoys from Glasisvellir to Óláfr Tryggvason’s court is omitted. However, given the overall conciseness of this version, such an omission may be less unexpected than it initially appears. Lastly, τ represents an isolated case in which, rather than referring to something that “will be told later”, the text instead mentions that the events are recounted “í öðrum stað” (“in another place”).

The variations found in η , λ , and τ do not permit any definitive conclusion but suggest the presence of authorial or editorial interventions, likely occurring at different times and under different circumstances for all of them. This stands in stark contrast to the other manuscripts examined in this study, where the allusion to *HP* remains unchanged despite the absence of the text itself. Indeed, in all the other cases (ϵ , ζ , θ , ι , κ , λ , μ , ν , ξ , $\omicron$, π , ρ , τ , and υ), the cross-reference leads nowhere.

It is difficult to account for such an oversight on the part of so many compilers, working across a span of more than five centuries. One might hypothesise that they either intended to include *HP* at a later point in the manuscript (as appears to be the case in η), or, more plausibly, that they simply copied *NP* without giving any thought about the reference to another text. Given the composite and often fragmentary nature of the younger manuscripts, any definitive conclusion remains elusive; nevertheless, the latter explanation seems the more likely. This suggests that *NP* and *HP* were originally composed to function as a pair, but – aside from a few exceptions – the two components of this literary diptych became separated during what may be termed the second phase of their transmission.

Concluding Remarks

Medieval compilation practices have left us with artefacts – medieval manuscripts – that may be regarded as masterpieces in terms of their design,

even though the processes by which these works were conceived, crafted, and assembled are not always fully understood today.⁵¹ Flateyjarbók is one of the most renowned medieval Icelandic manuscripts and stands as a significant testament to the compilation practices employed in fourteenth-century Iceland. As noted above, Jón Þórðarson – the scribe responsible for copying the first part of Flateyjarbók – offers an explanation for the interpolation of *exempla*, which he refers to as *ævintýri*, within his work. When *NP* and *HP* are examined within their original context, they can indeed be considered as *exempla*: their purpose clearly appears to provide Óláfr Tryggvason with an opportunity to confront the pagan past and present of his country while carrying out his missionary endeavour.

This study does not aim to provide a detailed literary analysis of *NP* and *HP*; however, the interpretation of these texts as a diptych – modelled on the artworks commonly admired in churches across medieval Europe – is undoubtedly strengthened when one considers the religious message and moral instruction they convey. Long after his disappearance at the battle of Svölðr, Óláfr Tryggvason came to be regarded as the “Apostle of the North”, particularly by Icelanders, who began composing sagas about his life as early as the twelfth century.⁵² Biographies of Óláfr Tryggvason continued to be written and expanded in the centuries that followed, not least by Snorri Sturluson in his *Heimskringla*, ultimately culminating in the longest saga devoted to Norway’s first missionary king: *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. As Ólafur Halldórsson (1963, 85) notes, the D redaction of this saga is preserved in α and β – the very manuscripts in which *NP* and *HP* are first attested. These two *þættir* appear within the king’s biography, and it is particularly in this context that their moral function becomes evident: *NP*, on the one hand, provides Óláfr Tryggvason with the opportunity to reconcile with his heathen ancestry through the baptism of a representative of pagan Scandinavia, while *HP*, on the other, serves as a warning against the dangers of sin and temptation, embodied by the legendary realm of Glasisvellir and its inhabitants.

If one considers their moral dimensions, the central contention of this article is further reinforced: *NP* and *HP*, likely composed in fourteenth-

51 For a discussion concerning compilation practice in medieval Icelandic manuscripts, see Lethbridge (2014), especially pp. 75–76.

52 See Fidjestøl (1997) and Bagge (2006).

century Iceland, were originally intended to function together within *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* but eventually became decontextualised and disconnected during the second phase of their transmission. This was an unfortunate destiny, particularly given that much of *HP*'s literary content is more readily understood when read in conjunction with *NP* – as Elizabeth Ashman Rowe has emphasised. When viewed as *exempla* – *HP* serving as the “negative exemplum” of *NP* – it becomes clear that part of their intended meaning was lost once the two *þættir* began to circulate as independent narratives, first in younger manuscripts and then in most printed editions. Their fate as separate texts suggests that the relationship between them, which must have held some significance at the time of their composition, eventually ceased to be recognised as meaningful. Whether later scribes and compilers consciously chose to treat the two *þættir* as independent units or were simply unaware of their connection is difficult to determine. In some cases, we know the text was copied from a manuscript that did not contain *HP*, which may suggest unawareness rather than intention.⁵³ However, even in such instances, this does not explain why the reference to a later text was retained. Beyond these limited examples, the question remains largely unresolved. Overall, what can be noted, is that most compilers who copied *NP* appear to have carried out their task without altering the text – preserving a reference to a scene that, in most cases, is never actually recounted.

The transmission of the two *þættir* examined here demonstrates that texts should, whenever possible, be read and interpreted within their original contexts. Only through such contextual reading can one fully perceive and appreciate the sophisticated intellectual framework of medieval Icelandic literature. *NP* and *HP* ought to be understood in light of their original relationship and context – a connection otherwise impossible to discern if the evidence provided by the oldest manuscripts is overlooked. To treat these *þættir* as independent texts risks losing a significant portion of their meaning. This becomes especially clear when one considers the etymological meaning of the term *þáttir* – namely, ‘strand’.⁵⁴ Reading these *strands* unravelled from their original textual fabric – the quite literal Latin *textus* – prevents us from grasping the full nuance of the tapestry in which

53 See, for instance: π , copied from ι ; ξ , copied from θ^1 ; μ and κ , both copied from ϵ .

54 Cf. Lindow (1978).

they were woven. Or, to return one last time to the metaphor of the diptych, it would be as though we were to appreciate only one of two panels that once formed a pair; we might understand part of its meaning, but its full significance would be lost in time.

Icelandic manuscripts of *Norna-Gests þáttur* and *Helga þáttur Þórissonar*

| Shelfmark | Year | Century | NP | HP | Material | Reference |
|------------------------|------------|---|---------|-----|-----------|-----------|
| α) GKS 1005 fol. | 1387–1394 | (14 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Parchment | Yes |
| β) AM 62 fol. | 1375–1399 | (14 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Parchment | Yes |
| γ) AM 309 4to | 1498 | (15 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Parchment | Yes |
| δ) AM 54 fol. | Added 1510 | (16 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Parchment | Yes |
| ε) GKS 2845 4to | 1440–1460 | (15 th c.) | Yes | No | Parchment | Yes |
| ζ) AM 567 V 4to | 1450–1499 | (15 th c.) | Partly | No | Parchment | Defective |
| η) AM 313 4to | 1657 | (17 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Paper | Different |
| θ) AM 202 i fol. | 1600–1699 | (17 th c.) | Yes (2) | No | Paper | Yes (x2) |
| ι) AM 65 fol. | 1625–1672 | (17 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| κ) Holm Papp. 5 4to | 1630–1670 | (17 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| λ) Holm Papp. 22 fol. | 1600–1650 | (17 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | No |
| μ) Holm Papp. 15 4to | 1650–1700 | (17 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| ν) AM 348 4to | 1688–1730 | (17 th /18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| ω) Holm Papp. 9 4to | 1600–1699 | (17 th c.) | No | Yes | Paper | – |
| ξ) NB, Ms. fol. 246 II | 1700–1799 | (18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| ο) NKS 1223 fol. | 1700–1799 | (18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| π) NKS 1150 fol. | 1750–1799 | (18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| ρ) NKS 1766 4to | 1750–1799 | (18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |
| σ) Lbs 2145 8vo | 1801 | (19 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Paper | Yes |
| τ) Lbs 1496 4to | 1883 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Different |
| υ) SÁM 4 | 1890–1910 | (19 th /20 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper | Yes |

Manuscripts not included in this study

Manuscripts in other languages

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|-----|----|-------|
| GKS 1015 fol. I | 1661 | (17 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| GKS 1017 fol. I | 1650–1750 | (17 th /18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| Rostock 78/2 | 1700–1799 | (18 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| MS 3714 | 1891 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| BL Add. 45317 | 1850–1890 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |

Manuscripts copied from editions

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Lbs 4661 4to | 1827 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| NKS 1685 b 4to | 1800–1849 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
| Ms Germ q. 935 | 1805–1810 | (19 th c.) | Yes | Yes | Paper |

Manuscripts listed in archives as containing Norna-Gests þáttir but without it

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|---|----|----|-------|
| AM 202 g fol. | 1600–1683 | (17 th c.) | No | No | Paper |
| JS 33 4to | 1730–1745 | (18 th c.) | No | No | Paper |
| Lbs 3713 4to | 1776–1825 | (18 th /19 th c.) | No | No | Paper |

Manuscript from private collection

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------|-----------------------|-----|----|-------|
| Einkasafn KP I | 1881 | (19 th c.) | Yes | No | Paper |
|----------------|------|-----------------------|-----|----|-------|

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SUMMARY

Norna-Gests þáttur and *Helga þáttur Þórissonar* in Icelandic Manuscripts: A Literary Diptych Lost in Time

Keywords: *Norna-Gests þáttur*, *Helga þáttur Þórissonar*, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, medieval Icelandic literature, manuscript studies, literary diptych

This article aims to reconstruct the relationship between *Norna-Gests þáttur* and *Helga þáttur Þórissonar* by assessing their presence first in Icelandic parchment manuscripts and then in younger paper manuscripts. It will argue that these two texts were originally intended to function together as a literary diptych embedded within the narratological framework of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, demonstrating how they are connected through medieval compilation practices on two levels: interdependence and careful insertion within a broader literary context. Although scholarship has briefly commented on the existing relationship between these two þættir, no previous work has extensively tackled the subject by considering their manuscripts alone, which seem to bear witness to the close connection between them. After elucidating their relationship, the article will argue that, although they were originally meant to be interdependent texts, they became separated from each other when they were later committed to paper in the witnesses of their post-medieval reception.

ÁGRIP

Norna-Gests þáttur og *Helga þáttur Þórissonar* í íslenskum handritum: Glatað tvíþætt bókmenntaverk frá miðöldum

Efnisorð: *Norna-Gests þáttur*, *Helga þáttur Þórissonar*, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, íslenskar miðaldabókmenntir, handritafræði, tvíþætt bókmenntaverk

Tilgangur þessarar greinar er að varpa ljósi á tengsl *Norna-Gests þáttar* og *Helga þáttar Þórissonar* með því að rannsaka varðveislusögu þeirra í skinnhandritum áður en litið er á gerðir þeirra í yngri pappírshandritum. Rökstutt er að þessir þættir hafi upprunalega verið settir saman til að mynda tvíþætt bókmenntaverk (e. *literary diptych*) í ramma *Óláfs sögu Tryggvasonar ennar mestu*. Sýnt er fram á hvernig þeir tengjast á tvöfaldan hátt í gegnum bókmenntalegar ritunarhefðir miðalda: annars vegar með því að vera innbyrðis háðir hvor öðrum og hins vegar með því að vera vandlega grepptir í breiðara bókmenntalegt samhengi. Þó að nokkrir fræðimenn hafi þegar stuttlega bent á tengsl milli þáttanna tveggja hefur hingað til ekki verið nægilegur gaumur gefinn að handritageymd þeirra og samhenginu sem varpar ljósi á skyldleika textanna í báðum þáttum. Eftir að upprunaleg tengsl *Norna-Gests þáttar* og *Helga þáttar Þórissonar* hafa verið skýrð er að lokum gerð grein fyrir því hvernig þættirnir varðveittust hvor um sig í yngri pappírshandritum.

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ICONOGRAPHY IN ICELANDIC LAW MANUSCRIPTS IN C. 1330–1600¹

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. 1330–1600.² 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,³ as well as their function as pictorial exegesis of medieval theology.⁴ 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,⁵ 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 Mediale* 27 (2014), 63–113; Stefan Drechsler, "Production and Content of the Fourteenth-Century Norwegian

corpora.⁶ 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,⁷ 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),⁸ 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, ættingjar 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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 1262–64.¹¹ 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.¹²

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*.¹³ 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:¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ *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.¹⁶ *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. 1400–1450.¹⁷ Likely because of a change in trading practices,¹⁸ most sections of *Búalög* reflect domestic trade and are much less widely distributed than *Jónsbók*: *Búalög* is found in only seven manuscripts.¹⁹

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.²⁰ 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.²¹ Likely because of the political changes after the establishment of the Kalmar Union in 1397,²² manuscripts dating from the following two centuries only include short sections of this court law.²³

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, Þorlákur Runólfsson of Skálholt (1086–1133) and Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (1075–1145).²⁴ *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).²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ Complete redactions or sections of the influential ecclesiastical law are found in fifty legal manuscripts that predate the eighteenth century.²⁸

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*.²⁹ *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.³⁰ 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.³¹ 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).³²

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.³³ 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.

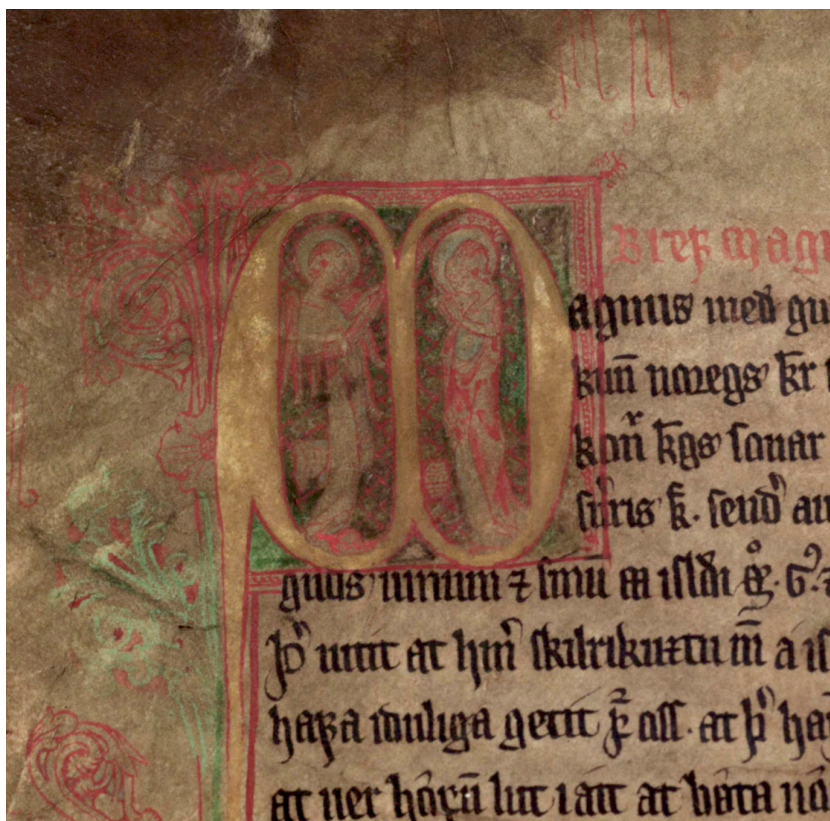


Figure 2: Historiated main initial showing the *Annunciation*, at the start of *Bréf Magnúss konungs* in *Jónsbók*. AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók), f. 1v1–5, 1363. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir.

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ Stylistically and throughout the time period investigated in this article,³⁶ 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.³⁷ Numerous manuscripts, predominantly from the fifteenth century, feature a multitude of inhabited middle initials that involve grylli figures.³⁸ 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,³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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*.⁴³ Other textual and iconographic elements may indicate new inspiration in the production of law manuscripts from that time on.⁴⁴



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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ 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*,⁴⁸ 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).⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

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.⁵² 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.⁵³ It is likely that the text-related book painting was first and foremost intended as visual guidance by and for the original clients.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ 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).⁵⁶

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,⁵⁷ followed by less internationally inspired book painting in the subsequent centuries.⁵⁸ Yet, both the size of major initials and also the size of the law manuscripts themselves do not change much during these centuries.⁵⁹ 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 Norway⁶⁰ 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,⁶¹ 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 1349.⁶² After the establishment of the Kalmar Union in 1397 and the first wave of the plague in Iceland in 1402–4,⁶³ Iceland began to trade directly with English seafarers, and the Norwegian hegemony shifted towards Denmark, with less political influence on the Icelandic trade.⁶⁴ Yet, text-related illuminations in *Jónsbók* remain in the inventory of Icelandic illuminators until the end of the seventeenth century.⁶⁵ 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),⁶⁶ 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 bogeksport 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).⁶⁷ Furthermore, in the sixteenth century, margins likely became the primary place for historiated illuminations in the Icelandic law books.⁶⁸

| 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 þegnskylða</i> | | 2 | | | | |
| <i>Mannhelgisbálkr</i> | 7 | 5 | 1 | | 2 | 5 |
| <i>Kvennagiftingar</i> | 3 | | | | 1 | 3 |
| <i>Erfðabálkr</i> | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Framferslubálkr</i> | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| <i>Landsbrigðabálkr</i> | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Landsleigubálkr / Búnaðarbálkr</i> | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | 19 |
| <i>Rekapáttir</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 |
| Total | 55 | 19 | 11 | 2 | 12 | 59 |

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), ⁶⁹ 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.

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| <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> |

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

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

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| <i>Far-
manna-
lög</i> | On
nautical
laws and
trade
con-
ducted
via
seaways | <p>Settlement scene onboard a boat (1): GKS 3269 b 4to (c. 1330–40), f. 52ra5–10.</p> <p>Settlement scene onboard a boat and the boat being repaired (1): AM 350 fol. (Skarðsbók) (1363), f. 61va23–28.</p> <p>Sailing scene (2): GKS 3269 a 4to (c. 1350), f. 73rb6–14; AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 68va12–21.</p> <p>Sailing scene (marginalia) (2): AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), ff. 61v–62r; AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), ff. 73v–74r.</p> <p>Social scenes (marginalia) (1): 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>Prosecution scene (5): 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>Prosecution scene (marginalia) (3): 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>Hanging scene (3): 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>Hanging scene (marginalia) (9): 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>Hanging and prosecution scene (2): AM 132 4to (c. 1450), f. 51v22–28; AM 157 a 4to (c. 1460), f. 75ra4–13.</p> <p>Hanging and flagellation scene (marginalia) (1): AM 147 4to (Heynesbók) (c. 1525–50), f. 81v.</p> <p>Figure with stolen goods on his back (3): 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>Figure with stolen goods on his back (marginalia) (1): AM 126 4to (c. 1400), f. 79v.</p> <p>Figure holding a stave (1): 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 |
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| <i>Jónsbók</i> | <i>Rex Perpetuus Norvegiae</i> (9) | AM 135 4to (Arnabæislögbók) (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. |
| | <i>German Kogge ship</i> (1) | AM 40 8vo (c. 1550–1600) f. 1r. |
| | <i>Norwegian kings</i> (Sverrir Sigurðarson, Hákon Hákonarson, Magnús Hákonarson and Eiríkr Magnússon) (1) | AM 345 fol. (Reykjabók) (1549), f. 1r. |
| | <i>King Magnús Hákonarson</i> (1) | MS Icelandic 43 (c. 1566), on f. 3v. |
| | <i>Christological scenes</i> (<i>Annunciation, Birth of Christ, Calvary Group, Resurrection of Christ, Ascension, Throne of Grace</i>) (1) | DG 9 (c. 1575), on ff. 10r–11v. |
| <i>Kristinréttir Árna Þorlákssonar</i> | <i>St Þorlákr</i> (2) | AM 135 4to (Arnabæislögbók) (c. 1350), f. 74vb; AM 160 4to (c. 1550), f. 102v. |
| | <i>Mary Enthroned</i> (1) | AM 49 8vo (1507), f. 1v. |
| | <i>Throne of Grace</i> (1) | AM 49 8vo (1507), f. 6v. |

Table 2: Iconography in miniatures of *Jónsbók* and *Kristinréttir 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 |

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| 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) |
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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 táknmynda 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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A HANDLIST OF MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN MEDICAL VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS¹

There are thirty-seven manuscripts in Scandinavian vernacular languages from the medieval period before 1550 containing medical lore. Although the middle of the sixteenth century may not be generally regarded as *strictly medieval*, the year 1550 is one of the rough cut-off points used by scholars marking the end of the medieval period and the start of the early modern era (Salonen and Jensen 2023). This is because by 1550, the evangelical movement that had started in the 1520s, known as the Reformation, begins to fully take over.² I include three decades of this religiously ambiguous period in my analysis of medieval manuscripts because the manuscripts written in the first half of sixteenth century have copied sections from older manuscripts, meaning that the texts they contain had been in circulation during the medieval period. This allows for a more comprehensive overview of the medical knowledge available in Scandinavia in the Middle Ages. Whilst thirty-seven may not sound like a terribly small number, one must consider that many of these manuscripts are mere fragments, sometimes having as little as two sides of one page, while others contain only a few leaves of medical knowledge amidst other religious or law texts. Few of these codices actually contain medical texts back-to-back. For comparison, the number of medical manuscripts in Middle English (between

1 Transcriptions and translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

2 The Reformation is one of the major events that mark the end of the Middle Ages and the start of the Early Modern period. The evangelical movement is thought to have begun in Sweden when Gustav Vasa ascended the throne, but the movement is not thought to have been completed until the establishment of the Uppsala Synod in 1593 (Kouri 1995, 43–45). In Denmark, the traditional view is that the Reformation took place when Christian III ascended the throne in 1536, after fighting a civil war and gaining control over Norway, too. Nonetheless, popular evangelical movements had started to germinate amongst the bigger towns since the 1520s. For an overview of the development of the Reformation, see Grell (2016).

the twelfth and fifteenth centuries) amounts to over 350 (Robbins 1970, 393). Those of German origin are indeed so many that they have not, to this date, been added up (Brévert 2008, 6).³ Next to these numbers, the Scandinavian medical material is rather thin.

Of the relatively little material there is, much of it goes back to or builds upon the work of Henrik Harpestræng (b. ca. 1164, d. 1244), a Danish medical author and personal doctor of King Erik *Plovpenning*. He is best known for his botano-medical works: the *Liber Herbarum*, known as the *latinske urtebog* (Latin herbal) in Denmark, and *Den danske Urtebog* (the Danish herbal), written in the vernacular. There are no extant original manuscripts in Harpestræng's hand, yet thirty out of the thirty-seven manuscripts either explicitly attribute certain texts to Harpestræng or have copied texts attributed to him elsewhere.⁴ There are only two manuscripts written in East Norse that are directly related to Harpestræng's original *Den danske Urtebog*: Cod. Holm K 48 (also known as Sth K 48, no. 1) and Ny kgl. saml. 66 8vo (also known as NKS 66, no. 2). Henning Larsen (1931, 39) created a stemma in which he asserted that both exemplars are copies of two distinct copies of Harpestræng's original herbal book, meaning that they are both two steps removed from Harpestræng's own manuscript. Fabian Schwabe (2011) does not contest Larsen's view and adds that virtually all the Icelandic manuscripts, except AM 655 XXX 4to (no. 30) and possibly AM 673 a II 4to (no. 32) are somehow related to NKS 66 in the stemma. The earliest extant copy of the *Liber Herbarum* is found in

- 3 Another reason why there has been trouble enumerating the German *materia medica* is because there are too many overlapping genres and sub-genres that are not always easy to categorise. As explained by Schnell (1995, 6) in his survey of twelfth-century German medical manuscripts, there are various texts that enter the 'medical' division, which include genres such as 'herbals', 'medicinal handbooks', 'collections of recipes', 'guides to good health', which makes it harder to divide the texts between those that are medicinal, pharmacological, botanical, or even magical. Nevertheless, the only German medical corpus that has been quantified is that of the twelfth century, by Hellgardt (1988). Hellgardt offers an overview of the manuscripts produced in that century and categorises six out of the fifty-three manuscripts as medical ones, excluding ten other manuscripts wherein isolated medical recipes can be found. That would form 10 per cent of the extant German manuscripts of the century.
- 4 The only manuscripts in this list that do not have any direct association with Harpestræng (meaning that his name is not mentioned and that none of his works seem to have been copied) are Thott 245 8vo (no. 14), C 22 (no. 19), M 59 (no. 23), X 502 (no. 28), J 8 (no. 29), and possibly AM 655 XXX 4to (no. 31), although this last one is unclear.

Upps D 600 (no. 8), which dates to the mid-fifteenth century, making it harder to grasp what the original may have looked like.⁵

These so-called herbals are botanical works consisting of up to fifty-three chapters (*Liber Herbarum*) and 150 chapters (*Den danske Urtebog*) dealing with plants and their medical uses, as well as a few minerals and chemical compounds,⁶ often ordered alphabetically. There are two other works associated with the *Urtebog* which have often been attributed to Harpestræng. These are a *Stenbog* (lit. stonebook, lapidary), describing the properties of minerals and gemstones, and a *Kogebog* (cookbook) with recipes,⁷ both of which appear as a unified work in NKS 66 8vo (see below, no. 2), though it is unclear whether Harpestræng did in fact compose these texts (Johnsson 1921, 14). Nevertheless, he is also the author of other lesser-known works. For instance, there is evidence that he produced an astrological prognostic for King Erik *Plovpenning* with instructions for bloodletting. Two manuscripts survive that explicitly mention Harpestræng as the author, GKS 3656 8vo (no. 10), and the *Codex Grensholmensis* (no. 26, also known as Klemming VIII), in Linköping, shelf-marked Saml. 1a, from around the year 1500.

Harpestræng is also said to have composed a *lægebog* or 'leechbook' (Hauberg 1919). Unlike the herbals, leechbooks generally focus on diseases and their treatments and not on the properties of plants. They are usually arranged in a head-to-toe structure, rather than in alphabetical order, as is customary for herbals. Even though there is no extant original Harpestræng leechbook, it likely existed, as it is referenced in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts such as Upps. D 600 (no. 8) and AM 45 (no. 17), surveyed below.⁸ Lastly, there is speculation that the Danish

5 The first Danish translation of the *Liber Herbarum* is found in NKS 314 b 4to (no. 9).

6 Chemical elements and compounds found in the *Urtebog* include gold, silver, copper acetate, and mercury.

7 Neither the *Stenbog* nor the *Kogebog* will be explored in this project, but for an overview of these, see Kristensen (1908–1920).

8 N.B. It is important to note that D 600 and AM 45 4to contain leechbooks attributed to Harpestræng. However, while Thott 710 4to and NKS 314b 4to explicitly cite Harpestræng as the author of a *Lægebog*, they then copy his *Urtebog*. This implies that "Lægebog" and "Urtebog" may have been used interchangeably in the medieval period. Nevertheless, these two manuscripts, as well as AM 819 4to, GKS 3457 8vo, and AM 188 8vo, all contain the same text that D 600 and AM 45 4to refer to as *Lægebog*, in addition to entries from the *Liber Herbarum* and *Den danske Urtebog*.

physician may have authored a list of treatises or articles dealing with hygiene and surgery, which are interpolated between chapters of the *Liber Herbarum* or *Den danske Urtebog*. Due to the nature of these short articles, there is speculation that they may have once been a single, symbiotic work (Molbech 1826, 6).

Harpestræng is referred to as a Salernitan doctor (Kristensen 1908–1920; Johnsson 1921), a term used for physicians who followed the training given in Salerno, Italy, where a prominent medical school had blossomed in the late tenth or early eleventh century. The Salerno school of medicine was not a formal institution but rather a movement that saw the renaissance of ancient Greek medical texts by Pliny, Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Galen combined with the arrival of Arabic medicine, due to the growth of Salerno as a popular trading town between Christians and Muslims. One need not have been physically in Italy to train in the Salernitan fashion, as all the texts created or compiled in Salerno quickly spread across Europe. The texts produced by Salernitan authors followed the Hippocratic theory that illness was the result of an imbalance of the four cardinal humours: phlegm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile. Between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, these sources were used in the creation of new texts such as the *Trotula* and *Secreta mulierum*, and Harpestræng's work can be included here, as he duly follows Galen's theory of the four qualities of plants (hot, cold, dry, and wet) and the four degrees in which these qualities lie.

It has been established that Harpestræng's work is mostly derived from *De viribus herbarum* (On the strengths of the herbs), also known as *De virtutibus herbarum* (On the virtues of the herbs), composed by a Macer Floridus, who has been identified as Odo Magdunensis, supposedly a French author from the Loire area (Kristensen 1908–1920; Flood 1976, 63). Of the 150 chapters of *Den danske Urtebog*, eighty-one are, at least in part, translations from Macer's work (Hauberg 1936, 14). This has led some scholars to speculate that Harpestræng may have been trained in France, perhaps in Montpellier (Schwabe 2009, 202), or Orléans (Kristensen 1908–1920, v; Johnsson 1921, 15) an area well known for its physicians, which would eventually replace Salerno as the centre for medical education (McVaugh 1975, 57). Another clue that hints at his studying in France is a fifteenth-century manuscript in the National Library of

France (Paris, BN ms. Fr.1357, 2vo). Under a text presumably written by French astrologer Symon de Phares, titled *Recueil des plus celebres astrologues et de quelques hommes doctes* (Collection of the most famous astrologers and other learned men), a certain “maistre Henry de Danemarch” (master Henry of Denmark) is mentioned as a renowned physician and astrologer in Orleans. He is said to have resided in the city under the rule of King Philippe Augustus in 1181, giving us a clue about his whereabouts and age (Johnsson 1921, 15). This matches another source that refers to Harpestræng by his first name followed by his home country. That is a manuscript at the Royal Danish Library (GKS 1654 4to) containing a work in Latin titled *Liber de simplicibus medicinis laxativis* (A book on simple laxative medicines) citing “Henricus Dacus” (Henrik the Dane) as its author.⁹

Harpestræng’s work also has Arabic influences copied from Constantine the African’s *De Gradibus Liber* – itself a translation of the work by Ibn al-Jazzar – in his *Urtebog*. Constantine, originally from Carthage, is best known for his translations of Arabic medicinal texts into Latin (see Green 1987), and sixty-nine chapters of *Den danske Urtebog* partially draw from Constantine’s work (Hauberg 1936, 14). Ten chapters have not been ascribed to any source and therefore could possibly be Harpestræng’s own composition (Hauberg 1936, 14). Even if it was not Harpestræng who wrote those ten chapters, it was probably a Scandinavian author, as the plants used are unique to Scandinavia, such as “Angelica” (*Angelica archangelica*). “Benedicta alba” (*Geum urbanum*) and “Benedicta ruffa” (*Geum rivale*) are also not known from any other Salernitan texts, so this may be evidence of local Scandinavian knowledge seeping into the written texts.¹⁰

Some manuscripts contain various additional texts popular amongst the medieval Salernitans, such as the *Regimen sanitatis Salernitatum*¹¹ (NKS 314 b 4to and X 23) and excerpts from thirteenth-century Iberian doctor Petrus Hispanus’ *Thesaurus pauperum*, a popular text that survives in at least twenty manuscripts from before 1340 (Lindberg 2017, 62).

Later manuscripts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries display

9 The text was edited by John William Johnsson (1914).

10 I am sceptical of Harpestræng’s authorship of these entries, as none of these plants appear in the earliest copies of the *Urtebog*, K 48 4to and NKS 66 8vo.

11 The *Regimen sanitatis Salernitatum* (the Salernitan ‘Code’ or ‘Rule’ of Health) is a medieval didactic poem in hexameter verse, allegedly composed by Arnold de Villa Nova. For a translation of this text, see Ordrónaux (1871).

a wider variety of influences outside the Salernitan sphere, especially the manuscripts of Danish origin. Thott 710 4to, NKS 314 b 4to, and NKS 134 4to all have entries in German.¹² In the case of Thott 710 4to, the German entries are found in German manuscripts, whereas NKS 314 b 4to has translated the Harpestræng content into German. The fifteenth century saw the dawn of printing, making it much easier for texts to travel faster than ever before. Christiørn Pedersen was the first Danish physician to publish a medical book in print in 1533, titled *En nøttelig Legebog faar Fattige och Rige Unge och Gamle* (A Useful Leechbook for the Poor and the Rich, the Young and the Old), from which at least three manuscripts have copied, AM 819 4to (no. 15), M 5 8vo (no. 25), and *Lavriids Pedersens Lægebog* (which I shall call *Huskurer*, see no. 16).¹³ Other figures make an appearance in our late medieval medical manuscripts, such as Peder Månsson, Bishop of Vadstena, who wrote his own manuscripts on natural sciences, and a Master Alexander, who might be a Spanish doctor or possibly a fictitious character but whose work is mentioned in three Swedish manuscripts: Upps D 601, no. 24; C 19, no. 18; and no. X 23, no. 26 (Zachová 2013; Ottosson 1977, 131–3). AM 819 4to mentions advice given by a Dr Karl.

There is no complete, comprehensive overview of the Scandinavian medical corpus to date. Poul Hauberg (1936) published a list of medical manuscripts and fragments containing parts of the *Liber Herbarum* but left manuscripts containing other medical texts out of that list. He later published a book encompassing all manuscripts linked to Harpestræng, into the Early Modern era (1982).¹⁴ Marius Kristensen, on the other hand,

12 There is evidence of Danish influence bleeding into Germany too. There are two manuscripts from the fifteenth century that contain Harpestræng content: Ms. Giessensis 610.Fol. (Universitätsbibliothek, Giessen) and Bibl. Pal. Vind. Cod. 2962 (Universitätsbibliothek, Wien) (Hauberg 1936, 31–34).

13 A first edition is kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, under the shelf-mark Hielmst. 1516 4to. The text has been edited by Adams and Boeck: <https://tekstnet.dk/christiørn-pedersen-legebog/metadata>.

14 These later manuscripts, which will not be explored in this article, are L 45 4to (Medicinsk-historisk Museum, 1580); NKS 67 8vo (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1550–1599); NKS 719 8vo (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1575–1599); L 46 4to (Medicinsk-historisk Museum, 1619); Thott 717 4to (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1623); Thott 720 4to (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1643); Thott 204 (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1600–1699); Thott 254 8vo (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1675–1699); NKS 67 8vo (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1700–1799); Thott 721 4to (Kongelige Bibliotek, 1700–1799); *Lægebogen fra Ulvik* (privately owned, 1550–1650).

published a list of only the manuscripts that contain *Den danske Urtebog*, *Stenbog*, and *Kogebog* that he deemed relevant enough to edit, so his list is also incomplete. The present list is a new survey of the medieval vernacular Scandinavian corpus up to the middle of the sixteenth century, divided into five categories depending on the presumed origin of the manuscripts, starting with those from Denmark.¹⁵

Danish

Thirteenth/Fourteenth century

1. K 48 4to (Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)¹⁶

Alternative names: Henrik Harpestrengs Læge- og Urte-Bog

Dating: 1290–1300

Dimensions: 19.6 × 15.0 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: This is the oldest copy of *Den danske Urtebog*, dating to the very end of the thirteenth century.¹⁷ It has a total of forty-five folia made of parchment and includes most known chapters of the herbal from fol. 2v–43r, though the entries have not been listed alphabetically. The first three folios (or–2r) contain two Marian miracles of the Toledo-Saturday type and a “Skriftemålsbøn” (confessional prayer; Bullitta 2017, 8). The opening page, which begins *in medias res*, is completely worn, suggesting that this manuscript was once part of a larger codex containing legends and a herbal. The quire number 16 on 6r suggests that the first sixteen quires are missing, meaning that the original version of the codex has 120 leaves (Bullitta 2017, 9). A nineteenth-century hand on the cover of the manuscript says that the manuscript would have originally had 158 leaves, although it does not provide a reason, only the observation that the herbal

15 The manuscripts presented here focus on the human body and health. There are manuscripts, such as Kungliga Biblioteket K 45, which includes a passage with monthly predictions and zodiac signs that do not deal with remedies for the human body and thus has not been included in this handlist. Similarly, manuscripts only containing sections on veterinary— not intended for the human body, such as Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek C 54, also have not been included.

16 No online facsimile available.

17 There are two notes written on the first page of the codex, one in pen that dates the manuscript to the turn of the fourteenth century and another, in pencil, that dates it to the end of the thirteenth century.

must have been cut out of a larger exemplar due to its content being medical.

The alleged missing folios containing a miscellany of texts – including a version of the *Stenbog* found in NKS 66 – are now believed to be preserved at Kungliga Biblioteket, in K 4. Also, in a bifolio containing two accounts of the “*Passio sanctae Caterinae*” (Legend of St Christina) and the beginning of the Marian miracles found today at the University of Cambridge, Add. 3827 (Eiríkr Magnússon 1902). This is because the “*Passio*” in Add. 3827 is identical with the one in the Legendary of K 4, and the Marian miracles are also a match with K 48, meaning that originally K 4, Add 3827, and K 48 were all part of the same work. This idea has been contested by Carl J. Brandt (1859, 97), who noted some stylistic inconsistencies between the texts. In any case, regardless of whether these are truly connected, the herbal in K 48 was not written as a stand-alone piece but as part of a larger body of work.

The herbal commences on fol. 3v with entries on gold and silver, and a list of sixty plants. Towards the middle of the manuscript, from fol. 22v to 23v, there are five entries on different chemical compounds: salt, vitriol, *spanskgrønt* (lit. Spanish green; a chemical compound named after its green colour caused by the copper in it), *Pic liquida* (known as “Norwegian tar” in English), and *bitumen iuidaicum* (bitumen judaicum, a pitchy substance, similar to tar, mostly made up of hydrocarbons). This is proceeded by four chapters between 25v and 27r on how to treat pain in the chest, stomach, bladder, and head, respectively, and a chapter on *badstue* (sauna), its benefits, and how to use it. This segment looks more like a medical book, as the subject in this section is not herbs but rather diseases in different parts of the body plus instructions for treatment. There follows a chapter between 27r and 27v on taking laxatives, the same text that is attributed to Henricus Dacus – *De simplicibus medicinis laxativis* in GKS 1654 4to – before the manuscript resumes the list of simples. The manuscript ends with four entries on bloodletting and cupping at the end, on fols. 44r–47r.

All the medical content in the manuscript has been edited by Kristensen (1908–1920, 1–102) and more recently by Marita Akhøj Nielsen, which can be found online.¹⁸

18 https://tekstnet.dk/books/harpestreng-h_skrifter-k48/

2. NKS 66 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)¹⁹

Alternative names: The Danish Herb Book; Knud Jul's Book

Dating: 1300

Dimensions: 11.7 ' 9.0 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: This is the second oldest manuscript, produced around the year 1300. It has a total of 147 folia made of parchment. This manuscript contains Harpestræng's *Urtebog* (6r–114v), along with a *Stenbog* (114v–139v) and a *Kogebog* (140r–146r). The manuscript starts with a collection of Skåne church law (1r–5v). The *Urtebog* contains 135 chapters and is split in two: the *første urtebog* (first herbal) and the *anden urtebog* (second herbal). Both bodies are structured alphabetically. In the first herbal, just as in K 48, there are four chapters concerned with ailments rather than simples, on pain in the chest, stomach, bladder, and head. However, unlike in K 48, with its whimsical structure, as pointed out by Simon Skovgaard Boeck (2017, 111), these chapters have been placed appropriately around the letter F, for the active F-verbs in the sentences, “fangær” (to catch) and “far” (to get):

Vm man fangær ylt i b[r]yst (If one gets an ache in the chest)
 Af man fangær ilt .i. quith (If one gets an ache in the abdomen)
 Far man ylt .i. blæthær (If one gets an ache in the bladder)
 Of man far ylt [.i.] houæth (If one gets an ache in the head)²⁰

Just as K 48, NKS 66 also includes a chapter on bathing, which has been added with the B-entries, and the chapter on laxatives, added after G, as the paragraph starts with H (“Hwa sum wil takæ lækidom”).

The manuscript names Knud Jul (Kanutus Yuul) – hence the alternate name for this manuscript – who was associated with the Cistercian monastery in Sorø in the early fourteenth century. This is especially relevant because the monastery at Sorø is known to have included two infirmaries.

The manuscript has been edited by Kristensen (1908–1920, 103–202) and more recently by Marita Akhøj Nielsen, which can be found online.²¹

19 <https://permalink.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/87/dan/>

20 Titles in Old Danish in NKS 66 8vo, between fol. 37v and 40r (or pages 65–70), in Simon Skovgaard Boeck (2017, 111).

21 <https://tekstnet.dk/harpestreng-nks66/metadata>

3. T 67, no. 199 (Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek)²²

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1300–1350

Dimensions: 15.6 ' 10.0 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: All that is left from this manuscript are four folia, preserved in a colossal codex titled *Eklesiastike Samlingar* (Ecclesiastical Collection), donated to the Library of Linköping by theologian and professor Carl Jesper Benzeliuss, Swedish teacher to Queen Louisa Ulrika. It preserves seven chapters of Harpestræng's *Dansk Urtebog*: Absinthium/Malyrt (wormwood), Abrotanus/Abrut (southernwood), Artumesia/bunæ (mugwort), Plantago/Weghbrethæ (plantago), Apium/Merky (celery), Allium/Klofløk (leek), Aristologia/Hwlyrt (birthwort) and one line of an eighth chapter, Cepa/Sypol (onion). It has been dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, though Kristensen (1908–1920, lxvvi) suggests that it could be from the same time period as AM 187 8vo (no. 4). It was only found in 1907 by librarian Carl S. Petersen at the old Linköpings Gymnasium and has now been relocated to the Linköping City Library.

Kristensen (1908–1920, 203–209) edited this fragment.

4. AM 187 8vo (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)²³

Alternative names: Arnamagnæan Leechbook; Danske Lægebog

Dating: 1400–1450

Dimensions: 16.7 ' 13.1 cm

Language: Danish; Latin

Comments: There is some controversy regarding the time of composition of this manuscript. The general consensus, as stated in *handrit.is*,²⁴ is that it was produced at some point in the fourteenth century (1300–1399), as Kristian Kålund (1889, 437) claimed. Viggo Saby (1886, iii) similarly dated it to the second half of the fourteenth century (1350–1400). Christian Molbech (1826, 40) first dated it a century later, to either the middle or the second half of the fifteenth century (1450–1500). C. J. Brandt (1857, 60) and Hans Brix (1943, 36) joined him in his mid-fifteenth century dating.

22 No online facsimile available.

23 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AMo8-0187/o#mode/2up>

24 *Ibid.*

Erik Kroman (1943, 68), however, dated it to the beginning of the fifteenth century (ca. 1400), where he has been joined by Simon Boeck (2017, 109), John Kousgård Sørensen (1966, col. 77), and Ailie Westbrooke (2023). Poul Hauberg (1982, 16) settled on dating it to the first half of the fifteenth century (1400–1450).

The manuscript is mostly written in Danish, specifically in a dialect that mixes the Skåne and Sjælland dialects (Såby 1886, xi) although many headings are in Latin, along with several Latin prayers. It is the work of a single scribe, who keeps glossing at a minimum to correct errors. It contains a leechbook proper (1r–56v), with diseases mentioned in the head-to-toe fashion and a focus on their treatments, although around the last quarter of the manuscript the order becomes unstructured. For instance, all remedies for the head (headaches, eyes, ears, and deafness) lie between 1r–20v, before carrying on with ailments in lower parts of the body (throat, voice, etc.), but in 47r, there are more remedies to prevent hair loss from the scalp. The text includes some herbal treatments mentioned in *Den danske Urtebog*, although it does not contain any chapters in full, suggesting that the scribe might have been copying from the same sources as Harpestræng, rather than from the *Urtebog* itself (Såby 1886, ix). It includes sixteen contemporary magic formulae as well as one added in the seventeenth century.²⁵

On 50r, there is a chapter on uroscopy, explaining how to use urine to determine whether a sick person will live or die from their sickness. This is followed by a text titled “Probacio galieni”, which also explains how to determine a sick person’s fate. Between 51v and 53r, there is a chapter on phlebotomy, with bloodletting and other medical advice for each month of the year. The Salernitan influence is thus very clear and places the manuscript in a learned medical context. Between 54r and 55r there are remedies specifically aimed at women along with some non-medical entries such as how to prevent a married woman from committing adultery: “Om thu wilt at thijn quinnæ tachær æy annen man” (If you want your wife not to take another man; Såby 1886, 94); and how to know whether a pregnant woman is carrying a son or a daughter: “Om thu wildæ widæ om quinnæ thet barn hauer om hun ær medh søn eller doter” (If you want to know if

25 The charms have been collected by Ferdinand Ohrt (1917–1921). Stephen Mitchell (2020 and 2025) has written about the charms within AM 187 8vo.

a woman who is with child, if she shall have son or a daughter; Såby 1886, 96). After this, there are some more remedies for a myriad of different things, including pain in the abdomen, constipation, stones, spleen, abscesses, wounds, pain in the genitals etc. At the end of the manuscript, fol. 57v–59r, there is a list of household remedies written by a hand from the early sixteenth century, in a hand not dissimilar to the first hand in AM 819 4to responsible for 1r–33v.

The scribe of AM 187 8vo is known to have worked at the Franciscan Saint Clara's convent in Roskilde (Hansen, 2016). Since the Clarissan convent apparently did not care for the sick (Westbrooke 2023, 385–386), some have suggested that the manuscript was written for the nuns' own personal use (Sørensen 1966, col 77). This seems unlikely, however, given the manuscript's contents, which include remedies for pregnancy, childbirth, and adultery—none of which are of any use to a nun. A more plausible scenario is that the scribe began working on the manuscript while in Skåne—possibly at Lund Cathedral—and later brought it with him to Roskilde, where it was purchased by the Clarissan nuns.

The text has been edited by Såby (1886).

Fifteenth century

5. Thott 710 4to (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)²⁶

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1400–1450

Dimensions: 20.6 × 15.5 cm

Language: Danish, German, Latin

Comments: This is a composite manuscript containing many different hands and mostly medical texts, although there are some religious sections scattered throughout. The entire codex is 153 folia (306 pages in total). The cover and the binding of the manuscript Thott 710 4to appear to be original but have been mended with some paper, bound by a leather strap. The manuscript has been re-bound several times. This is evident because it contains smaller manuscripts within the codex and some pages that have been replaced and/or re-positioned and re-foliated in the manuscript. The treatments are mostly in Old Danish, but there are some incantations in German scattered throughout the manuscript as well as some others

²⁶ No online facsimile available.

in Latin. Most of the manuscript dates to the first half of the fifteenth century, although certain sections date to the sixteenth (Kristensen 1908–1920, xciii; Hauberg 1919, 112).

The manuscript opens *in medias res*, with a Latin text on the Roman weight system (drachmas) and use of leeches (1r–4v). Fols. 4v–5v are blank, and they are followed by a smaller, later manuscript, written in the sixteenth century, that has been sewed in to make fols. 6r–9v, measuring approximately 9cm × 12cm, on the preparation of salves and plasters. Thereafter, between 10r and 23v, follows a list of remedies that does not seem to follow a particular order. The cures are for fertility, old wounds, intestinal worms, pestilence, chest ailments, and adultery. On 14r–14v, there is a remedy in Latin for phlegm. Between 15r and 18r there is a Latin-Danish Plant Dictionary from A–P, with the heading “Hic Sequitur de Varijs Herbis Nomina”. On 18r, below the end of the glossary, another hand has added a recipe for an eye water and a salve. This section (10r–23v) dates to the beginning of the sixteenth century.²⁷

After this, come two texts which make up the core of the manuscript, and both are ascribed to Harpestræng. The leechbook opens with some incantations for the sick, a weather-divination spell and Saint Birgitta’s advice for childless marriages on fol 24r. This folio is barely legible due to its damaged condition, although the name Birgittæ is legible half-way down the page. The writing is very faded here – a stark contrast to the writing on 24v – suggesting that, at some point, this side of the folio must have been the cover of the manuscript before it was incorporated into its present location. The text also begins *in medias res*, so this is also not the original beginning of the leechbook. On fol. 25r, there is an entry on daily lifestyle, followed by a long section on bloodletting up to fol. 27v. Also on 27v, there is the text on laxatives ascribed to Henricus Dacus, known from K 48 and NKS 66. At the very bottom – only two lines – there is the very start of the leechbook proper: “Swa som howeth er op hoff tel allæ lymmæ, swa skal thet oc først fynnes lægædom tel for thy then tymæ ther ...” (Just as the head is the chief (top) of all the limbs, so must the remedy first be found for it because then ...).

When the page is turned over, there is a slightly later hand that is filling in. The new scribe indicates that they are carrying on from when the last

27 The hand is similar to the one starting on 65r in the prayer book AM 784 4to.

one left off by copying the exact same last few words. He begins from “... thy then tymæ ther howeth wærk tha sorgther alla lemæ” (... because when the head aches, all the limbs are afflicted). The new scribe takes the reader through the first half of the body, from the very top of the scalp, “om haar aff faller” (if the hair falls off), to the bladder and genitals. Then, on 33v, there are a few entries for ailments in Latin. At the very bottom, a later hand from the end of the fifteenth century, has a Danish remedy for pestilence. The medical content in this hand continues all the way to the top 37v. This scribe has added the ailments in the margins for easier searching. 37r contains various prayers. On 36r–36v, there is a passage attributed to St Gregory which focuses on the spiritual efficacy of six masses, particularly for the dying or deceased. Saint Gregory, who was well known as a physician, is invoked as an authority on penance and medicine.

Fol. 38r sees the return of the original scribe in the main text, but it seems as though the previous scribe who filled in for him has added the ailments on the margins. This section begins with “bolnæ a lønligh ting” (boils on genitalia), probably referring to sexually transmitted diseases. It has a few more remedies for urine infections and then begin the gynaecological remedies. There are cures and recipes for conception, menstruation and menstrual cramps, stillbirths, labour, and at the end, contraception. Following the gynaecological section, which ends on 39v, there are remedies for wounds on 40r; abscesses, burns (“brand aff ild”), and snake bite on 40v; abortion, general sickness (“siwgdom”), feet ailments, and fleas on 41r. On the last folium, 41v, there is an index listing the ailments in order of appearance in the leechbook, which is almost exactly like the one in D 600, except that it seems to be missing a page containing the last few remedies that do appear in the *Lægebog*, but the index jumps from 41v straight to the herbal. Fol. 41v contains a glossary of all the ailments mentioned in the medical book up to that point.

The main evidence that supports that this leechbook was composed by Harpestræng is a note on 41v naming its sources:

hennæ bogh eer sammen sat aff wisæ læghæs kennæ domæ aff the
tyngth ther oftæ prowætæ æræ [--] cer constantinus / galienus /
henrik harpæstengh och andra wisæ mesterna

[This book is compiled from the knowledge of wise physicians, of the things that have often been tested [by] Macer, Constantine, Galen, Henrik Harpestræng, and other wise masters.]

The facts that Macer, Constantine, and Galen are already known sources from which Harpestræng drew, and that the text is in Danish and not in Latin, point to the possibility that Harpestræng may have been its author. D 600 (no. 8) bears a different inscription that attributes the leechbook to Harpestræng.

Between 42v and 55v we encounter a portion of Harpestræng's *Urtebog*, under the heading "Hæræ byrgher lægæbog aa danske then ther mæster Henrik harpestragh aff syth mæklæ mæster skap dikthæthe" (Here commences the leechbook of Danish master Henrik Harpestræng, which he composed. The master shall dictate). It seems as though the terms for 'herbal' and 'leechbook' were interchangeable.

To date, there is no entire edition of this manuscript, although certain edited excerpts of the leechbook are included in *Lægebøger – Bondepraktika – Griseldis* (1970, 1–146) and others have been edited by Hauberg (1982).

6. Thott 249 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)²⁸

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1400–1450

Dimensions: 10.8 × 7.9 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: This is a very small, pocket-sized manuscript in a very fragile condition, with its binding coming undone. It has been paginated and has a total of 272 sides.

The manuscript deals exclusively with medical content. The texts have been written by one sole scribe, and there is virtually no glossing except for a later hand which has, in a few places, added the ailments in the margins. The manuscript begins *in medias res*, as the first part of the original codex seems to have been. This has resulted in the first page suffering some damage, especially at the top, where the page has wrinkled. Pages 1–128 contain a leechbook with a wide variety of remedies for different ailments. It appears that the manuscript may have once been structured

²⁸ No online facsimile available.

in a head-to-toe fashion, as pages 1–61 seem to make their way down the lower half of the body. The leechbook starts with issues in the stomach, kidney stones, urination, boils and wounds,²⁹ men’s genitals, then women’s health. The section on women encompasses pages 52–61. Thence, the structure becomes whimsical, with remedies for constipation, pain in the chest, dropsy, and then back to the top of the body with remedies for the eyes and headaches.

The leechbook is followed by a lapidary on pages 129–159. From page 161, we find Harpestræng’s text on laxatives, although this time, rather than warning the reader about the administering of laxatives, it cautions the reader against the administering of any and all medicaments: “Hwo som will taghe legedom Han skal thet vidhe ath [nogle?] sterck legedom maa ey giffues børn ellr gamelth folk oc ey andhre thr farmcke**ær” (Whoever wants to take medicine. He should know that some strong medicines must not be given to children or old people, or others, who are sick). This is followed by a version of the *Urtebog*, from page 163, though it seems to start half-way through, with *Lilium* as the first plant. The first part of the *Urtebog* is added at the end, with *Apium* coming in on page 243. This manuscript relies heavily on NKS 66 8vo, as its contents and wording are essentially the same as in NKS 66. Hauberg (1927) edited this manuscript.

7. GKS 3656 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)³⁰

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1450–1500

Dimensions: 17.5 × 11.5 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: There are 186 folia in this manuscript, of which only the first three contain any medical advice, 1r–3r. The rest of the contents of this neat, well-preserved manuscript is of a legal nature. Those first three pages contain information on bloodletting, opening with “Thette ær legen mesther Hinrick harpæ strengh aff konnyngh Erick” (This is the medical advice of master Hinrick Harpestreng to King Erik). There is a section on fol. 3r that gives specific advice on how to let blood depending on what

29 Conditions that are not associated with any part of the body, such as wounds, burns, and boils, tend to crop up around the middle of the body, with the stomach and kidneys.

30 No online facsimile available.

astrological sign the sun is in. The last sentence of this section, half-way down the folio, reads “Er han i løwen tha ...” (if he is in Leo then ...), and the advice on bloodletting remains unfinished.

To date, no full edition exists, but the section on bloodletting has been edited in *Lægebøger – Bondepraktika – Griseldis* (1970, 147–148).

8. D 600 8vo (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)³¹

Alternative names: A Leechbook from Head to Toe

Dating: 1400–1490

Dimensions: 15.0 × 11.0 cm

Language: Danish, Latin

Comments: This manuscript is generally dated to around 1450. Hauberg (1936, 27) notes that the year 1437 is recorded in two astrological figures on page 25 but notes that the hand does not look old enough to be from this year. The year 1490 is mentioned on page 50, which he thinks fits the date of the manuscript better. The manuscript has a total of 151 pages and 300 sides, and it has been paginated rather than foliated. The texts are written by the one hand, mostly within the medical genre, although there is a strong ecclesiastical element. The first part of the manuscript, pages 1–87, features countless texts in Latin and some tables, including Easter tables; astrological information; a text on “Nomes de modo horologii” (Names relating to the method of the clock); one on the thirty-day lunar cycle; a text on bloodletting; another on the full moons in each month and how they affect one’s health; and an almanac.

Next, on pages 87–91, there is a medical text ascribed to Harpestræng in Danish and subheadings in Latin, opening with “Nomina medicina magister henrici harpestreng” (The medicine of Master Henrik Harpestræng). This text gives general advice on how to heal from an illness and how to lead a healthy lifestyle: “Hwo som krank ær han schal syn dagheligh leffeth swo gøme som hær star screwth” (Whoever is ill, he shall live his daily life as carefully as it is written here). On page 88, there is the start of a leechbook with remedies for headaches, earaches, and for hair loss. This carries on to page 91, where the text ends abruptly with a remedy for horses. The same hand (in different ink) then adds a four-line text titled “Epitaphium Virgilii” (Epitaph of Virgil).

31 No online facsimile available.

Between pages 92 and 140 there is a series of shorter medical texts in Latin. Following this, on pages 141–145, there is a Latin-Danish list of herbs, trailed by a section of a religious and superstitious nature. Between 146 and 148 there is musical notation intended for chanting. At the bottom of 148, the same hand has added an entry on “spansgrønt” (copper acetate) in Latin, although they kept the name of the chemical compound in Danish. On pages 172–175, there are recipes for salves, before the scribe carries on with a fragment of Harpestræng’s *Liber Herbarum*, between 175 and 195. A medical book structured from head to toe is encompassed between 196 and 230. The text is a mixture of the *Liber Herbarum* and a slightly younger Latin text by Petrus Hispanus, *Thesaurus pauperum*. Perhaps the outline of the writing and some of its material originates from a now lost Danish medical book by Harpestræng. The text specifically contains some interesting sections at the end; perhaps the most charming is a section on how to make people happy.

On pages 231–260, there are medical and alchemical records written in both Danish and Latin. On pages 261–268 we find some minor texts in Latin. At the end of the manuscript, on pages 269–300, there is yet another medical book in Latin.

The contents and the remedies in Thott 710 4to are almost identical to D 600. Hauberg (1919, 112) claims that Thott 710 4to contains the oldest extant copy of the *Lægebog* allegedly composed by Harpestræng between fols. 25r and 41v, written in the first half of the fifteenth century, so D 600 may have either possibly been copied from the same exemplar as Thott 710 4to or from Thott 710 4to itself.

There is an online edition of the leechbook (pages 196–230 in the manuscript) available on Tekstnet.³² There is also a printed version in *Lægebøger – Bondepraktika – Griseldis* (1970, 1–146).

9. NKS 314 b 4to (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)³³

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1475–1500

Dimensions: 21.0 × 14.5 cm

Language: Danish, German

32 https://tekstnet.dk/books/anon_laegbog-upps-d600/

33 No online facsimile available.

Comments: NKS 314 b 4to is a comprehensive guide to *materia medica*, exclusively containing medical texts. It was first dated by Kristensen to the year 1500 'at the earliest' (1908–1920, xcvi). Hauberg revised this dating, claiming it was from the second half of the fifteenth century (1919, 114), before narrowing it down to the end of the fifteenth century (1936, 35).

The craftsmanship of the book is evident; it features an elaborate cover made from leather-covered wooden blocks adorned with intricate floral designs. The manuscript has been well preserved, showcasing vibrant pages and dark ink. The text is adorned with decorative touches in red and gold ink, including ornate capital letters and underlined titles. The whole manuscript has been written by one person, in Danish with very minimal use of Latin phrases. A later scribe has added some extra remedies or minor glosses on certain leaves (19v, 28r, 38v, 57r, 62r, 91r, 146v, 148r, 148v, 149v, 152v), this hand dates to the second quarter of the sixteenth century.³⁴

The main bulk of the manuscript contains a herbarium between 1r and 10v (i.e. a list of herbs and their uses, with no description or context, just as a tool for quick searches); an ailment index, where diseases are listed with their cures written next to them between 11r and 14v; twenty-two translated chapters of Harpestreng's *Liber Herbarum*: "Her begynnnes lægebog paa danskæ ther mesther Henrick Harpæstreng aff syth megle mestherskap dichtede" (Here begins the leech book in Danish that master Henrick Harpestreng, of his much knowledge, dictated)³⁵ on 17r–31v; a chapter on bloodletting, cupping, and bathing between 34r and 37r; and the leechbook allegedly penned by Harpestræng on 37r–69v.³⁶ After the leechbook (37r–69v), there are some shorter sections on how to make brandy, how to make plasters and balms, a poem on the health and wellness advice given to a king of England; and small sections on fever, dropsy, pestilence, and abscesses.

From 96v to 101r there is another text that resembles a head-to-toe

34 My dating of this hand is based on the fact that it bears a striking resemblance to the one in Laurids Pedersens Lægebog, which I have firmly dated between 1533–1546 (see no. 16).

35 N.B. Even though the rubric states that this is the *lægebog* (leechbook) by Harpestræng, in modern scholarship we refer to it as the *Urtebog* and the *Liber Herbarum* as 'Herbals', as this reflects the contents and nature of the work better. This text is, in fact, a translation of Harpestræng's *Liber Herbarum*.

36 The leechbook in this manuscript does not mention Harpestræng, but it is the same text found in other Danish and Swedish medical manuscripts where this is implied: Thott 710 4to, AM 819 4to, AM 45 4to, AM 188 8vo, and GKS 3487 8vo.

leechbook, but it does not ascribe it to any author. On 101v and the first half of 102r, there is a text that explains the Galenic phlegmatic and melancholic humours, which Galen based on Hippocrates' humoral theory. This text seems to never have been finished, as there are two humours missing and the rest of 102r and 102v have been left blank. This is followed by two poems in Middle Low German conveying the medical advice attributed to Pythagoras (103r–104r and 105r–116v). Both poems deal with how the celestial bodies, such as the moon, and the times of the year affect the body and wellbeing and offers advice on how to remain in good health.

Henceforth, the content remains medical, but the texts become shorter, and the structure somewhat arbitrary. There are texts on the powers of "Cardabenedicta" which are also found in *Huskurer* (no. 16), a section on women's health (121r–124v), astrological treatises (128r–129r), an anatomical text on the science of bloodletting and which veins to bleed from (129v–135r). There are clear traces of German influence in this section, too. There are sections where German words have been kept: "beweritze" (southernwood),³⁷ and "honnigseem" (honey).³⁸

There are also remedies not found elsewhere in the corpus, such as one on 124r, to heal women's perineal tears after childbirth: "Thet skeer thyt oc offthe thet quinnen wynner barn thet hennes hwd refner all sammens" (It often happens that when a woman gives birth, her skin tears). Cures for this ailment, albeit absent in the Scandinavian corpus, are known from German manuscripts, such as the so-called *Breslauer Arzneibuch*, a thirteenth-century German manuscript at the University Library of Wrocław in Poland;³⁹ the *Utrechter Azneibuch* and the *Stockholmer Arzneibuch*. Other cures from the *Breslauer Arzneibuch* also share similarities with NKS 314 b 4to, but the general structure and quality of the *Arzneibuch* (leechbook) is different enough from the *Lægebog* to ascertain that the Danish scribe was not copying directly from the texts in this manuscript, which contains a German version of

37 123r: "tha skullæ taghe saluæ oc rudhe. malyrt oc abrotanum the er beweritze" (then one shall take sage, rue, wormwood and southernwood (*abrotanum*), which is beweritze). However, the Scandinavian word for *abrotanum* is consistently *abrott*.

38 Mod. Germ. "Honnigseim" (honey); 121v: sywd thet met ædickæ oc med honnigseem ("seeth it with vinegar and honey"). In Danish, the term is consistently "honnig" or "honning".

39 This is an extensive, neat, and expensive parchment manuscript with illustrations, written in Ostmitteledeutsch (East Middle German), in Silesia. See Külz and Külz-Trosse, *Der Breslauer Arzneibuch R.291 der Stadtbibliothek*, for an overview and edition of the manuscript.

the *Trotula*. Therefore, rather than a simple copyist or scribe, we may be dealing with a learned Danish physician trained at a German university.

On 136r–139r, there is a text on Hippocratic medicine and how to discern illness from a person's complexion, which is not to be found in other Scandinavian manuscripts. The manuscript ends with a leechbook by Master Bartolomeus (known as Bartholomew the Englishman in English, or Bartholomaeus Anglicus in Latin), between 144r and 154v. This last text can be traced back to the original exemplar. The earliest version of this text is found in C 58 at the Stadtbibliothek in Zürich, dating to the middle of the twelfth century. Another version is found in the mid-thirteenth-century Cod. germ. 92 (Cgm 92) at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in München (formerly the Hof- und Staatsbibliothek zu München).

The *Liber Herbarum* on 17r–31v has been edited by Kristensen (1908–1920, 243). The leechbook has been edited in *Lægebøger – Bondepraktika – Griseldis* (1970, 1–146). The rest of the manuscript remains unedited.

*Sixteenth century*⁴⁰

10. GKS 3487 8vo (Gamle Kongelige Samling, Copenhagen)⁴¹

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1490–1510

Dimensions: 14.5 × 9.5 cm

Language: Latin, Danish, Low German

Comments: This example begins with a Low German confession formula detailing numerous different ways in which one can sin (1r–9v).⁴²

Following that, there is a version of the *Kvindens Rosengaard* (Women's Rose Garden), a Danish translation of the work by German doctor and apothecary Eucharius Rösslin in 1513. It starts on fol. 10r: "en bogh som kallis frwchtsomeligh qwynders Och Jordhemodherness Rosengardh" (a book called the fruitful women's and earth mother's rose garden) and ends on fol. 65r. It includes advice on difficult labour, how to care for women before and after childbirth, and how to care for new-born children. The

⁴⁰ There are two more manuscripts of the Harpestræng tradition that date to the sixteenth century but that aren't included in this list because they date to the second half of the century: Ledreborg Håndskrifts Samling 15 4to with sections from *Den danske Urtebog* and NKS 67 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliothek, Copenhagen) with sections from the *Liber Herbarum*.

⁴¹ No online facsimile available.

⁴² This text has been edited online by Seán Vrieland (n.d.).

manuscript proceeds with snippets of medical advice in Latin and German, including the famous text on “Cardo Benedicta” (66v–68r), copied in its original language, German.

On fols. 98v–109v there is a leechbook with remedies for a wide variety of ailments, which Hauberg claimed has a connection with Harpestræng’s leechbook (1919, 121; 1982, 23–24), but they do not seem to have been structured in any particular order. At the end of the leechbook, there is an entry on “sennep” (mustard), taken from the *Urtebog*, followed by another entry on “blodh ganck” (dysentery), and ending with a glossary with the Latin and Danish names for plants.

There is not a holistic edition of the entire manuscript. However, the leechbook and the *Kvindens Rosengaard* have been edited online by Simon Boeck, Anne Mette Hansen, and Ebba Hjorth. There is a printed version of fols. 98v–103r, 109r–110v, and 129r–129v (*Lægebøger - Bondepraktika – Griseldis* 1970).

11. AM 188 8vo (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁴³

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1490–1510

Dimensions: 14.7 × 10.2 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: AM 188 8vo is a miscellany compiled around the turn of the sixteenth century,⁴⁴ with a heavy focus on medicine. It measures 14.7cm × 10.2 cm. The manuscript consists of ninety-two leaves, seventy-six made of paper and eighteen of parchment. There are a total of nine hands, including the ones that only add glossing. The main bulk of the text, however, is written by two hands. The first (Hand A) dates to around the year 1500 and is responsible for writing fols. 3r–41r and 52r–60v, which mainly contain astrological texts. The second (Hand B) dates to the second quarter of the sixteenth century, as this hand also adds some notes on Christian II of Denmark’s trip to Norway in 1532, rendering this the *terminus post quem* for Hand B.⁴⁵

43 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AMo8-0188/o#mode/2up>

44 According to Handrit.is, the original manuscript was created between 1475 and 1525, <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/da/AMo8-0188>. Poul Hauberg (1919, 123) previously dated the manuscript to the first half of the sixteenth century (1500–1549). The website for the University of Copenhagen agrees with this view (“Restauration of AM 188 8vo”, n.d.).

45 Poul Hauberg (1919, 123) says that Hand B is writing at around the same time as the events

The manuscript opens with some annalistic notes of events that took place in 1526 on 1v, written by Hand B. In the same folio, the scribe reveals that he was born on the 8 May 1508. This is followed by a Latin text on rules to follow for the meteorological nature of the seasons on 2r–2v. A later hand from the 1600s has then filled in the empty space on 2v by adding all the names of the runes in Iceland. Hand A begins his work from here. Between 3r and 9v there is a Latin calendar, with an Easter table and then a month-by-month lunar calendar.

10r–41r consist of astrological tables and how the cosmos affects the human body, all in Latin. From 13r, there are texts and tables called “spera’ (spheres) ascribed to Apuleius, through Pythagoras (“Spera Pythagorea Appulei”). These texts and spheres describe a method for determining a person’s health and fate using numerical calculations and astrology. This theme is followed all the way through to 41r. In 30r, a later hand has added a religious verse in Danish.

On 41v, two later hands from the middle of the sixteenth century have each added one medical remedy in Danish. The second remedy is for “Lungesot” (lung ailments). The hand is very similar to the one found in *Huskurer* (no. 16). This begins the section on medicine. Hand B’s writing begins *in medias res* at the top of 42r, “Tagh thesse effterne wrter och skøll them i wand aff huer wrth ij gode handfull” (Take these following plants and soak them each in their own water in generous handfuls). We know not what the plants are nor what the cure is meant to be for. It seems as though this was originally a separate piece of work that got sewed in with this manuscript written by Hand A. On the opposite side, in 42v, there are two hands: the first one, at the top, reads “Abraham puocat te vel vos fugies vel fugient[-] + et aligat + salomon te vel vos mueniat +” (Abraham summons you to flee + and binds + may Salomon protect you) which has been crossed out; and another, writing in Danish, adds some more remedies for another unknown ailment. This latter hand is the same one as the one at the top of 41v.

In 43r, Hand B comes back with the aforementioned paragraph on Christian II’s trip to Norway, which carries on to 43v. At the bottom of 43v, the medical content continues, starting off with a remedy “ffaar blod-sott” (for dysentery). The medical content in Danish carries on until 51v.

take place, although he concedes that it could be as late as the middle of the sixteenth century.

Between 46v and 47v there is a section on “skørbugh” (scurvy). Fols. 48r and 48v deal with a variety of problems, none of which seem related to each other: on “ondhe yld” (lit. bad fire), “anledhe” (face), “ambudh” (penis), “amyndelsse” (memory), and “binbrwdh” (broken leg/bone). In 49r, there is a heading that reads “Tiill Quinder” (For Women); this is followed by remedies for childbirth and menstruation, and later with remedies for chest pains, for the bladder, dysentery, tuberculosis, and abscesses.

Between 52r and 60v, Hand A comes back to copy a “Formulae epistolarum” (also known as ‘Epistole Caroli’), which is a manual in Latin on how to write letters. On 61r, the medical content, written by Hand B, returns, adding treatments in no apparent order. This time, there is a heading at the top of the page reading “Legedom faar then mye siuge uti brystett: Syde oc Riighen” (Cures for much sickness in the chest: side and back). On 65v begins some veterinary advice for horses and mares and miscarried foals. Following this, on 70r, there are remedies for miscarried fetuses. Between 76r and 79v, there is a Danish translation of the treatise on the properties of Carda Benedicta and how to use it medicinally. However, part of the original text in German is found right after it, between 80r and 82v. On 82v, the last two paragraphs are written in Danish, before going on to a text ascribed to Albertus Magnus, which carries on to 84r. The codex ends with a fragment of a head-to-toe leechbook from the eighteenth century. Hauberg (1919, 127) noted that on 87r there is advice against dropsy with the use of the “Slangesten” (snake stone), which is found in AM 187 8vo.

12. NKS 134 4to (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)⁴⁶

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1500

Dimensions: 21.0 × 15.0 cm

Language: Danish, German

Comments: This is a fragment of just ten paper leaves written by one hand. It does not include any gloss or show signs of later usage. The writing is neat and clear, and there are some elements of decoration. Rubrics have been marked clearly with red and gold ink. Only the first double-page has any medical material and a little bit on circulation on 1v. Thence, the content pivots to religious texts but remains somewhat related to medicine.

⁴⁶ No online facsimile available.

The text begins *in medias res* and includes three chapters from the *Liber Herbarum* on fol. 1r: “Pipinella”, “Serptentina”, and “Zinziber”. On the same folio, there is an entry on gout in Danish, with a German translation, and another on haemorrhage, in Danish with no German translation. At the top of 1v there is an entry on “Contra fluxum sanguinis a propeposteriori” (Against blood flow from the rear door). A Latin inscription suggests that the manuscript was copied in Randers (Jylland) on the 21 October 1499.

To date, no edition exists.

13. GKS 3457 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)⁴⁷

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1490–1520

Dimensions: 14.0 × 9.4 cm

Language: Danish, Latin

Comments: This manuscript offers a remarkable window into early sixteenth-century Danish monastic life and medieval scholarship. Dated precisely to the year 1520, as evidenced by an included almanac and a specific notation on a table within the text, it was produced at the Maribo Kloster (Abbey) in Lolland, Denmark (Kristensen 1908–1920, xcvi). Its contents span hymns, prayers, psalms, and medico-botanical knowledge.

The manuscript is small and thick, consisting of 206 folia made of parchment, though not all pages are numbered. The text is written in a single hand, but later glosses indicate ongoing use and study and emendations to recipes. The manuscript opens with mostly illegible text on fol. 1r, in faded red and black ink, featuring a circular diagram with an abbreviation of “Ihesus” encircled by a sun, accompanied by a Danish inscription. Subsequent folios (1v–3v) contain a variety of prayers, including the “Pater Noster” (Our Father) and the “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary), followed by the Apostles’ Creed. These prayers are foundational to Catholic liturgical practice and often recited in that exact order, suggesting that the booklet may have been used often in Mass. A notable section begins on fol. 4r with an astronomical or calendrical table, indicating the manuscript’s use for timekeeping and liturgical planning. This section includes a preamble discussing the validity and usage of the solar table over different time spans, including leap years. On fol. 4v, there is another circular diagram that reads

⁴⁷ No online facsimile available.

“Tabula angelica est ista” (This is an angelic table) and an inscription below mentioning Easter dates in the year 1520.

The manuscript includes botanical and medical knowledge, mostly in Danish. A remedy for pestilence has been added on 1v, and thirteen entries of Harpestreng’s *Liber Herbarum* (but translated into Danish) have been included on fols. 13r–14r. This is followed on fol. 15r by an explanation of the Galenic concept of the ‘simples’; how plants have certain properties (hot or cold, and wet or dry) that will directly counteract certain illnesses. Between fols. 133r and 144v there is a head-to-toe leechbook, followed by forty-three chapters of the *Liber Herbarum*, although the scribe adds more plants that are unique to the Scandinavian geography and eating habits, such as *Angelica* and *Benedicta alba*, between fols. 144v and 151v. These entries have been written mostly in Latin, although the scribe seamlessly blends some Danish or provides Danish translations of the herbs. Towards the end of the codex, there are some more remedies that seem to have been added as an afterthought, in Danish and Latin, once the manuscript was completed.

To date, no edition exists.

14. Thott 245 8vo (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen)⁴⁸

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1500–1515

Dimensions: 17.6 ´ 11.8 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: This manuscript is a witness to the German gynaecological text known in Danish as the *Kvinders Rosengaard*, which, in this manuscript, is named *Frugtsommelige Quinders Urtegaard* (The fruitful women’s herb garden), a translation of Rösslin’s *Der Rosengarten* (The Rose Garden). It contains much of the same material as the text in GKS 3487 8vo, plus many more entries, including one about twins, why a child must be bathed after birth, and advice for heavy menstruation. This medical text can be found on fols. 1r–79r.

To date, no edition exists.

⁴⁸ No online facsimile available.

15. AM 819 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁴⁹

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1500–1515

Dimensions: 18.5 × 12.5 cm

Language: Danish

Comments: This specimen consists of two sections, which must once have been separate products and were bound together by a later compiler. The first half, between 1r and 33v, gives us a *terminus ante quem* of 1514, as the scribe writes down the date on the last page, presumably when the manuscript was completed: “Anno domini MDXIII sabato pentecostes” (Year 1514, Pentecost Saturday). The second half, between 34r and 53v, dates to slightly later, possibly around the middle of the sixteenth century. Both sections have a sole scribe and no glosses or later emendations.

The first half of the manuscript (Part I) contains part of Harpestræng’s leechbook.⁵⁰ However, it opens with some spells and charms that do diverge from the Harpestræng material, starting with a spell to dispel rats and mice from the home, followed by a long list of prayers to Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, St John, and Elizabeth to heal gout, and a spell to incarcerate a thief so that they do not leave with the possessions they have taken. There are other prayers and charms scattered throughout Part I of the manuscript, which Hauberg (1919, 118) suggested might have been copied from the mid-fifteenth century Danish manuscript Thott 710 4to, as these are the only two copies of Harpestræng’s leechbook that contain charms or other magical entries. These charms have been compiled and edited by Ferdinand Ohrt (1917–1921).

Unlike most other leechbooks attributed to Harpestræng, the structure in AM 819 4to is obscure, as it does not follow the traditional head-to-toe order. However, from fol. 5r, there is an attempt to keep related ailments together. For instance, between 12v and 13v, all the remedies are intended for different parts of the head, followed by a section on horse veterinary medicine, and then the signs of the zodiac. Remedies for fevers are mostly bundled together between 29r and 31r. There is a final section on fol. 33r

49 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AM04-0819/0#mode/2up>

50 Harpestræng is thought to have written a leechbook, as there are various Danish manuscripts that allude to this: Thott 710 4to, NKS 314b 4to, AM 45 4to, GKS 3487 8vo, and AM 188 8vo.

dedicated to spiritual questions that one should ask the terminally ill, attributed to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1033–1109). There is an entry for infertility that opens with an explanation that if a woman cannot get pregnant, this is because her womb has moved upwards to her stomach – the phenomenon known as the ‘wandering womb’. One of the suggested treatments involving the burning of goat’s hooves is also present on page 27 of *Lavrids Pedersens Lægebog* (*Huskurer*, see no. 16), although in this manuscript, the remedy is provided in German. There is a recipe for a plaster in AM 819 4to that is also written in a mixture of Danish and German, on fol. 11v, so the link with a German medical manuscript is present.

AM 819 4to contains striking similarities with the only medieval Norwegian *lægebog* (*Vinjeboka*, see no. 29). It seamlessly threads through magico-religious treatments as well as herbal ones, and its entries – albeit often much shorter due to the smaller size of the codex – largely overlap with AM 819 4to. For instance, the section on horse veterinary medicine in AM 819 4to, between 13v and 15v, matches up almost perfectly with the entries in *Vinjeboka*.

In Part II (34r–53v) of the manuscript, between 34r and 44v, lies a copy of the beginning of Harpestræng’s *Lægebog* followed by miscellaneous medical advice and charms from fols. 44r to 53. It also includes part of his *Urtebog* between 37r and 42v, but the scribe has taken some liberties; rather than listing the treatments alphabetically, per each plant’s properties, they have carried on with the traditional leechbook’s structure, naming the ailment first, and then following with the ingredients and recipe. Part II is mostly concerned with general health, such as good-quality sleep, headaches, toothache, and so on. Some chapters of Christiørn Pedersen’s *En Nøttelig Legebog* have been copied between fol. 34r and 44v, although not all remedies in this section of AM 819 4to have been taken from Pedersen’s *Lægebog*. This confirms Poul Hauberg’s notion that Part II was written later than Part I, as *En Nøttelig Legebog* was not published until 1533. Following this, there are some cures for a variety of ailments unrelated to one another (44v–48r) and a few recipes for “sten” (stones), i.e. kidney stones, liver stones etc., between 50v–52v. This is followed by a chapter on how to live a healthy lifestyle, attributed to a Dr Karl, a thus-far unidentified physician. Parts of the manuscript, namely the section on bloodletting, the medical advice, veterinary medicine and section on farming known as

“bondepraktika” have been edited in *Lægebøger – Bondepraktika – Griseldis* (1970, 149–155, 175–212, 213–216, and 244–290 respectively). The rest of the manuscript remains unedited.

16. Lavrids Pedersens Lægebog 4to [no shelfmark] (Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien, Stockholm)⁵¹

Alternative names: *Huskurer och Signerier på Danska*

Dating: 1550–1699

Dimensions: 20 × 15.5 cm

Language: Danish, German, Latin

Comments: This manuscript has been catalogued as “Huskurer och Signerier på Danska” by the Swedish Royal Academy of Letters (Vitterhetsakademien), and therefore, I refer to it as *Huskurer*. Until very recently, this small codex had been all but forgotten, with only two scholars (Hauberg 1936; Heugren 1918) having ever briefly consulted it in their quests to better understand medicine in medieval Denmark. The exemplar is a thin and small book made of paper containing purely medical knowledge. It has sixty-three sides in total, having been paginated, not foliated. Most of the manuscript is in Danish, although there are some sections written in German and some prayers in Latin.

This manuscript has become known as Lavrids Pedersens Lægebog due to a note at the back of the manuscript reading, “Lavrids Pedersen Bin ich gennant [--] Mein gelych stegt in gottis Handt. – Paffuell Jacobsen Egen Hand” (Laurits Pedersen is my name [--]. My happiness lies in God’s Hand. – Paffuell Jacobsen. Own hand). This hand, which Paffuell Jacobsen has claimed to be his own, is certainly later than both MS 1 and MS 3 by at least a few decades, if not half a century. It appears Jacobsen is a later owner of the manuscript and is shedding some light on its origins, originally belonging to this Laurits Pedersen.

The codex comprises three separate, different manuscripts that were later sewn together. Poul Hauberg (1936, 36) refers to the work as a whole as dating to the first half of the sixteenth century, but the three manuscripts seem to have been written at different times throughout the 1500s. Manuscript 1 (MS 1) is the only manuscript that fits into our time-period (up to 1550); the other two being slightly younger examples. Paul Heugren

51 No online facsimile available.

(1918, vi) assumed that MS 1 and MS 3 were originally the same, written towards the end of the 1500s, and believed that a younger manuscript (i.e. MS 2), was inserted in the middle. However, there are some clear differences between MS 1 and MS 3, such as the ink colour— including the use of red ink at one point— and some distinct letter forms, indicating that they were written by different scribes. Each section is written by one hand throughout; all three are different from each other but each manuscript is the work of a sole scribe.

The hand in MS 1 (Hand A henceforth) is the oldest. The texts penned by this hand shed light on when Hand A was writing. About a third (34.37%)⁵² of *Huskurer* MS 1 has been copied from Christiørn Pedersen's *En Nøttelig Legebog*, the first Scandinavian medical work to be published in print in 1533. This data provides us with our *terminus post quem*. As for the *terminus ante quem*, I venture to suggest that this is 1546. This is because the only other medical work printed in the first half of the sixteenth century, another largely popular and influential work, is Henrick Smid's *Ny Urtegaard*,⁵³ the content of which is notably absent from *Huskurer* MS 1. Therefore, *Huskurer* MS 1 was most likely written in the thirteen-year window between the two works, sometime between 1533 and 1546.

MS 1 includes texts not found in Christiørn Pedersen's work, too, including recipes for cosmetic procedures, such as how to stop hair from greying or how to make it blonde(r). Also absent from Pedersen's work are several prayers in Latin when the patient and/or practitioner are encouraged to mutter a prayer as part of the treatment. There is also evidence of copying from a German manuscript: a whole paragraph on page 27 written in Early High German describes using the claws or hooves of an animal, grinding them down into a powder, and giving this to a wetnurse to drink in broth, wine, or any other liquid. The scribe also seems to copy some of Harpestræng's work, but does not cite him as a source, and the entries are much shorter than those in NKS 66 and K 48.

Whilst the author/scribe of the manuscript seems to be well-educated in medicine and languages – for they must be at least trilingual, writing in Latin, Danish, and German – they do not seem to seek any acclaim,

52 I obtained this percentage by counting all words and sentences in MS 1 and comparing them to the overlapping ones in Christiørn Pedersen's *Legebog*.

53 Henrick Smid published his medical work in four volumes between 1546 and 1553.

power, or authority. The only instance when they reference a Salernitan doctor is in an entry under “for kaalde syge” (for fever) where they mention medieval Arabic physician Avicenna. The only other two authorities our scribe mentions are “en gammel quinde fra Halland” (an old woman from Halland), on page 5, who advised another, who had cancer in her lip, that she should take a white cloth, dip it in tar, and apply it [to her lip], and an unnamed physician who used Carduus Benedictus to heal a woman with breast cancer in Augsburg, Germany. This suggests that the scribe is more interested in empirical evidence and remedies that actually work than the learned theoretical teachings of antique and medieval doctors. This is further supported by the fact that right after providing a remedy, the scribe will sometimes add “och det er forsøgt” (and this has been tried), as if they are validating the legitimacy of the remedy.

MS 1 sometimes amends some of Pedersen’s entries, replacing expensive ingredients only found in apothecaries with plants that grow locally and prescribing cheap wine over more expensive wine. This suggests that the scribe is writing for a working-class patient.

To date, no edition exists.

Swedish

Fifteenth century

17. AM 45 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁵⁴

Alternative names: Klemming I

Dating: ca. 1450

Dimensions: 19.4 × 13.7 cm

Language: Swedish, Latin

Comments: AM 45 4to is peculiar for its being primarily a legal manuscript. Of its 113 paper folia, ninety-eight relate to legal content. A text on the Swedish *Stadslag* (city law) of King Magnus Eriksson makes up the vast majority of the manuscript, covering fols. 1r all the way to 93r. Two hands, from around the middle of the fifteenth century, are responsible for the writing. The first (Hand A) goes from 1r to 42r. The second (Hand B) picks up where the first left off, which happens to be mid-sentence on the fifth line in 42r and carries on all the way to the end of the text and almost

⁵⁴ <https://handrit.is/search?q=AM+45+4to>

the end of the manuscript. After finishing the law text, Hand B continues to write a thirty-day almanac, found on 93v–95v, followed by an excerpt of Harpestræng's leechbook, between 96r and 98v: "Her byrias lækedomber aff mæsther henrik harpostræng" (Here begins the leechbook of Master Henrik Harpestræng). The excerpt does not seem to follow a particular order and mainly sticks to giving one remedy for each ailment. Hand B is also responsible for a "Missa Missa De quinq Wlnderibus corporis Christi" (Mass of the five wounds of the body of Christ), between 99r and 101v, written in Latin. Following the ending of the Mass, there is a six-line liturgical text and two cures for breast abscesses.

There is a text on the internal structure of the German-Roman Kingship ("Det tysk-romerske kejserdømmes indre opbygning"), on 102r–102v, and two articles of the city charter on 103r, also by the same hand. Fol. 103v is stuck to 104r, and they are thus illegible. However, according to Handrit.is, a sixteenth-century hand had written on these pages, which had presumably been left blank. Fols. 104v–105v are blank, and the rest of the manuscript is written by two later hands, from the second half of the 1500s. On 106r–108v, there is a text on the rules of duelling, by Hand C; and on 111r–112v, there are annal records of the history of the Swedish monarchy between 1521 and 1569, by Hand D. The last three pages (112v–113v) contain biographical data of Gustav Vasa of Sweden and his nine children, written in Latin: birth dates, places and times, and deaths.

The manuscript has been neatly written throughout. New chapters or paragraphs have been clearly signed by large initials and red rubrics, although these are not visible in the black-and-white facsimile found online. The original manuscript ran from 1r to 103r and had ten blank folia at the end. It appears the two scribes responsible for its conception and creation were working together or at least worked in the same institution. Even their hands are rather alike, hinting that they may have been trained together, too. The manuscript seems to have set out to be a law book from the start, its focus heavily being on laws and kingship, as emphasised by the addition of the text on German-Roman Kaisers.

Klemming (1886, 3–10) edited the medicinal sections.

18. C 19 (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)⁵⁵

Alternative names: Codex 19 Benz; Klemming V

Dating: ca. 1450

Dimensions: 22.0 × 15.0 cm

Language: Swedish, Latin

Comments: This is an exceptionally large clerical reference and handbook of 538 folia containing mostly ecclesiastical and administrative texts, but also two small leechbooks: one on 77r, and another between 292r and 293v; as well as a Swedish translation of *Den danske Urtebog* between 80r and 82r, followed by some medical advice on 82v–83v in Swedish and Latin. The manuscript is believed to have been created and used at Vadstena (Anderson-Schmitt and Hedlund 1988, 199).

The manuscript is written predominantly in Latin and Swedish by several hands and compiled between 1300 and 1500, with a strong focus on theology and canon law. It includes collections of sermons, liturgical texts, penitential instructions, and episcopal statutes, making it a highly practical handbook for clergy. Among the theological materials are “Sermones Varii de Tempore” (35v–54v), a series of sermons aligned with the liturgical calendar, and “De Mandatis Dei” (55r–62r), which expounds on the Ten Commandments. Multiple texts deal with the administration of penance and clerical functions, such as “Ut penitencie publice ab hiis quorum interest uniformiter imponantur” (That public penances may be imposed uniformly by those whom it concerns; 99r–100r), which provides guidelines for the uniform imposition of public penance. The inclusion of three separate texts related to St Birgitta – her “Revelationes” (62r–64r), a Passion meditation, and liturgical texts – conveys a strong connection to Vadstena Abbey. Additionally, the manuscript contains statutes issued by Bishop Nils of Linköping for Vadstena Abbey (245r–248v), reinforcing the book’s likely use within the Bridgettine sphere. The inclusion of masses for the dead (18r–18v) and texts on ecclesiastical discipline also aligns with Vadstena’s role as a centre of prayer and spiritual guidance.

Despite its predominantly ecclesiastical character, a few secular materials are interspersed throughout. These include legal texts such as King Karl Knutsson’s regulations on trade and wages (155r–155v) and a tax-related decree from 1436 (159v–160r), alongside medical texts (77r, 80r–82v,

⁵⁵ <https://manuscripta.se/ms/100408>

292r–293v), which reflect the practical needs of a monastic community. The presence of a genealogical table (507v) further suggests that the manuscript may have been used for record-keeping.⁵⁶

The medical texts have been edited by Klemming (1886, 164–181).

19. C 22 (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)⁵⁷

Alternative names: Klemming X

Dating: ca. 1450

Dimensions: 15.0 × 10.0 cm

Language: Latin, Swedish

Comments: This codex is a compilation of many smaller manuscripts bound together into this 157-folia exemplar. Like C 19 (no. 18), this is an ecclesiastical work written at Vadstena,⁵⁸ containing predominantly devotional and instructional texts in Latin and Swedish. The manuscript is made of paper, and the dating of its texts ranges between 1300 and 1500. These include an account of the life of Jesus (9r–16v); the six sins against the Holy Spirit (31r–35r); and a variety of prayers, including a “Bön till Kristi lekamen” (Prayer to the Body of Christ), Eucharistic prayers ascribed to Popes Johannes XXII, Innocentius, and Bonifacius VI, and a “Bön till Jungfru Maria före tagandet av Guds lekamen” (Prayer to the Virgin Mary before the Assumption of the Body of God), all between 81r and 81v. There are two Latin-Swedish glossaries: a general, semi-alphabetical one between 69r and 77r, and a short herbal glossary on 82r. A herbal recipe for dye lies across 129r and 129v.⁵⁹

The manuscript encloses six pages of medical advice, between fols. 6r and 8v. It loosely follows a head-to-toe structure, although four remedies between 6r and 6v are for ear pain (“Före örna värk”), and eleven are for deafness (“Contra surditatem”). Fols. 7r and 7v contain nine treatments for eye health (“ad sanitatem oculorum”), and 8r six treatments for pain relief (“Pro dolore dencium”), followed by three entries titled “fore wäxtin”, which might be referring to tumours or abscesses (Swedish: “förhindra

56 For an overview of all its contents as well as editions of the texts, see Anderson-Schmitt and Hedlund (1988, 199–221).

57 <https://manuscripta.se/ms/100410#>

58 There are signatures of Vadstena Monastery on the back of the cover (Anderson-Schmitt and Hedlund 1988, 228)

59 For a full break-down of the contents see Anderson-Schmitt and Hedlund (1988, 227–232).

växten”, lit. impede growth), although the meaning is unclear. The medical section ends with a remedy for headache and an unfinished entry on eyes.

The medical sections are edited by Klemming (1886, 446–449).

20. B 4 (Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)⁶⁰

Alternative names: Arvid Trolles Lagbok; Klemming XIII

Dating: ca. 1450

Dimensions: 17.5 ´ 12.5 cm

Language: Latin, Swedish

Comments: Named after its owner, Swedish aristocrat and politician Arvid Trolle, this codex brings together a wide variety of material ranging from legal texts to remedies, charms, and genealogical notes. The heart of the codex is taken up by extended legal compilations: Magnus Eriksson’s *landslag* occupies fols. 19r–102r. The *stadslag* follows on fols. 104r–177v, with inserted material such as a note concerning opposition to royal officials (f. 112r). It contains some medical material, which is compiled and edited in Klemming’s 1886 (450–453) publication under “Strödda läke-domar” (scattered remedies). The codex opens on 1v with a group of short medical remedies: against blood sickness, fever, and poisoning; on the same folio a veterinary cure is given for sheep and goats suffering from scab. Further medical and magical texts follow in fols. 2r–3r, including a charm against gout (2v), remedies against poisoning (2v), and three rat and mouse charms introduced by distinctive incipits (3r). Additional medical and magico-religious texts are to be found towards the end of the manuscript: remedies for dysentery (102v), charms against swine plague (102v), prayers and charms for staunching blood (103r), and a Latin prayer to St. Liborius against kidney stones (103r).

21. AM 792 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁶¹

Alternative names: Klemming VI

Dating: 1440–1499

Dimensions: 21.0 ´ 14.5 cm

Language: Latin, Swedish, Danish

Comments: This specimen comprises 236 folia of both parchment and paper and dates from the second half of the fifteenth century. The manu-

60 <https://www.manuscripta.se/ms/100256#>

61 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AM04-0792/0#mode/2up>

script features predominantly Latin texts, interspersed with sections in Danish and Swedish, written by multiple hands. There are some pen trials on fol. 90v in the Scanian dialect and two lines of a ballad on the same folium, also in the Scanian dialect, that place the manuscript in the region of Skåne, modern Sweden, which formed part of Denmark at that time.⁶²

The manuscript's eclectic assemblage encompasses religious sermons, grammatical treatises, and medical advice. It begins with religious and didactic material, including a sermon attributed to St Augustine ("Sermo St. Augustini"; fols. 1r–26v), a theological disputation ("Disputacio prioris cum anima Guidonis"; fols. 28r–39v), and a calendar mnemonic ("Cisio Janus"; fols. 40r–52v), before delving into the first passage on medicine with a chapter on bloodletting (53r–54v) and a Latin astrological treatise on 54v. The second wave of medical remedies begins on 137r–139r, with another astrological treatise in Latin (present in M 5, no. 25), giving medical advice according to the month and star sign. This is followed by a leechbook (139r–142v) and another astrological treatise, though this time in Swedish despite its title, "Regimen sanitatis per circulum anni" (Health regime throughout the year), which lies between 140r and 142r and is also present in M 5. At the end of the medical text, there is a Latin and Old Swedish glossary (142v) and forty-eight chapters of Harpestræng's *Liber Herbarum* between 147r and 152v (Hauberg 1936, 29–30).

Many texts point to the fact that the compilers were concerned with the saving not just of lives, but of souls, too. There is a chapter on christening (55r–55v); an "Ordo confitendi" (91r–113v), about confession, which ends abruptly on fol. 113v; a section on "Opusculum tripartitum Johannis cancellarii Parisiensis" (Chancellor of Paris Jean de Gerson's three-part minor literary work; fols. 116r–126v);⁶³ and the "Stella clericorum" (127r–135v).⁶⁴ The copying of these texts implies a willingness to take care of the people after the Black Death, which had wiped out 45–55 per cent of

62 Skåne only became an official part of Sweden in 1720.

63 The *Opusculum tripartitum* is a work by Parisian scholar Jean de Gerson, who, dissatisfied with the clergy's negligence and the ignorance of the local people on theological matters, composed, around 1404, a three-part set that instructs readers in the Ten Commandments, sacramental confession, and most importantly, the 'knowledge of death'. This last part was highly influential and was the basis for later work on how to die a good death, such as the *Ars Moriendi* (See Pabel 2013, 8; Bast 2017, 93–96).

64 This text is a thirteenth-century treatise on the dignity of priesthood that survives in over four hundred manuscripts from the Middle Ages (Reiter 1996, 152).

the population (Gottfried 1983, 58). The manuscript even contains a short explanation of what happens when the soul leaves the body (160r–163v).

Alongside its practical content, AM 792 4to includes devotional poetry (“Salme”; fol. 159v), a love poem (“Kærlighedsdigt”; fol. 90r), two lines of a Scandinavian folk song (90v), and a guide for pilgrims (“Vejviser for pilgrimme”; fols. 189r–197v).

Klemming (1886, 182–193) edited fols. 53r–55r on bloodletting and astrology and 139r–142v – the list of remedies, and the Latin-Swedish botanical glossary.

22. A 49 4to (Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)⁶⁵

Alternative names: Vadstena klosters book; Naadendals klosters book; Klemming IV

Dating: 1475–1499

Dimensions: 22.0 × 15.5 cm

Language: Swedish

Comments: A 49, dated to the second half of the fifteenth century (Klemming 1886, 162), is a compilation of mostly religious texts written at Nådendal (Naantali), in modern-day Finland. The texts are mostly written in Swedish although some are in Latin. The content is diverse, including hagiographies, theological treatises, medical texts, and prayers. Particularly prominent are the legends of saints such as the “Life of St Ansgar” (1r–61v), the “Legend of St Gregory of Armenia” (63r–102v), and the “Legend of St Germanus of Auxerre” (239r–248v). The popular narrative of “Barlaam and Josaphat” (109r–121r, 122r–169v) is also present, along with excerpts from Heinrich Suso’s “Gudelig snilles väckare” (249v–257v). The manuscript further contains a compelling collection of prayers, including the fifteen prayers to the Passion of Jesus (211r–212v) and the seven joys of Mary (214v–216v), indicating a strong Marian devotion. An interesting detail is the penitential formulary (237v), which offers insight into the period’s practices of penance. The manuscript also contains short legends such as the “Legend of a Monk in Rome” (209v–210v), the “Legend of a Virgin” (219r–220v), the “Legend of St Genoveva” (259r–267v), and the “Legend of St Macra” (267v–268v).

There is a short excerpt of a leechbook in 171r and 171v, which includes

⁶⁵ <https://manuscripta.se/ms/100225>

the heading “nadhen dals closters book” (Nådendal cloister’s book). Nine chapters of *Den danske Urtebog* follow between 171r and 177v. P. J. Bergius states in 1758 that “this little piece [...] contains nothing of particular importance or value”,⁶⁶ simply because it was taken to be a straightforward copy of *Den danske Urtebog*. However, the divergences within some entries, especially for “Mirra” (myrrh) and “Malyrt” (wormwood) are great enough to imply that this must have been the result of a mixture of sources.

Klemming edited the medical section (1886, 153–163).

23. M 59 (Universitetsbiblioteket, Lund)⁶⁷

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1490–1510

Dimensions: 15.0 ´ 10.5 cm

Language: Latin, German, Swedish

Comments: This manuscript has mostly passed under the radar of scholars of medieval Scandinavian medicine until recent years.⁶⁸ It contains a total of thirty-four folia, filled with miscellaneous texts and written mostly in Latin. The reason it has been included in this handlist is that it includes Swedish translations of ailments, such as “Antraces liktorn” on 22v.⁶⁹ Fols. 2r–14r contain a lapidary ascribed to Bartholomaeus Anglicus, at the end of which, there are entries on three different plants: “aloe”, “amomum”, and “anetum”, suggesting that we are dealing with a part of his Book 16, *De lapidibus preciosis*, and the start of his Book 17, *De arboribus et herbis et eorum prorietaibus*. This is followed by a remedy in Middle Low German for scurvy on 14v. Fols. 15r–17v are blank.

Fols. 18r–33r contain a medical handbook. In the margins there are the names of different body parts, symptoms, diseases or other problems, and in the main text there are prescriptions for remedies. The structure of the text is very fluid, following neither head-to-toe nor alphabetical order. Instead, the structure seems to flow from one ailment to a cure, to other

66 In the original text: “Denna lilla piece [...] innehåller väl ingen ting af särdeles vigt och värde” (Bergius, 1758, 45).

67 <https://tinyurl.com/bdzwzrnd>

68 Johanna Svensson (2006) wrote a Master’s dissertation, which included a partial edition of this previously unedited manuscript.

69 Mod. Eng. Anthrax.

ailments, to other cures, which – albeit unusual – is not illogical (Svensson 2006, 6). The last folio (34r–34v) contains different lists: of sins, the five senses, and the seven sacraments.

Svensson (2006, 25–38) edited the section attributed to Bartolomaeus Anglicus between 2r–14r. The rest of the manuscript remains unedited.

Sixteenth century

24. D 601 (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)⁷⁰

Alternative names: Klemming II; Liber Martini Erasmi

Dating: 1490–1510

Dimensions: 22.0 × 15.0 cm

Language: Swedish

Comments: This sample is a collection of medical and botanical texts known as *Liber Martini Erasmi* (Martin Erasmus' Book), after one of its owners. Made of both paper and parchment, this codex has a total of 159 sides, as the manuscript has been paginated rather than foliated, and contains multiple hands.

The first twelve pages comprise a so-called Magister Alexander's monthly regimen with instructions for ideal times for fasting and purging, which is almost identical to manuscript X 23 (no. 26).⁷¹ Pages 13–30 had previously been left blank, but later hands have filled most of them in with medical remedies, although these do not seem to follow a particular order. On page 29, a Teorgius Petri Strengnensis signed his name and added the date, 15 November 1459. Pages 31–66 enclose a Swedish leechbook edited by Klemming (1886, 11–40) structured in what seems to be an arbitrary order. This is followed by veterinary medicine (67–70) and some more medical advice in Latin with interpolations in Swedish (71–75). A treatise on melancholy (one of the four Hippocratic humours) follows, also attributed to Magister Alexander.

What is particularly noteworthy is the next passage, on pages 78–88: a unique version of the *Liber Herbarum*, which is not known from anywhere else, under the title “De Speciebus” (On species). On 89–92, there are medical incantations and charms, proceeded by various recipes in Latin.

70 <https://tinyurl.com/ycxkfu7y>

71 A ‘magister Alexander’ is known from other Latin fifteenth-century manuscripts: GKS 1656 4to (Copenhagen); Canon. Misc. 480 (Oxford); Cod. Lat. 4784 (Munich). The two latter ones attribute the adjectives *Yspanus* (Spanish) to his name.

The last third of the codex has been filled in by a younger hand. The contents remain medical and includes other medical advice in Latin whose source has not been identified.

At the end of the codex there are some interesting notes. On page 156, one of the scribes introduces himself as Lantt[e]s Erick, writing at Gripsholm Castle in September 1480. The following (and last) page, written in the same hand, mentions the birth of Magnus Martini in Stockholm in 1472, followed by a note on the 1485 wedding of King John III and Queen Gunilla, his second marriage. This points to the manuscript having been made for the personal use of (and perhaps also by) an aristocratic Swedish family.

Klemming edited some of the texts in this manuscript, which was originally shelf-marked C 601 (1886, 11–50). The rest of the manuscript remains unedited.

25. M 5 n. XCIV 8vo (Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek)⁷²

Alternative names: Klemming VII

Dating: 1490–1510

Dimensions: 14.5 × 10.5 cm

Language: Swedish, Latin

Comments: This pocket paper manuscript encloses 180 folia of purely medical material, except for some spells to keep elves and witches at bay, towards the end of the manuscript. This makes it the longest Swedish medical book; it includes many Salernitan texts as well as prayers and magic charms, which have been compiled by Ohrt (1917–1921). The manuscript was originally believed to have been written by one scribe only (Klemming 1886) until Per Gunnar Ottosson (1977) noted that it was the work of many scribes, although their hands are remarkably similar. Ottosson noted that parts of the manuscript dated to the second half of the 1400s and that others must have dated to the second quarter of the 1500s, as the codex contains virtually the entirety of Christiern Pedersen's leechbook, published in print in 1533. The codex encloses different types of paper, too, which suggests that the current codex consisted of many smaller codices that were later put together. This would explain the whimsical structure of the manuscript: the texts appear to be unstructured and often unrelated

⁷² No online facsimile available.

to one another except for the overarching medical topic. There are two versions of the *Regimen sanitatis per circulum anni* (Health regime throughout the year) in the manuscript: one in Swedish, between 83 and 97, and another in Latin between 118 and 126 (both present in AM 792 4to, no. 21). Klemming (1886, 399) compared the Latin version to those in AM 792 4to (no. 20) and D 600 (no. 8) and found that they are near identical, except for some differences in terms and spelling. There are chapters of the *Urtebog* scattered across the whole manuscript, at pages 98–102 and 139–150. Between 67–71 and 215–234 there are sprinkled entries taken from the *Liber Herbarum*, translated into Swedish, blended with other medical advice.

Despite drawing from his work, Harpestræng himself is not named as a source, although numerous Salernitan doctors are cited, such as Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Constantine, Avicenna, Aristotle, Arnold de Villa Nova, Albertus Magnus and many more. On page 52 (also foliated as 26(r)), there is a remedy for “tanna werck” (toothache) ascribed to a Sanctus Bernardus, but Klemming (1886, 228) transcribes this name as Gerardus medicus, presumably by mistake, as he does not address this discrepancy. A Gerardus is, in fact, cited as a source later in the manuscript, at 203, which has been foliated as 102(r). It also contains two separate texts on how to dispel rodents from the home by invoking Saints Ciriacus and Kakwkylla.⁷³ The eclectic content of the manuscript and chaotic structure is what led Klemming (1886, 503) to believe that this was an apprentice physician’s personal notebook, but given the variety of hands and the religious texts, this is more likely to be a codex put together at an ecclesiastical institution.

There is very little writing by later owners and antiquarians. There is a note from 1882 saying that the book had belonged to Elias Brenner (1647–1717) and later to Erik Benzeliuſ the younger (1675–1743), who then donated it to the Linköping secondary school before it ended up at the Linköping central library. The inconsistency in pagination implies that the book has been rebound several times, perhaps during production or by later owners.

The entire manuscript – except for pages 103 and 104, which are

73 M 5 is the oldest extant manuscript to mention Kakwkylla, a rare saint only known in Sweden and Germany (see Åmark 1935; Mitchell 2020, 202–204)

penned by a hand from the Reformation – was edited by Klemming (1886, 196–395).

26. X 23 8vo (Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)⁷⁴

Alternative names: Christina Månsdotters (Natt och Dag) läkebok; Klemming III

Dating: 1500–1510

Dimensions: 10.5 × 7.5 cm

Language: Swedish

Comments: This pocket-sized medical manuscript is known as *Christina Månsdotters Läkebok*, after one of its owners. On its very last page, a hand reads “Liber domine cristine in sundhaby (Lady Cristina of Sundaby’s book). Christina Månsdotter was a noblewoman who belonged to the Swedish house *Natt och Dag* and may have had the book commissioned for her own personal interest and use.

The first nine pages (five leaves) contain a neat table of contents with all the chapter numbers and their titles. The manuscript has been foliated, but Klemming (1886) provides his edition as if it were paginated, possibly because it was only foliated later. The first section of the book after the table of contents, beginning on fol. 6r (page 11), is a month-by-month regimen attributed to Master Alexander. This is followed by a passage on bloodletting between 15v and 16v (pp. 30–33) and some remedies for stones and eye ailments (16v–18v; pp. 33–36). After this (18v–24r; pp. 36–47), there is a month-by-month health regime to maintain one’s health, addressed to the author’s son: “Myn son thet skal tik witerliket wära at thenna eptirscriffna script dwger at tw mat triggelika liffwa” (My son, it shall be clear to you that this written scripture teaches you how to live properly; Klemming 1886, 67).

Entries from both the *Liber Herbarum* and the *Urtebog* – as well as two lines from the *Regimen sanitatis* in the entry for “Saluia” (Hauberg 1936, 36–37) – lie between 24r and 78r (pp. 47–155), blended with some scattered medical advice in the middle. Thence, there is a relatively short head-to-toe leechbook (78r–91v; pp. 155–182) and a text on treatments for pestilence (91v–93r; pp. 183–185) expressly directed to the noble class: “Nadhoghe herra oc förste iak hafwir wndirstandit aff waraktoghum man-

74 No facsimile available, although the manuscript is registered at Manuscripta: <https://www.manuscripta.se/ms/100356>.

nom ath stoor plagha oc dödhö ar nu i idhrom landum Nu wil iak scrifwa idro konungxlika waldhe the beste läkedomasom iak hafwir funnit i greska manna bokom swa som är ath hwru man skal then bradödha forkoma om ther ar nokor läkedombir innan” (Gracious lords, I have understood from trustworthy men that a great plague and death is now in your lands. Now, I wish to write to your royal authority the best medical treatments that I have found in the books of the Greeks, namely, how one may prevent sudden death if there is any remedy for it; Klemming 1886, 136).

At the end of the codex, there is a short section on weather lore relating to Christmas omens and folk meteorology, followed by texts deafness, more chapters from the *Liber Herbarum*, and a treatment for stomach ailments.

Klemming edited the entire manuscript (1886, 51–144).

27. Saml. 1a 4to (Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek)⁷⁵

Alternative names: Codex Grenholmiensis; Klemming VIII

Dating: 1500

Dimensions: 19.1 × 14.0 cm

Language: Swedish, Danish, Latin

Comments: This exemplar is unique in that it is a family codex, containing the biographical information of the family living at Grensholm spanning four generations, whence the codex gets its name. It may have been purchased by the family in the first half of the 1500s, as the first child born to Mætta Ryning, the owner of Grensholm at the time, was born in 1547. The manuscript originates from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (Stephens and Ahlstrand 1844, xlvii; Klemming 1886, 500), although some texts have been added as late as the mid-seventeenth century. Written in Swedish, Danish, and Latin, the manuscript, encloses 181 pages and contains a wide range of texts. There is a helpful eighteenth-century table of contents towards the back, added by the vicar Per Kylander on page 171. Agnieszka Backman (2017, 36) observes that the cover is original and is made of paper, which was then painted green. However, there is clear evidence of the re-binding. For instance, we find an entry for the zodiac sign Pisces, which would have followed Aquarius on page 41, on page 123.

The structure of the codex in its current form makes sense: it begins with some texts on medicine, along with practical advice on pages 1–52. This section includes an almanac, an astrological treatise, texts on general

⁷⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/347pdv7f>

ailments, and a section on herbal pharmacology taken from *Den danske Urtebog*. It also contains a rare text only present in one other manuscript (GKS 3656 8vo, no. 7) on how to let blood, on pages 20–21, which reads “Thet er then legedom som mesther henrik harpestræng gaff konigh erik” (This is the medical advice that Master Henrik Harpestræng gave to King Erik). This medical section amounts to one third of the manuscript and ends on page 52. From page 53 follow a few stories which become progressively more moral, starting with the purely entertaining “Legend of the Knight Tungulus” (63–96) and ending with an incomplete version of the life of Griselda (124–149) and an incomplete Life of St Gregorius (151–152); after this, the texts are purely religious: sermons, masses, and prayers (153–160). This section of religious texts led Carlquist (2002, 114) to argue that it must have belonged to a pious individual with an interest in science.

Lastly, there is a spell on how to identify a thief, which is very similar to one in the *Lægebog fra Vinje* (no. 29), and a remedy against pestilence (page 181). This means that it is likely that at least the first 50 pages or so of the codex, written by two hands, made their way to Grensholm together and were rebound there, with the addition of the popular stories and religious texts.

Between pages 171–179, a later hand has added a table of contents of the entire manuscript. The herbal was edited by Klemming (1886, 400–409), who described Codex Grensholmensis as a “small and incomplete collection on the powers and virtues of herbs, based on older books” (1886, 503).⁷⁶

28. X 502 (Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm)⁷⁷

Alternative names: Peder Månssons Liber B

Dating: 1516–1519

Dimensions: 10.0 × 7.0 cm

Language: Swedish, Latin

Comments: This large exemplar of 273 leaves is the second codex (“Liber B”) of four codices comprising the work penned by Peder Månsson about the natural sciences, who would become Bishop of Västerås in 1524. The manuscript’s contents are eclectic and reveal a clear emphasis on practical, technical knowledge, evidenced by the inclusion of texts detail-

76 “Små och ofullständiga samlingar af örter krafter och dygder, grundade på de äldre böckerna” (Klemming 1883, 503).

77 <https://manuscripta.se/ms/100358#>

ing fishing-bait preparation (52r), leather tanning (184v–186v), and glass-making (277r–282v). There are various treatises on gemstone processing (187r–198v, 199r, 228v–229v), which indicates an appreciation for luxury crafts. As for medical advice, there are treatments for quartan fever (52v), immediately followed by advice on how to keep clean, “Taka smittan aff” (Take dirt off). The manuscript also includes a lapidary between 119v and 228r in which some stones are prescribed for human ailments and to protect against magic and spells. There is no herbal in this exemplar, but Columella’s agricultural treatise can be found between 55r and 183v, as well as sections on “Bondakonst” (The Art of Farming) and on how to run a country farm – “Landhushållning” – which indicate an interest in plants as supporting general health.

Notably, the manuscript also features texts on military strategy, including Flavius Vegetius’ “Stridskonst” (Martial Arts) on 231r–268v and Peder Månsson’s own “Stridslag” (Battle Law; 260r–261v).

There is no full edition of this manuscript, but its texts have been edited by Robert Geete (1913), who provides a full breakdown of its contents on pages xliii–xlvi. In his book, *Peder Månssons skrifter på svenska*, instead of providing a separate edition of each individual manuscript, Geete presents an edited version of the texts, drawing from multiple manuscript witnesses.

29. J 8 (Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek)⁷⁸

Alternative names: Peder Månssons Liber C; Klemming IX

Dating: 1500–1522

Dimensions: 13.4 × 9.8 cm

Language: Swedish, Latin

Comments: This manuscript is the third codex by Peder Månsson, which contains a substantial amount of medical knowledge. The medical section opens on fol. 92r, with a long, esoteric entry on “Göra liffwens vathn” (making life water), and it carries on until 97r with other longer entries on how to extend human life, how to separate the four elements from all things, and how to make life water stronger. Between 102v and 119r, there is a leechbook that begins with an entry on “Vnderstanda gradus” (understanding degrees) and continues with remedies for treating humour imbalances. The leechbook carries on all the way to 119r with entries on how to treat different ailments, such as “blodith rensa” (blood cleansing) and

⁷⁸ Only one page has been scanned on Alvin: <https://tinyurl.com/3kucdyad>

“flegma rensa” (phlegm cleansing), and a list of all the remedies (mostly plants and herbs) for them. Klemming (1886, 411–445) edited these folia.

On fols. 151r–152r, there are entries on how to whiten teeth, a recipe for pills against pestilence, a remedy for muscle pain, a recipe for an ointment for scalp ulcers, and a recipe for treating tumours. On fols. 157v–158r, there are treatments for pestilence as well as for poisoning. The last section containing medical advice begins on fol. 215r with a recipe for “öгна vathn moth ethsr, vathn sot, cancrum, ondan eld” (eye water for poison, dropsy, cancer and *evil fire*) and continues onto 220r with recipes on how to make Watthn aff swalor (water of swallows), a concoction made from dried swallows, vinegar, and powdered galls to treat various ailments.

There is no full edition of this manuscript, but its texts have been edited by Robert Geete (1913); a full breakdown of its contents is provided on pages xlvi–liii.

Norwegian

Fifteenth century

30. Lægebog fra Vinje 12mo [Ms 8vo 3725] (Oslo Katedralskole)⁷⁹

Alternative names: Vinjeboka

Dating: 1480

Dimensions: 7.0 × 4.8 cm

Language: Norwegian, Danish, Latin]

Comments: This is the only extant Norwegian manuscript that includes pieces of medical advice from before 1600.⁸⁰ However, it is neither a standard leechbook nor a herbal; the Lægebog is also known as *Svartebok*

⁷⁹ No online facsimile available.

⁸⁰ There has been some controversy over whether manuscripts AM 673 a II 4to and AM 696 I 4to are Norwegian or Icelandic. Larsen claims the former to be an East Norwegian sample and the latter a West Norwegian one (Henning Larsen, 1931). According to him, Iceland received medical knowledge from Denmark through Norway (MS Royal Irish Academy 23 D 43, p. 386). Hauberg (1936, 15) agreed with Larsen; however, it seems that today the consensus is that they are Icelandic, as *handrit.is* has established that the language in which they were written is Icelandic. Other than this, to my knowledge, there is only one Norwegian manuscript from the sixteenth century containing medical knowledge, which belongs to a private collector and sits outside our designated time-period. It is known as *Lægebog fra Ulvik* (Leechbook from Ulvik) and belonged to farmer and businessman Kristoffer Frimann Hjeltne. The manuscript is mainly written in Danish with some Norwegian blended in. There are two parts to it: one written in 1574 and another from 1626. There are pieces from both the *Liber Herbarum* and *Den danske Urtebog* (Eide 2009).

(Black Book), due to its heavy focus on magic. This genre commonly contains some medicinal and herbal remedies, although, unlike the other manuscripts in this catalogue, most of the treatments have a magic or religious element. Most of its remedies include reciting the “Pater Noster” or carving prayers onto one’s bed. This example is known as the first black book in Norway (Garstein 1993). It contains a magic formula to identify a thief and a spell to win the love of a woman. There is one cure for women in childbed that consists of writing a prayer on her womb. The manuscript encloses a section dedicated to “Grana Juniperi” (juniper), taken from Harpestræng’s *Liber Herbarum*, on fols. 32v–33v (Hauberg 1936, 38).

The manuscript is written in a mixture of Norwegian and Danish, with some parts written solely in Danish. This means that the manuscript cannot have been written in Norway (or by Norwegians) in its entirety, and that parts must have been written in Denmark. Garstein (1993, 18–19) also states that the language is that of an educated person. It is the only manuscript that is not kept by a national or university library; rather, it is housed in a secondary school in Oslo: Kristiania Katedralskole. It was found stuck underneath a wooden plank close to the choir in the Vinje Stave Church.⁸¹

The manuscript was edited and translated into modern Norwegian by Oskar Garstein in 1993.

Icelandic

Thirteenth century

31. AM 655 XXX 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁸²

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1250–1299

Dimensions: 15.7 × 12.3 cm

Language: West Norse

Comments: This is the oldest example of a medical text in this corpus, dating from around the second half of the thirteenth century. It is a fragment of what may have once been a bigger leechbook, but only four parchment leaves have survived. The medical advice is varied, offering

81 Other black books have been found in similar conditions, as, according to folklore, these books have their own will power and will reappear if they do not agree to being given away or destroyed (see Ohrvik 2017).

82 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AMo4-0655-XXX/o#mode/2up>

treatments for insomnia, chest and eye infections, and digestive issues, as well as advice on childbirth, contraception, and how to remove warts. It also includes thirteen entries on herbal pharmacology (plus one on coral, “koralus”). These entries are taken from Constantine’s *De gradibus liber*, either directly or perhaps through Harpestræng’s work (Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir 2023, 209–210). The manuscript also quotes Dioscorides and Galen, suggesting that the scribe may be copying from other Salernitan texts.

An edition was offered by Konráð Gíslason (1860, 241–270) and, more recently, Fabian Schwabe (n.d.) has uploaded one on Menota.⁸³ Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir (2023) has published the first in-depth article exploring the manuscript’s origins, context, and content.

Fourteenth century

32. AM 696 I 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁸⁴

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1340–1360

Origin: Norwegian or Icelandic

Dimensions: 19.8 × 12.7 cm

Language: West Norse

Comments: This fragment consists of only two folia that were originally in different parts of the manuscript. It contains the first few entries of what looks like an Old Norse translation of *Den danske Urtebog*. The specimen follows the standard herbal book alphabetical structure, starting with “Apium” and ending with “Eupatorium”. There is an entry at the very beginning that includes remedies for dysentery, pulmonary complications, dentistry, and intestinal parasites, though sadly we have lost the previous leaf that would have contained the name of the plant used for these purposes. The plant names are first written in Latin, with a translation in Old Icelandic next to them. In the bottom margin of fol. 1r a contemporary hand has written a formula for haemostasis. The fragment does not mention Harpestræng as a source, but it does name Galen in the entry about celery (*Apium*). The language of the manuscript led Hægstad (1906, 9–10)

83 <https://menota.ku.dk/q?p=menota/eds/struct/487693>

84 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AM04-0696-I>

to argue that the manuscript may have been written in Norway – a position also held by Matteo Tarsi (2025, 330) – though it may also simply have been copied from a Norwegian manuscript (Stefán Karlsson 1967, 52).

An edition was provided by Marius Hægstad (1906).

33. AM 673 a II 4to (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Reykjavík)⁸⁵

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: ca. 1370

Dimensions: 19.1 × 12.7 cm

Language: West Norse

Comments: This is one of the oldest manuscripts in the Arnamagnæan Collection, dated between 1190 and 1210. It has suffered significant damage due to dampness, and only nine folios remain. The fragment encloses the so-called “Physiologus” (1r–7v),⁸⁶ the “Fjallræðan” (Sermon on the Mount, 6v), the “Læknisráð” (medical advice, 6v–7r) and the *Predikun* (an Icelandic sermon/homily on the meaning of the ship and the rainbow, 8r–9v). The medical-advice section, which consists of only twenty-seven lines between folios 6v and 7r, may contain fourteen herbal remedies from *Den danske Urtebog*. However, because of its brevity, it is impossible to definitively connect it to Harpestræng, especially since Schwabe (2011, 5) argues that the structure is too different. The medical advice was added by a later hand, along with the “Fjallræðan”, and was originally dated to around 1500 (Kålund 1894, 91), but the dating has now been revised to 1370 by ONP. Early sources claimed that this manuscript was Norwegian (Hægstad 1913, 8–9; Hauberg 1936; Kristensen 1908–1920, xxi), but the Arnamagnæan Institute deems it, in fact, to be of Icelandic origin. Most recently, Matteo Tarsi considers it to be Norwegian (2025, 330).

The medical advice (“Læknisráð”) was edited by Hægstad (1913, 4–5).

85 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/is/AMo4-0673a-II/0#mode/2up>;
<https://ioco.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?m9122>

86 This is an early Christian Greek text containing descriptions of animals, both real and fantastical (see Corazza, 2005).

34. AM 194 8vo (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁸⁷

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1387

Dimensions: 14.0 ´ 10.7 cm

Language: Icelandic, Latin

Comments: This manuscript is an encyclopedia work of fifty-two folia and includes a section of *Veraldar saga* and sections on law. It also contains two lapidaries, translated from Bishop Marbode of Rennes' works (Kreager 2022, 121). There is botano-medical lore between 34r and 45v, with some entries possibly borrowed from Harpestræng, followed by an intermission on gemstones between the second half of 45v and 48v. This is proceeded by a section on bloodletting on 48v, "Prognostica" (the signs of death and seasonal regimens) between 49r and 51v, and ends with a nearly unreadable section on "Likneskjúsmíð" (image making) between 51v and 52v. It is not in the best condition; damage to the manuscript has made many of the folia illegible in parts. However, it is one of the few Icelandic manuscripts that can be traced back to its origins, thanks to the scribes, Ólafr Ormsson and Brynjólfur Steinráðarson, who wrote their names down. The medical section of the manuscript has been edited by Kristian Kålund (1908, 61–77) and is also available online at the Old Norse Prose Dictionary.⁸⁸

Fols. 7r–52v (the entire original manuscript) has been edited by Kristian Kålund (1908).

Fifteenth century

35. AM 696 II 4to (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁸⁹

Alternative names: N/A

Dating: 1400–1499

Origin: Norwegian or Icelandic

Dimensions: 18.1 ´ 13.7 cm

Language: Old Norse

Comments: This fragment is the smallest one in the corpus, at only two folia, alongside AM 696 I, with which it may have once been compiled.

87 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AMo8-0194/0#mode/zup>

88 <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?r9115>

89 <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AMo4-0696-II>

The fragment contains remedies for the plague and a section of a *Liber Lapidum*. The lower margins of the leaves have been cut off.

The fragment has been edited by Kålund (1917–1918, 76–80).

36. AM 434 a 12mo (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen)⁹⁰

Alternative names: *Den Islandske Lægebog* ('The Icelandic Leechbook')

Dating: ca. 1450

Dimensions: 10.4 × 7.7 cm

Language: Icelandic

Comments: At forty folios long, this is the second-longest and possibly the most famous of the Icelandic medical manuscripts, dating to the middle of the fifteenth century. The beginning of the manuscript is missing, so the text begins *in medias res*. In its current form, it only contains medical knowledge throughout (1r–40r), with the interpolation of a *Lunaria* between fols. 37r and 39r.⁹¹ It encompasses an almanac with dietary recommendations for each month and time of year, as well as optimal times and dates for bloodletting. It displays other pieces of folklore, such as how to keep houses safe from witches, and apotropaic symbols. At the end of the manuscript, the Roman alphabet has been written in runes.

There is another manuscript dated around the same time,⁹² AM 435 12mo, that Kålund believes may have been written by the same scribe (1917–1918, xiii). This manuscript encloses a text known as the "Physiognomica" (Physiognomy) between 1r and 15v, which deals with the philosophy of medicine and the human body, and a text called "Tunglfræði" (Moon Lore) in Icelandic about how the moon affects health, dreams, and the fates of children, between 55r and 58r. These two texts were edited by Kålund (1917–1918, 91–108).

AM 434 a 12mo was edited by Kristian Kålund (1907) and, more recently, translated by Ben Waggoner (2011).

⁹⁰ <https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/en/AM12-0434-a/o#mode/2up>

⁹¹ <https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?m8953>

⁹² Although this manuscript is dated to ca. 1500 (Kålund 1894, 484), Kålund also noted that the first thirty-one leaves may date to the middle of the fifteenth century (Kålund 1917–18, xviii).

37. MS 23 D 43 8vo (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin)⁹³

Alternative names: An Old Icelandic Miscellany

Dating: 1400–1499

Dimensions: 14.6 × 11.4 cm

Language: Icelandic

Comments: This manuscript was first dated to the first half of the sixteenth century when it was found in the early twentieth century, though further research suggests an earlier date at some point in the fifteenth century. It is the longest Icelandic exemplar, at seventy folios. Written in Middle Icelandic, the manuscript copies some of Harpestræng's work. This is the only Scandinavian medical manuscript kept at the Royal Irish Library in Dublin. Henning Larsen (1931) published a full edition and translation of this exemplar along with a thorough introduction.

Conclusion

Scholarship concerning medieval Scandinavian medical manuscripts has heavily emphasised the influence of Henrik Harpestræng and his *Liber Herbarum* and *Den danske Urtebog*. However, an examination of these texts reveals a far more complex and multifaceted picture. The Danish manuscripts, particularly those of the early sixteenth centuries, showcase evidence of Scandinavian knowledge of German medical texts, which are sometimes translated into Danish and at other times kept in German. Of the Swedish manuscripts, AM 45 4to bears a text on the German kaisers, forming another link with central Europe. Meanwhile, a leechbook by Master Alexander, who may be Spanish physician Alexander Hispanus, is found exclusively in Swedish codices. Many other Salernitan doctors are cited, although it is not always clear whether their works are being directly copied from an exemplar or their names simply being used to confirm the validity of the manuscript.

In any case, the manuscripts also reflect local botanical and medical knowledge with the implementation of local herbs and spells and charms that hark back to Scandinavian pre-Christian lore. A Dr Karl is mentioned in AM 819 4to, who might have been a Danish physician, and an analysis of a number of manuscripts, such as *Huskurer* and M 5, strongly suggest

93 https://www.isos.dias.ie/RIA/RIA_MS_23_D_43.html

that these were created by practising doctors. In fact, the context of production of these manuscripts varies greatly, from ecclesiastical centres and the Bridgettine Abbeys of Vadstena, Nådendal and Maribo, to the personal books of medical enthusiasts, such as those by Peder Månsson and those written for the aristocracy (X 23 for Christina Månsdotter, *Codex Grensholmensis* written, in part, for the family at Grensholm castle, and D 601 for Martinus Erasmus).

The manuscripts suggest a train of transmission of medical knowledge from Southern Europe, through Denmark and into Norway and Sweden. However, Iceland presents a distinct case, as indicated by the herbal entries in AM 696 I 4to and AM 673 a II 4to, which could be the earliest examples of the dissemination of the *Urtebog*, after K 48 and NKS 66, or point to an earlier Salernitan tradition that made its way to Iceland. Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir (2023, 210) has pointed out that all the Icelandic manuscripts that deal with herbal pharmacology⁹⁴ comprise botanical entries that are absent from other Scandinavian manuscripts, meaning either that Harpestræng may have written yet another medical book, now lost (Kristensen 1908–1920, v), or that Iceland had a separate medical and/or scriptorial link to Europe.

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SUMMARY

A handlist of medieval Scandinavian medical vernacular manuscripts

Keywords: manuscript catalogue, Old Norse medical manuscripts, medieval medicine in Old Norse, herbal medicine, *materia medica*, Harpestræng

This article presents a comprehensive handlist of all vernacular Scandinavian manuscripts (Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic) containing medical content, up to the year 1550. The surge of interest in Old Norse medical texts around the turn of the twentieth century led to the publication of most extant editions of Swedish and Icelandic medical texts. This interest also spurred the publication of editions and research on renowned manuscripts such as K 48 (Stockholm) and NKS 66 (Copenhagen), recognised as the earliest copies of the works by Danish physician Henrik Harpestræng (d. 1244). Harpestræng's *Danske Urtebog* and *Liber Herbarum*, along with his lesser-known texts, laid the foundation for medical knowledge across Scandinavia. This prompted Poul Hauberg to compile a book

encompassing all manuscripts traceable to Harpestræng's work within and beyond Scandinavia. However, not all medical manuscripts belong to the Harpestræng tradition. Evidence suggests that other physicians' works influenced later manuscripts, which have largely been overlooked by scholarship. Therefore, this article compiles all extant manuscripts containing medical advice, regardless of their influences, origins, or relationship to Harpestræng, to provide a more complete picture of medieval Scandinavian medical lore.

ÁGRIP

Skrá um handrit norrænna lækningabóka frá miðöldum

Efnisorð: handritaskrá, norrænar lækningabækur miðalda, læknisfræði á Norðurlöndum á miðöldum, grasalækningar, Harpestræng

Þessi grein inniheldur skrá yfir öll handrit skrifuð á fornnorrænum málum (dönsku, sænsku, norsku og íslensku) um læknisfræðileg efni frá öndverðu til ársins 1550. Aukinn áhugi á fornum norrænum lækningabókum í kringum aldamótin 1900 leiddi til útgáfu flestra varðveittra gerða af fornnorrænum lækningabókum. Þessi áhugi ýtti einnig undir útgáfu og rannsóknir á þekktari handritum eins og K 48 (Stokkhólmi) og NKS 66 (Kaupmannahöfn) sem eru elstu handrit verka danska læknisins Henriks Harpestræng (d. 1244). Rit Harpestrængs *Den danske Urtebog* og *Liber Herbarum* og aðrir minna þekktir textar hans lögðu grunn að læknisfræðilegri þekkingu um öll Norðurlönd á sínum tíma. Þessar rannsóknir urðu til þess að Poul Hauberg tók saman rit um öll handrit sem rekja má til verka Harpestrængs innan og utan Norðurlanda. Hins vegar tengjast ekki öll norræn handrit lækningabóka þeim verkum Harpestrængs sem hafa varðveist. Vísbendingar eru um að önnur verk hafi haft áhrif á seinni handrit sem fræðimenn hafa að miklu leyti litið fram hjá. Því eru í þessari grein tekin saman öll varðveitt handrit sem innihalda læknisfræðileg ráð, óháð uppruna þeirra eða tengslum við verk Harpestrængs, til að gefa sem heildstæðasta mynd af norrænni læknisfræðiþekkingu á miðöldum.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN ORIGIN OF THE *GALDRASTAFIR*

*Tracing the Transmission of the Learned European
Magical Tradition into Icelandic Popular Lore*

1. Introduction

The *galdrastafir* – magical staves preserved in Icelandic manuscripts from the late medieval and early modern period – have sometimes been interpreted as native products of Norse magical thinking. For instance, they are sometimes associated with ‘vikings’ and runes in popular culture. While local traditions and pre-Christian beliefs undoubtedly influenced their reception and use, their ultimate origin resides elsewhere. This paper situates the *galdrastafir* within a pan-European context, arguing that their form and function are best understood as adaptations of esoteric motifs originating in the Mediterranean area. As will be discussed, the presence of Solomonian sigils, Latin invocations, and hermetic formulations in Icelandic grimoires reflects a broader cultural process of transmission and localisation.

Unfortunately, not many such books survive, undoubtedly because many of them were destroyed either by authorities or by their owners for fear of consequences. This fact significantly complicates any attempt to understand the evolution of the tradition. Previous commentators have lamented the difficulty in reconstructing the origin of this tradition due to a lack of sources (Magnús Rafnsson 2018, 16). Rare similarities have been identified between different texts, such as the same charm appearing in almost identical shape in more than one book (Cf. Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992, 307, 373–375), but identifying any tradition, let alone its earlier origins, remains daunting. The four earliest and most important texts date from the period starting around 1500 until roughly the seven-

teenth century. These manuscripts are characterised by a large variety of contents, the presence of prayers and invocations, and less elaborate magical staves. After this period, and particularly from the eighteenth century, many more magical texts survive, but they become quite different in some respects, for example in the inclusion of ciphers, and they turn increasingly into catalogues of magical symbols, which also evolve to become more complex in their design. In this paper, an attempt will be made to describe and interpret the history of these symbols, showing how they appear to be derived by a European esoteric tradition beginning, in all probability, in the late Middle Ages around the Mediterranean, between Greece and Italy.

1.1 *The Corpus*

The Icelandic magical tradition, as preserved in manuscript form, offers one of the most visually and conceptually distinctive manifestations of early modern European esotericism. The considerations discussed in this paper are essentially drawn from an analysis of the earliest examples of grimoires preserved:

AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver* (c.1500): This is the oldest extant Icelandic manuscript containing magical material. It blends medicine, the use of metals, and herbal remedies with protective charms. The coexistence of Latin formulas with vernacular spells reflects a liminal moment in which learned and popular magical traditions overlapped. It was written by two scribes, one of which was a *bóndi* from Steingrímsfjörður, in the Strandir region (Stefán Karlsson 1999, 155), a person with some education, but not a member of the learned elite. It was published in a diplomatic edition by Kålund (1907) and translated into English (Waggoner 2011).

Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver* (1670): This is a fully developed *galdrabók* containing an extensive series of magical texts, such as a pseudo-epigraphic epistle, prayers, and staves linked to a specific purpose (mostly designed for protection against magic, evil, enemies, and for the health of livestock). The manuscript is notable for its clean design and visual clarity, often dedicating full pages to individual *stafir*. Despite the presence of lengthy texts such as a pseudepigraphic

epistle and prayers, it also contains symbols that exemplify the shift towards a symbolic, talismanic logic where power is embedded in graphic form. It has been published in a facsimile edition with normalised transcription and translations in English, Danish, and German (Ögmundur Helgason 2004).

ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók* (sixteenth–seventeenth century?): Preserved in the archives of the Swedish National Heritage Board, this text contains a comparable selection of staves and magical instructions. It was written by multiple hands over a prolonged period, starting perhaps sometime in the sixteenth century. It includes prayers, invocations, and a list of magical staves. Interestingly, it shows the conflation of Judaeo-Christian names with the names of Norse Gods. An early edition appeared with a Swedish translation in 1921, an Icelandic facsimile edition with commentary was published in 1992, and a new English translation and edition has recently appeared (Kári Pálsson 2024).

Though it will not be referred to directly in this discussion, it is important to mention another very special manuscript that has recently been translated into English for the first time and published together with ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók* (Kári Pálsson 2024):

AM 434 d 12mo: This is a concise Icelandic manuscript dating from the late seventeenth century. Unlike its counterpart AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*, which contains a broader mix of medicinal and magical content, AM 434 d 12mo is focused on practical magic, comprising a series of symbols, and invocations aimed at establishing contact with *jarðbíur* (Kári Pálsson 2024, 156). This manuscript will not be discussed as it seems to represent a different, and more markedly localised, Icelandic practice not necessarily stemming from the same European tradition as *galdrastafir* in general.¹

1 The purpose of this paper is to identify the origin of the Icelandic *galdrastafir* tradition in European sources, but it should not be forgotten that the reception of such material was not merely passive: localised elements were added, such as runes and names of Norse gods, as we shall discuss.

Together, these four manuscripts reflect the evolution of a distinct Icelandic magical genre. They document the localisation of European esoteric ideas – especially those of the Solomonic and Christian magical traditions, as we shall see – into a visual and vernacular system that emphasised symbolic efficacy, portability, and practical outcomes.

2. The Solomonic Legacy in Iceland: Magical Sigils and Mediterranean Sources

Starting in the thirteenth century, the Latin West saw an increasing spread of so-called pseudo-epigraphic texts attributed to King Solomon (Véronèse 2019, 187). The dissemination of Greek material in western Europe may have started from Italy, where Greek scholars fled after the collapse of the Roman Empire in the East by the mid-fifteenth century. An early precursor of this tradition appears to be a text known as the *Testament of Solomon*: an apocryphal text of the Old Testament belonging to the genre of the *Testamenta* (Cosentino 2013, 5) likely composed in a Christian environment in the first centuries of the Common Era (Duling 1983, 940–943) and whose oldest witness is a papyrus from the fifth–sixth century, Vindobonensis G330 (Cosentino 2013, 23).

In it, King Solomon receives from Michael the archangel a ring with a precious stone carved with the ‘seal of God’ (a seal called the “Seal of Solomon” is found in multiple Icelandic magical books, as we shall see), which enables him to control the demons and complete his temple. The use of magical formulas and symbols in the practice of exorcisms was already attested in the Jewish tradition, though infrequently (Cosentino 2013, 6). The king evokes one demon after the other, using the binding force of the magical seals, asking each of them what their evil deeds are, what their name is, and what angel is their antagonist. These demons are responsible for a wide variety of physical, moral, and psychological evils, but they can be controlled by the binding power of the seal. The text combines the story with magic lore, astrology, angelology, demonology, and primitive medicine (Duling 1983, 935), a mix which we will also find in the earliest example of magical books in Iceland.

It is within this tradition that medieval European esotericism and magic will take their place: the idea of a magical seal that can be used to evoke and control demons will become a central concept of the so-called

Solomonic magic (cf. Cosentino 2013, 9–12). Indeed, from the first centuries of the second millennium, we possess a number of incomplete manuscripts of a text known as Ὑγρομαντεία (*Hygromanteia* ‘water prophecy’), also called *The Magical Treatise of Solomon*, which appears to be a precursor of (if not a model for) the much more famous and widespread *Clavicula Salomonis* (‘Key of Solomon’). Though the link between the two traditions is yet to be satisfactorily described (Véronese 2019, 193), the former text is preserved in manuscripts dating from the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries and seems to have originated in southern Italy (Torijano 2002, 174). The latter is mostly preserved in manuscripts from the late sixteenth century or younger. This is about the same time in which the magical tradition making use of *galdrastafir* starts appearing in Iceland, and it may not be a coincidence, as we shall see.

These Solomonic texts incorporate elements of Judaeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman esoteric traditions, and they can be ascribed to that branch of magic called *goetia* (from Greek γοητεία ‘witchcraft’). These texts illustrate the rituals and the procedure to manipulate reality through the invocation and control of demons. There are dozens of demons, each with a particular name and specialised powers, and the magician can evoke them through rituals involving the use of sigils.

The most famous manuscript preserving the earlier text, the *Hygromanteia*, is a Greek codex bearing the shelf mark *Harleianus 5596*, which includes a number of sigils (see Figure 1) to be used for the conjuration of demons. Some of them bear a striking resemblance to Icelandic *galdrastafir*.

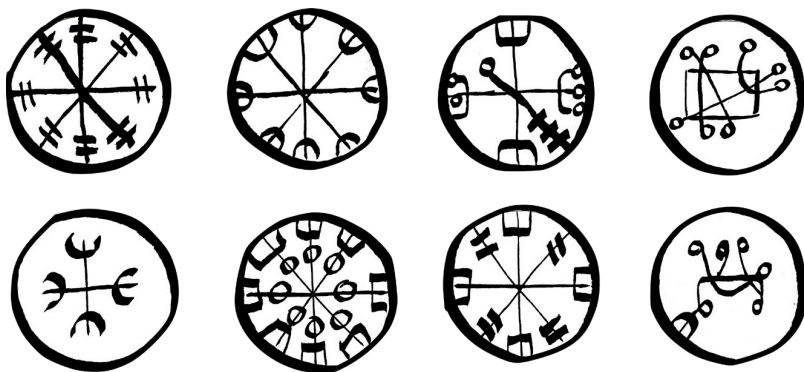


Figure 1: Examples of sigils from the *Harleianus 5596* (fol. 33v).

Despite the name, *Hygromanteia* does not include any instruction on water divination, as it deals with invocation and planetary magic. It may have done so, however, in a part lost in the transmission. It is interesting to note that a form of divination involving the use of water is indeed recorded in the earliest Icelandic grimoire, AM 434 a 12mo (fol. 4v), prescribing the use of a magical stave (see Figure 2) to identify a thief. The person must fill an *askur* (sort of wooden bowl) with water and yarrow (*Achillea*, a flowering plant), recite “*in nomine domini, amen*”, and the face of the thief will appear in the water.

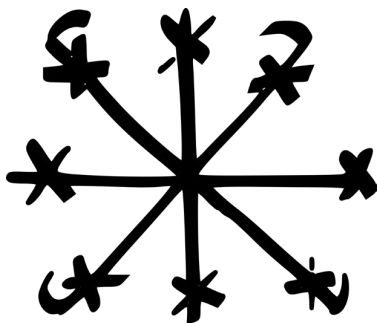


Figure 2: Þjófastafir.

The resemblance between the sigils of the *Harleianus 5596* and the earliest *galdrastafir*, such as that shown in Figure 2, is quite striking. We can still see a strong similarity if we observe what has perhaps become the most famous of all *galdrastafir* in the popular imagery, the so-called *Ægishjálmur* (Figure 3) from Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver* (fol. 11r).

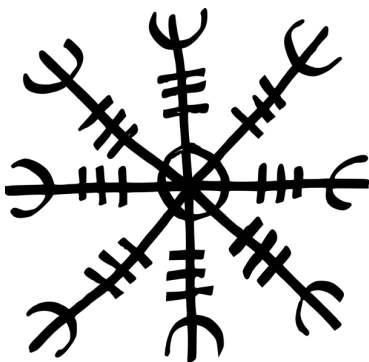


Figure 3: The *Ægishjálmur*.

On its own, visual similarity, although uncanny and intriguing, is insufficient proof of direct influence or derivation. However, that and the context in which the first *galdrastafir* are situated, interspersed with known esoteric motifs, strongly indicate that both these themes and the staves must share the same origin: Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*, for instance, begins with an epistle claiming to be written by God himself and brought by an angel to Pope Leo III (similarly to the magic seal Solomon gets in the *Testament*), followed by symbols called ‘rings of Charlemagne’; fol. 13v displays the ‘Seal of the Holy Spirit’, and on 14r we find a ‘Seal of Solomon’. These symbols have been called *galdramyndir* in Icelandic and are named in Icelandic court cases from the seventeenth century (Ólína Þorvarðardóttir 2000, 210). On fol. 12r we also encounter the Greek-derived form *ihs* (Jesus) and Latin expressions such as “*re demtor* [sic] *et saluator*” or “*conserfa seruam tuum* [sic]”.

ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*, also displays two examples of the ‘seal of Solomon’ (fols. 8r and 14r), though aesthetically rather different from that in Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*. The second one is followed by ‘The 109th Psalm of David’ (14v–16v). Beginning on fol. 11v, we find a prayer against dangers posed by nature and animals, including an invocation (on fol. 12r) to “Adonaij agijos otheos agijos yskyros agijos athanathos Eleyson ymas Zebaoth Emanuel”, a mixture of Hebrew and Greek words. We also find a list of days that were considered unlucky ‘particularly by the Egyptians’ (fols. 13r–13v).² It would be more difficult to find an explanation as to why the *galdrastafir*, if they had a completely different origin from the surrounding material, would have been inserted in this Judaeo-Christian esoteric context. The explanation that they must share the same origin as the rest of the material surrounding them is more economical.

Page (2019, 438–445) describes the widespread use of textual amulets, including magic symbols or sigils, copied alongside prayers or charms and carried around for protection. She also describes how these circular symbols became more numerous and complex in the late Middle Ages. A similar tendency is observed in the Icelandic *galdrastafir*, whose complexity appears to progress incrementally from the earliest attestations in AM 434

2 While a systematic comparison with parallel motifs in continental European grimoires lies beyond the scope of this paper, this nonetheless constitutes a promising avenue for future research and could yield valuable insights into patterns of transmission, adaptation, and local innovation.

a 12mo, *Lækningakver*, to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century attestations and even later ones.

The Icelandic *galdrastafir* have sometimes been regarded as part of a unique and isolated magical tradition. Their aesthetic and symbolic vocabulary appears distinct and apparently recognisable at first glance: angular symbols, symmetrical radial designs, and rune-like components often associated with Icelandic folklore and Norse heritage. The fact is that Solomonic sigils are not widely known among the general population to begin with, while *galdrastafir* enjoy a significant popularity, at least judging by how frequently people choose them for a tattoo. Indeed, the chances are that the sigils from *Harleianus 5596* would be identified as Icelandic *galdrastafir* by anyone who is unaware of their provenance.

However, a comparative analysis reveals apparent and significant stylistic and functional correspondences with the magical sigils found in early modern European grimoires – especially those associated with the Solomonic corpus. Previous authors have already noted this relationship with Judaeo-Christian magical traditions (Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992; Mitchell 2011, 41; Bauer 2020, 290). This suggests that *galdrastafir* were not purely indigenous innovations but rather peripheral adaptations of Mediterranean esotericism, filtered through the cultural and linguistic context of late-medieval and early modern Iceland. It is impossible to trace the evolution of the Icelandic tradition from the European one in a direct and univocal way directly through the texts, given how few they are, but the connection with the European tradition is very difficult to refute in light of the striking similarities.

The key to understanding this process lies in recognising the transregional circulation of magical texts in the medieval and early modern period. Pseudepigraphic magical texts or spells attributed to a number of famous ancient figures, such as Charlemagne, Cyprian, or Honorius, circulated in a number of versions across Europe, and the body of texts attributed to King Solomon enjoyed a remarkable popularity. A survey of this heterogeneous body of texts and its history can be found in Véronèse (2019). Though their content varied depending on the compiler and scribe, they shared certain recurring features: the use of geometric sigils, the invocation of spiritual intelligences (angels or demons), and an emphasis on linguistic magic – often in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek. These features appear, albeit

transformed, in Icelandic magic books, which typically reframe them in visual and vernacular terms. References to King Solomon, Charlemagne, and other characters typically associated with mediaeval pseudo-epigraphic texts are to be found throughout the Icelandic manuscripts.

Let us consider the *Clavicula Salomonis*, arguably the most influential grimoire in European magical history (Davies 2009, 15). The text first appears in the fifteenth century (Davies 2023, 72) and purports to be a manual written by King Solomon, teaching the reader (among other things) how to summon spirits and compel them to perform tasks and to protect them from spiritual harm. Central to this tradition are magical sigils – diagrams composed of intersecting lines, letters, and divine names – believed to hold inherent power. These sigils are often accompanied by instructions regarding ritual purity, timing (e.g., planetary hours), and verbal incantations.

These symbols, in their simplest form, begin to appear in Icelandic manuscripts not much later, given that the earliest text dated with some certainty is AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*, and this cannot be a coincidence. When we compare these Solomonic sigils with Icelandic *galdrastafir*, as shown above, we cannot help noticing striking formal similarities. The designs often consist of a central axis with symmetrical arms and repeating motifs, crosses, forks and circles, such as in the *Ægishjálmur* shown in Figure 3, displaying a radial pattern with tridents or spears radiating from a central point. Though the Icelandic staves often lack explicit divine names or invocations, their structure echoes the geometric logic of the Solomonic model. While it may be tempting to interpret this symbol as deriving from ancient Norse magical thought, perhaps as a collection of Ψ -runes, it bears considerable resemblance to medieval and Renaissance defensive talismans, especially planetary pentacles found the *Key of Solomon*, some of which are used to protect the wearer in combat and contain a circular structure with stylised points radiating outward. Both serve similar functions and share a similar visual language although the *Ægishjálmur* lacks the Latin inscriptions and divine names that characterise the Solomonic model. It is advisable to resist the temptation of seeing runes everywhere within any given *galdrastafir*: most runes are made by a couple of intersecting lines, while *galdrastafir* are formed from several intersecting lines, so it becomes inevitable that some of those should intersect in a manner reminiscent of runes.

Either way, the Icelandic treatment of these symbols suggests a process of visual distillation: diagrams once embedded in a ritual and theological framework must have been gradually transformed into simpler, vernacularised symbols, first accompanied by a simple prayer or invocation, but eventually self-contained and sufficient. The Solomonic sigil, often accompanied by names and depending on planetary positions and ritual for their efficacy, became in Iceland a figure of power in itself – divorced from its original invocatory context but retaining its symbolic force while moving away from the ritual and scholastic apparatus of continental magic. Access to learned commentaries and Latin texts must have been limited, especially in rural Iceland. As a result, the visual component of magic – the sign or *stafur* – became the primary locus of efficacy.

In light of these considerations, we may assume that the transferral and transformation of these motifs into the Icelandic context likely occurred not only through direct copying but through a long process of diffusion and reinterpretation, perhaps involving a degree of oral transmission. Copies of grimoires circulated throughout Europe. Once in the hands of Icelandic readers, their content could be reworked to suit local idioms and expectations. Latin prayers were corrupted or replaced by Icelandic instructions, demonic names were either omitted, integrated with those of Norse gods, or modified, and complex rituals were reduced to simple prescriptions, such as this from ATA Åmb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók* (fol. 7r): “while fasting, make the latter (symbol) with your saliva in your palm when you greet the girl whom you want to have. It should be the right hand.”

Yet, the core belief – that certain shapes and diagrams could mediate unseen forces – remained intact. This process can be understood through the lens of a sort of ‘vernacular Hermetism’, that is, the appropriation of learned magical traditions by non-scholarly audiences. It is a possibility that Icelandic students may have come into contact with at least some examples of European esoteric tradition in the course of their studies on the continent, perhaps in Denmark or Germany, and that they may have taken some of these ideas with them upon their return home. Icelandic folklore collected in the nineteenth century includes many folktales about the meddling with dark arts by clerics and in the cathedral schools of Skálholt and Hólar. Though these tales are more likely to reflect popular

paranoia about powerful people playing with superior forces to manipulate society (a fear that even our contemporaries are sometimes subject to), they may also reflect a historical reality by which magical material would have circulated first in those circles only to then trickle down into the general farming population. Indeed, we do know of cases in which students or priests were accused of practising magic and expelled (Ólína Þorvarðardóttir 2000, 147–149; Már Jónsson 2021, 1:397–405). It is worth noting that a symbol of this kind appears on fol. 14r of GKS 2367 4to, the *Codex Regius* of *Snorra Edda*, dated to the mid-fourteenth century. The symbol is located in close proximity to the word “fjolkyngi” (normalised: *fjölkyngi*), meaning ‘magic’ or ‘witchcraft’, as if serving to illustrate the very concept mentioned in the text. The passage in question features the wanderer Gangleri (King Gylfi in disguise) commenting on the magical powers of the jötunn king Útgarða-Loki. Although the symbol in the right margin appears to be a later addition, it may nonetheless suggest that learned individuals, such as those that would have handled a manuscript like this, were familiar with such symbolic traditions and engaged with them in meaningful ways.

In Iceland, once they had spread from learned circles into the general population, hermetic ideas and Solomonic motifs were no longer studied or used chiefly in monasteries (which ceased to function after the Reformation) or schools but deployed in barns, kitchens, and fields to suit the needs of the rural population. The *galdrastafir* became part of a living magical economy, traded among farmers and workers. Though severed from their Mediterranean roots, their symbolic grammar retained a surprising degree of continuity with their source material.

This shift – from invocation to inscription, from ritual to symbol – is what defines the Icelandic reinterpretation of European magic. The *galdrastafir* are thus not mere remnants of an older tradition: they are evidence of how that tradition adapted, survived, and flourished on the periphery of Europe, adapting innovations coming from the centre. As we shall see further in the next section, the Icelandic magical tradition bears the signs of popular reinterpretation of elements from a learned tradition that had perhaps been encountered but to which Icelandic practitioners had not been adequately exposed to fully absorb. Rather, they adopted some elements and ideas and built a new creative tradition around them.

3. The Evolution of the Icelandic Tradition

One of the most interesting features of the Icelandic *galdrastafir* in relation to the European tradition is their apparent disconnection from the theological and ritual frameworks that underpin the broad early modern European magical traditions. Unlike the grimoires of the Mediterranean world – where sigils function as part of a larger magical apparatus involving invocations, planetary timings, and spiritual hierarchies – Icelandic magical staves often appear self-contained. A stave is drawn, named, and sometimes given a simple set of instructions for activation, but rarely is there any reference to summoning spirits or performing complex rites, though these do occasionally appear – a further indication of the European derivation of such tradition. In other words, there is no explicit reference to the cosmological premises that enable the practitioner to perform this magic. To be sure, the Christian or Judaic references implicitly assume the Judaeo-Christian cosmos, made up of angelic and demonic forces, but this reference is gradually lost in favour of a simpler attribution of magical power to the symbol itself. While references to angelic and demonic powers are recurrent in the grimoires discussed thus far, they progressively disappear by the time of the later grimoires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though references to biblical figures or to the trinity and *nomina sacra* persist here and there, for example in Lbs 764 8vo from 1780; texts such as Lbs 2413 8vo from around 1800; ÍB 383 4to, *Huld*, from around 1860; and (particularly) Lbs 5472 I 4to from 1870–1918, increasingly resemble catalogues of *galdrastafir*, accompanied by terse and almost mechanical instructions for their carving. Prayers, invocations, and references to angelic and demonic figures largely disappear. This apparent simplicity belies a deeper transformation: the absorption and reinterpretation of motifs from the *Solomonic tradition* into a visual, demonic-free magical practice.

It can thus be suggested that the *galdrastafir* reflect a localised development of the Solomonic magical tradition and particularly its system of sigils linked to specific tasks and spiritual entities. In Icelandic magic, however, the power once attributed to angels or demons is transferred to the signs themselves. This shift did not happen overnight, and the earlier Icelandic magical books do contain rituals and invocations, but the trajec-

tory is clear: the symbols cease to be one element of a ritual but become the focus of the magical practice, the carriers of the desired supernatural power: any rites or invocations are merely an accessory to the symbols. This represents a profound conceptual shift, one in which magical authority becomes embedded in graphic form rather than mediated through supernatural negotiation.

Since the present study focuses on the symbols, it will not delve into the accompanying instructions, although they must be acknowledged as a highly interesting avenue for further research. However, a comparative analysis of the textual directions would be beyond the scope of the present work, both due to space constraints and the likelihood that it would yield limited results. While certain connections between grimoires may appear suggestive, they are often tenuous and difficult to substantiate. Similar symbols are frequently employed to perform markedly different operations across different texts, while identical or comparable effects are sometimes achieved through entirely distinct symbolic means and instructions, without it being obvious why the swapping or substitution of either the symbol or of its effect has happened and in which order – see, for instance, all the variations of the *Ægishjálmur*.

3.1 *The Ars notoria and the Visualisation of Knowledge*

It may be interesting, in this context, to cite yet another example of the Solomonic magical tradition originating in the Mediterranean and bearing conceptual similarities with the way *galdrastafir* are conceived and used: the *Ars notoria* ('Notory art', in the sense of 'Art of the notes/signs'). This text can be traced to thirteenth-century Italy (Page 2019, 442) and occupies a unique place in the medieval magical tradition. An edition, translation, and commentary of a version of the text, complete with facsimile pictures of manuscript witnesses, commentary, and a catalogue of staves, has appeared in Skinner and Clark (2019). Unlike the other books of the Solomonic corpus, it does not seek to command demons or manipulate natural forces through rituals. Rather, it presents a system of spiritual contemplation, wherein the practitioner uses specific images (*notae*) and prayers to receive divine knowledge through the help of angels invoked for the purpose (Collins 2015, 349). The practitioner is promised mastery of memory, eloquence, and the liberal arts – particularly grammar,

rhetoric, and logic – through sustained devotion to a ritual cycle involving meditative contemplation of the visual figures. Figure 4 shows some examples of *notae* from fol. 22v of the codex Latin 9336, *Sacratissima ars notoria*, housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and dated to the fourteenth century:



Figure 4: *Notae* from fol. 22v of the codex Latin 9336, *Sacratissima ars notoria*.

Certain *galdrastafir* that do not belong to the more stereotypical type with radial shapes bear some similarity to the kind of *notae* shown in Figure 4 in their use of forks, loops, curls, straight and curved lines etc. (Figure 5).

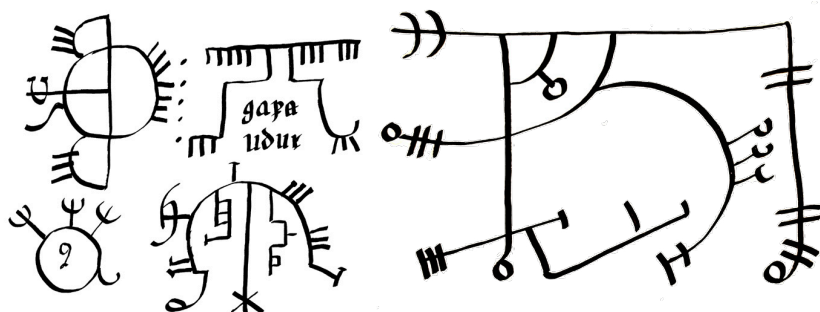


Figure 5: (left) *Galdrastafir* to conquer a girl from fol. 22v of ATA Ámb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*; (right) 'Stave of King Ólafur' from fol. 47r of Lbs 2413 8vo (1780–1820).

As can be observed in Figure 4, the *notae* in the *Ars notoria* are often elaborate circular or diagrammatic images, sometimes appearing as complex sigils or geometric compositions surrounded by text. They are not ornamental, but functional: each is connected to a particular goal, such as perfect recall of sermons, understanding of sacred texts, or rhetorical fluency.

Their power is not in their form alone but in the sequence of prayer and contemplation that unlocks their efficacy.

Interestingly, Icelandic magical staves serve analogous functions: They have a number of desired effects if drawn on paper or other supports and kept close to the body. While they lack the theological infrastructure of the *Ars notoria*, they perhaps echo its intent: a number of desired goals reached through visual-symbolic magic. It will not be argued here that the *Ars notoria* constitutes an influence or a source for Icelandic magical practice, though this possibility should not be excluded. However, this branch of European magic should be mentioned in this context, as there are some interesting parallels to be drawn between it and Icelandic magical practice. Indeed, the reliance on the symbol as a vehicle of the magic and as something that intrinsically holds a special power may have played a role in the shaping of the Icelandic tradition. At any rate, where the *Ars notoria* requires Latin education and access to ecclesiastical learning, the Icelandic staff tradition offers a democratised alternative: a visual magic of compressed intent, disconnected from learned prayer but grounded in the belief that symbols may shape reality. To be sure, it is not necessary to postulate a direct influence from *Ars notoria* on this development, and the parallel between the two traditions may be coincidental. On the other hand, the connection with the tradition of *goetia* appears much stronger.

3.2 *The Goetia and the Displacement of Demons*

In contrast to the contemplative aspirations of the *Ars notoria*, the *Ars goetia* has the purpose of enabling the magician to summon and command spirits. Texts illustrating this art, such as the *Hygromanteia* or the *Clavicula Salomonis* catalogue several demons, each with a sigil, specific abilities, and hierarchical rank. The magician invokes these spirits through ceremonial means, compelling them to appear in a protective circle and carry out tasks such as finding treasure, revealing secrets, or conferring love and favour.

The sigils associated with each demon are central to their summoning. Each sigil functions as a signature or a magical key, linking the practitioner to the corresponding entity. Invocation is crucial: the magician must name and command the demon, often using divine names, threats, and elaborate rituals. In this system, the sigil has no power in itself; it is effective only within a complex web of symbolic correspondences and spiritual authority.

What we find in Icelandic magic, however, is a significant departure from this framework. Several *galdrastafir* closely resemble goetic sigils in form, as we have seen – abstract, geometric, and highly stylised – but usually lack any reference to demonic spirits. Instead, these staves are ascribed independent magical functions. Many of them visually mimic the sigil-structure of goetic sigils, yet the instructions surrounding them contain no mention of spirits nor any requirement for invocation. Power resides not in commanding a spirit but in possessing or carrying the sign.

To be sure, the earliest grimoires – AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*; Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*; and ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók* – do contain various invocations to demonic or angelic entities, even conflating names of Judaic tradition with those of Norse gods, lumped together as demons and, as in one instance in ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*, where they are all considered to reside in Valhöll (Cf. Matthías Viðar Sæmundsson 1992, 417–427). However, many of the symbols are simply listed with brief instructions on how they should be used and the effects that they cause, while later grimoires from the eighteenth century or later have largely abandoned the invocational nature of the spells.

This separation of the sigil from the spirit constitutes a critical transformation. The *galdrastafir* preserve the visual grammar of the *goetia* – particularly the idea of the function-specific sigil – but reassign agency to the symbol itself. The stave becomes an autonomous magical unit, no longer a communicative device but a magical tool in its own right. This can be interpreted as a vernacular appropriation of learned magic: the form is retained, the theology stripped away, and the function made direct and immediate. There is a very curious parallel here with the Protestant idea of removing the excess construction of the mediaeval church to return to a ‘purer’ version of Christianity, where scriptures speak for themselves without the need of the sophisticated theological commentaries that were inherited from the learned tradition.

This displacement of the mediation of spirits may also reflect theological caution. In Lutheran Iceland, as elsewhere in Protestant Europe, overt invocation of spirits – especially demons – was legally and theologically dangerous. In fact, the theological climate of the early modern period was marked by an acute preoccupation with the real and active presence of demonic forces in the world. Within this framework, Satan was not merely

a symbolic adversary but a tangible agent “searching for allies for his final battle against God” (Nyholm Kallestrup 2025, 7). In such a context, any magical practice that could be construed as consorting with demons would have been subject to heightened suspicion and persecution. It is therefore plausible that the more explicitly diabolical aspects of *galdrastafir* were gradually suppressed or reinterpreted, not necessarily due to a decline in belief in their efficacy but as a strategic response to the theological and juridical dangers of associating with the demonic.

Moreover, some reformers, as Nyholm Kallestrup (2025, 70) also notes, made little or no distinction between witchcraft, heresy, and even Catholic devotional practices, a conflation that may also help to explain the disappearance of *nomina sacra*, invocations, and references to scriptural figures such as angels and other positive intermediaries from the magical repertoire, as even benign-seeming invocations could fall under suspicion of spiritual subversion. The reattribution of magical power from demons to symbols would have allowed practitioners to continue magical practices while avoiding charges of necromancy or heresy. It also speaks to a deeper shift in magical epistemology: one in which power is embedded in form, not in intercession. It is worth noting, however, that the systematic removal of demonic and angelic associations from the *galdrastafir* did not gain real momentum until well after the end of the witch trials, unfolding gradually from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth. In other words, if Lutheran theology and its intense preoccupation with demonic forces did indeed catalyse the displacement of such references from Icelandic grimoires, its influence was not immediate but rather initiated a longer process of sanitisation – one that continued long after the original theological and judicial pressures had faded.

From this perspective, it may be suggested that the original theological pressure was eventually supplanted by the antiquarian and romantic impulses of the nineteenth century, which favoured forms of the occult deemed ‘ancestral’ and largely detached from Christian frameworks. This shift in attitude reflects the same impulse that underlies the modern conflation of *galdrastafir* with Elder *Futhark* runes and Viking imagery in popular culture – a retrospective construction of a pre-Christian Nordic esotericism, often more reflective of romantic imagination than historical reality.

3.3 *A Vernacular Model of Magical Transmission*

The evolution of the continental *goetia* (witchcraft) tradition in Iceland suggests a vernacular model of magical transmission. The *galdrastafir* inherit the association between vision and knowledge, the idea that symbols can mediate intellectual or psychological transformation (similarly to what we encounter in the *Ars notoria*), and acquire the status of purpose-built sigils – diagrams designed for specific effects, from love to wealth to protection (similarly to what we encounter in the *Ars goetia*). In both cases, the Icelandic tradition internalises and materialises the process: instead of mediating between spirit and human, the stave ends up acting directly on the world. The process is simplified and purged from its theological and ritualistic aspects, leaving space for the pure performative act of the carving.

This model aligns with what Frank Klaassen has termed “illicit learned magic”, whereby complex magical ideas were transmitted in fragmented or corrupted form into vernacular contexts (see Klaassen 2013). In Iceland, where Latin learning was restricted and elite magical texts scarce, the adaptation took a visual and functional form. What survived was not the theology or ritualism of Solomonic magic, but its operational logic that signs have powers.

Several medieval magical texts claimed to be founded upon divine revelation (Klaassen 2013, 120), and this is an aspect that we find, for example, in Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*: The first charm (1r–7v), as mentioned, is an epistle claimed to be written by God himself and brought by an angel to Pope Leo III. It should be carried as a protection against ailments, full accusations, hatred, difficulties in childbirth, and more.

This also sheds light on the social function of *galdrastafir*. While the *Ars notoria* served monks and scholars, and the *goetia* catered to elite ceremonial magicians, both presupposing a high level of knowledge and complex rituality, *galdrastafir* belonged to farmers (and perhaps to some rebellious students) of rural Iceland. They are not abstract metaphysical devices but tools of survival and control in a harsh landscape – used to win legal disputes, succeed in love, protect livestock, or repel ghosts.

Thus, the manipulation of European magical practice, particularly in the form of the *goetia*, in the Icelandic stave tradition represents not a misunderstanding or a corruption but an innovation: a way to preserve the efficacy of medieval and Renaissance magic in a context of material scar-

city, and linguistic isolation. In this light, *galdrastafir* are neither degraded remnants nor folkloric curiosities but artefacts of vernacular esotericism – where vision, symbol, and action are fused into a single magical gesture.

3.4 *Galdrastafir as ‘Peripheral Salomonica’: Localised Esoteric Symbolism in the Icelandic Periphery*

To understand the nature of Icelandic *galdrastafir* is to confront a broader question in the history of Western esotericism: how do elite magical traditions, born in centres of learning and deeply entwined with complex theological and philosophical systems, survive and transform in peripheral, vernacular contexts? In this section, it will be argued that the Icelandic magical staves constitute a form of what can be called ‘peripheral Salomonica’ – localised, visual, and functional elaboration of the learned esoteric systems of the European Renaissance, particularly those rooted in Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, and the Solomonic grimoire tradition.

The term ‘Salomonica’ typically refers to a body of late antique texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, dealing with cosmology, astrology, theurgy, and the unity of the divine and the material. During the Renaissance, these texts were rediscovered and fused with other traditions – Christian Cabala, Neoplatonic philosophy, and the magical sciences – culminating in a vast, elite esoteric current that expressed itself in learned grimoires, philosophical treatises, and ceremonial magical practices. Yet these traditions were never fully contained within the Latin-educated elite. As early as the sixteenth century, fragments of this Hermetic and magical worldview were circulating among laypeople, artisans, and marginal figures through simplified manuals, chapbooks, and handwritten compendia.

Iceland, culturally and geographically distant from the European centres of magical innovation, nevertheless participated in this transmission, though we cannot prove whether this happened through direct engagement with the European sources, through the reception and adaptation of magical handbooks – often in manuscript form, through oral traditions containing vestiges of Hermetic and Solomonic thought, or through a combination of these. Either way, what we encounter in the Icelandic *galdrabækur* is a vernacular esoteric system: a world of protective staves, love charms, and magical recipes that, while stripped of some of the Latin complexity and theological depth, preserves the structural and symbolic

features of learned magic. The *galdrastafir* are not random folk inventions; they are systematised visual devices that in many cases appear to echo the logic, goals, and cosmology of their Mediterranean antecedents. They bear the signs of the transmission to a non-learned environment in uncertainties over the transcription of Latin or Hebrew names but also in the simplicity of the charms, usually involving the use of everyday objects available to the average Iclander in the early modern period: pieces of wood, eating knives, pieces of lead etc. Thus, what we are confronted with seems to be the popular attempt to create and systematise a coherent tradition that could suit the local needs of Icelandic rural society while still building on the reputable tradition of European magic.

There are more considerations to be made in this regard, which carry implications for our understanding of the material: the difficulty in reconstructing the tradition of the *galdrastafir* has been attributed to a lack of sources (Magnús Rafnsson 2018, 16), but this idea seems to be the product of the expectation that such sources should be found in indigenous material, on the one hand, and with a traceable transmission history, such as that between witnesses of a saga on the other. With this in mind, the tradition of the *galdrastafir* appears impenetrable due to the considerable differences between the few magical books that have survived.

The assumption is that the missing links showing the relationship between these manuscripts must have been lost. This is, in all probability, wrong. Klaassen (2013, 126) writes: “In examining these collections, we find that the manuscripts of necromancy and scholastic image magic are very different from each other”, and this is also what we find in the Icelandic material: an extreme degree of variability. This is confirmed by Véronèse (2019, 193): “these texts were sometimes subject to significant revision processes, which exceeded the inevitable variance that can be found in any single manuscript copy”. Indeed, this appears to be a defining trait of the tradition of Solomonic texts, given what Jackson (1988, 19) remarks about the *Testament of Solomon*: “unlike the great literary and philosophical works of antiquity, *TSol* and all the tracts of its kindred genres in occult science-herbals, lapidaries, bestiaries, and the like-were living texts, where scribes felt themselves free to redact as they saw fit”.

With a corpus characterised by this extreme variability, it would perhaps be pointless to approach this tradition with the tools of textual

criticism in the hope of shedding light on the transmission and evolution of the tradition in the same way as we would do with witnesses of a particular text: it may have been in the very nature of these texts that they were highly personalised to suit the very specific needs of the scribe, and their relationships are possibly more likely to be found in themes, methods, and aesthetic similarities than in the direct borrowing of discrete elements.

In all likelihood, there never were similar copies of the same grimoire in the same way as there were similar copies of the same saga: every grimoire may have been unique to a much larger degree than an exemplar of a saga. In other words, there have never been ‘missing links’ to be found, and our understanding of the tradition would not significantly improve by the addition of a few more texts; if anything, they would likely complicate the picture. It is possible to trace similarities between charms, and even almost identical symbols performing the same function, such as in the charm to identify thieves from ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*, which is identical to AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*, but identifying any tradition, let alone its earlier origins, by looking for such connections in the attempt to reconstruct some kind of ideal coherent tradition could mean missing the point.

To illustrate this, we can observe the difference between symbols performing the same function – scaring off enemies – from different manuscripts (*Figure 6*).

The symbols shown in *Figure 6* share a radial pattern, but in *a.* the arms are surmounted by circles, in *b.*, *c.* and *d.* by fork-shapes, all slightly different; *d.* also presents a central circle which is absent in the first three, and all its arms are cut by three short strokes.

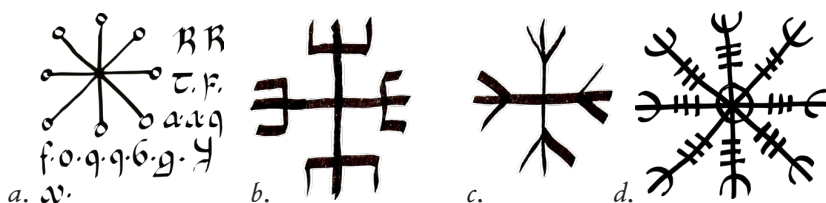


Figure 6: Different kinds of Ægishjálmur. From left to right:

- a.* AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*; *b.* and *c.* ATA Ämb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*;
d. Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*.

It could be that one of the simpler shapes inspired the more complex one to the right, but looking for such a connection may be to misunderstand the nature and purpose of this tradition and the highly personalised use that individuals must have made of the knowledge they acquired. These texts were the expression of the subjective needs and ideas of their creators, but such needs and ideas we can only speculate on.

A useful analogy may be drawn between grimoires and kitchen notebooks in which individuals collect recipes over time. Rather than transcribing entire cookbooks for personal use, people typically compile their own collections drawn from a variety of sources – written, oral, and experiential. Each notebook represents a curated assemblage of recipes that have been freely adapted and modified to suit the cook's preferences and the specific context of use. Ingredients may be substituted to reflect local availability, proportions may be adjusted to taste, and the resulting dishes are often unique, bearing only faint traces of their original source. Due to the extent of individual intervention, identifying the precise origins of any given recipe becomes exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Similarities and relationships between texts may appear more or less obvious, but these are obscured by the individualised nature of such texts.

This very high degree of variability is also present in the later *galdrabækur*. Magnús Rafnsson (2018, 10) comments that these texts, mostly from the nineteenth and twentieth century “are as different as they are many.”³ This must be kept in mind when approaching these texts: their tradition cannot be explored by searching for scribal errors or interpolations (though such a study may still yield interesting results) but is perhaps best analysed within a larger scope, exploring patterns of cultural diffusion, vernacularisation, and reception. The next section does not have the expectation of doing justice to this topic, since it may prove to be incredibly vast, but it will try to suggest a different way to approach the *galdrastafir* and Icelandic magic books in general.

3.5 From Learned Grimoire to Vernacular Compendium

One of the notable characteristics of the *galdrastafir* is their reliance on visual presentation. Icelandic magical books, whenever they use symbols,

3 ‘eru jafn ólík og þau eru mörg.’

privilege them over words. Many staves are presented without framing them into a ritual or esoteric context: we are not told explicitly from what supernatural forces the power of the symbols is derived. In some cases, invocations or the presence of prayer or *nomina sacra* may provide a hint to the cosmology that underpins these works. The authors did not concern themselves with framing this magical practice within a canon, nor did they seem strive to establish a new one. These symbols are thus not embedded in a narrative; on the contrary, in Icelandic practice, the staff itself becomes the ritual. The visual economy of the *galdrastafir* subsumes the multi-step processes of ceremonial magic into a single iconographic gesture. If we take, for instance, the *Ægishjálmur* from Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver* (fol 11r), we find that the symbol is accompanied by this brief annotation:

Ægir's Helm; it shall be carved on lead and pressed upon one's forehead when a person expects to meet their enemy, and thus they will prevail [over the enemy]. (It is as shown below).⁴

This provides a very succinct description of where to carve the sign (on lead), how to use it (pressing it onto one's own forehead), and to what effect (defeating one's enemies). This kind of magical minimalism is a hallmark of the *galdrastafir* tradition. Where Mediterranean grimoires often require consecrated tools, sacred space, and a cycle of purifications, Icelandic magic often requires only ink, paper, or even just saliva, and intention. This dematerialisation of ritual can be seen as both a theological adaptation and a cultural necessity.

On the one hand, the post-Reformation religious climate was inhospitable to forms of popular devotions or rites, especially those involving invocations to saints, offerings, purifying rituals (fasting), or prayers that could be reminiscent of Latin rites and liturgy. Lutheran orthodoxy suppressed overt magical practices, and those accused of witchcraft in Iceland were prosecuted with increasing frequency in the seventeenth century. The simplification of magic into signs – silent, compact, and easily concealed – offered practitioners both speed of execution and a degree of plausible

4 'Æirz hialmur hann skal / gioraft á blij og þrickia / J enni sier þa madur a uön a / ouin sijnum ad hann mæti / honum og muntu hann Jferuinna /(hann er so sem hier epter filger)'

deniability. This simplification curiously reflects the Protestant attempt to purge Christianity of Catholic rituals and traditions seen as superfluous. The *galdrastafir*, being an unorthodox expression of belief, were never intended to show any kind of coherence but reflected the idiosyncrasies of their scribes and how they interpreted them, not unlike how the different Protestant denominations came up with (sometimes) radically different interpretations of the Scriptures.

On the other hand, the geographic isolation and sparse population of Iceland made the complex apparatus of ceremonial magic impractical. Access to ritual implements, calculation of planetary position, and trained collaborators was limited. The staves offered a portable, efficient alternative: a personal, adaptable, and immediate form of magical practice. A staff could be drawn on the fly, hidden in clothing, or etched into everyday objects. This functional pragmatism is an interesting characteristic of these texts. Later grimoires, such as Lbs 2413 8vo, increasingly appear as catalogues of *galdrastafir*, and despite their later date, they appear to be directly connected to the older tradition, rather than being modern creations (Magnús Rafnsson 2018, 10).

The popularity of this form of magic is testified by the frequent mentions of magical staves in court cases from the so-called *Brennuöld* (for an extensive discussion on all the documents from the trials for witchcraft in the seventeenth century, see Már Jónsson 2021). For instance, a father and his son, both named Jón Jónsson, were sentenced to death in 1656 for having possessed magical staves written on some pages, which they later burnt (Már Jónsson 2021, 1:270–272), while a certain Halldór Bjarnason was sentenced for, among other accusations, carrying the ‘Seal of Solomon’ (Már Jónsson 2021, 1:321).

Indeed, if we adopt a structural view of magical practice – focusing on intention, medium, and expected outcome – the similarities between *galdrastafir* and their Mediterranean counterparts become more apparent. Even ignoring the aesthetic similarities, both seek to influence reality through signs, both presuppose a cosmos responsive to symbolic intervention, and both rely on a combination of inherited tradition (real or invented) and creative adaptation.

4. Conclusion

In the course of this paper, we have traced the origin of the Icelandic magical staves (*galdrastafir*) to the Mediterranean area, where pseudepigraphic texts attributed to king Solomon began appearing in the late Middle Ages. Some of these texts, such as the *Hygromanteia* and the *Clavicula Salomonis*, enabled the magician to evoke demons to perform tasks through rituals, the use of astronomical hours, and importantly, through sigils. The idea about the use of sigils to perform magic must have spread from the European continent to Iceland, where it gave rise to a popularised branch of this magical tradition. In Iceland, this form of magic was gradually purged of its theological and ceremonial elements and of the connection with demons, and was adapted to the psychological needs and material resources of the rural population. The earlier Icelandic grimoires, such as AM 434 a 12mo, *Lækningakver*; ATA Ámb2 F 16:26, *Galdrabók*; and Lbs 143 8vo, *Galdrakver*, still betray their Judaeo-Christian origin through the presence of biblical names, words in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as well as other elements, but all the ritualistic and esoteric elements are progressively removed until Icelandic magical books from the eighteenth century onwards increasingly resemble catalogues of magical symbols, with brief instructions on the way in which they should be carved and the desired effects.

European grimoires were not copied in the same way as other texts, and Icelandic *galdrabækur* are no exception: each of them was a unique product reflecting the highly individualised needs of its compiler. In that sense, the relationship between these books, or between the Icelandic books and the broader European tradition, should not be traced by attempting to philologically identify and reconstruct the changes undergone during the transmission, but rather by looking at the broad context in which these symbols are situated, and considering their intents and uses.

By tracing the Mediterranean roots of the *galdrastafir*, this paper has argued for their inclusion within the broader taxonomy of European esotericism. Icelandic magical staves should be seen not as isolated folk symbols but as the witnesses of survival and reinterpretation of late medieval and early modern ritual magic. The Icelandic transformation of themes and motifs from the *Ars goetia* – purged of its demons and re-centered on the inherent efficacy of symbols – demonstrates the adaptability of esoteric traditions as

they migrated from elite to popular contexts, and from the Mediterranean to the margins of Europe.

The findings have broader implications for our understanding of cultural diffusion and vernacularisation processes. They invite further exploration of other peripheral adaptations of elite intellectual traditions, potentially offering insights into the mechanisms by which learned ideas were transmitted and transformed in non-academic settings. Future research might investigate specific historical routes, such as clerical or scholarly networks, that facilitated the dissemination of esoteric texts to Iceland, or explore parallel adaptations in other geographically or culturally remote European contexts. In sum, the Icelandic *galdrastafir* represent a distinctive expression of Europe's broader esoteric heritage. They highlight not merely the endurance but the creative transformation of magical traditions, offering a compelling illustration of how local conditions shape the reception and redefinition of learned knowledge.

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SUMMARY

The Mediterranean Origin of the *Galdrastafir*: Tracing the Transmission of the Learned European Magical Tradition into Icelandic Popular Lore

Keywords: *galdrastafir*, Icelandic magic, Solomonic magic, grimoires, cultural transmission, Western esotericism, early modern period, Iceland

This paper argues that the Icelandic magical staves known as *galdrastafir* are a peripheral offshoot of the broader European esoteric tradition. Their iconographic and conceptual features indicate a lineage traceable to medieval and early modern grimoires, particularly those in the Solomonic tradition. This paper argues that the *galdrastafir* emerged through a syncretic process involving the conflation of different ideas taken from the learned European traditions such as the *goetia*, with the demonic component of the latter displaced and its powers reattributed to the symbolic power of the sigils themselves. The Icelandic tradition thus represents a localised, demythologised, and popularised expression of Renaissance and post-Renaissance ceremonial magic, shaped by the transmission of esoteric knowledge from the Mediterranean to the Nordic periphery.

ÁGRIP

Galdrastafir og uppruni þeirra við Miðjarðarhafið. Ferill lærðrar evrópskrar galdrahefðar inn í íslenska alþýðmenningu

Efnisorð: galdrastafir, íslenskir galdrar, Salómonskur galdur, galdrabækur, menn-ingarmiðlun, vestræn dulspeki, árnýöld, Ísland

Í þessari grein eru færð rök fyrir því að íslensku galdrastafirnir séu „jaðargrein“ af mun útbreiddari evrópskri dulhyggjuhefð. Myndrænir og hugmyndafræðilegir eiginleikar þeirra benda til tengsla við galdrabækur (grimoire) frá miðöldum og árnýöld, einkum þær sem tilheyra hinni svokölluðu Salómonshefð. Hér er því haldið fram að galdrastafir hafi orðið til við samruna ólíkra hugmynda úr evrópskum lærdómshefðum á borð við Goetia en í því tilfelli hafi djöfullega þættinum í Goetiu verið ýtt til hliðar og kraftar hans yfirfærðir á táknrænt afl stafanna sjálfra. Íslenska galdrastafahefðin endurspeglar þannig staðbundna, afgoðavædda og alþýðlega útfærslu á helgisíðatengdri galdrahefð endur-

reisnarinnar og tímans eftir hana, mótaða af miðlun dulfræðilegrar þekkingar frá Miðjarðarhafssvæðinu til norrænna jaðarsvæða.

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„EKKI ER ÞETTA KIRKJUNNI
AÐ NEINU GAGNI“

Íslensk söngbókabrot úr kaþólskum sið¹

Örlög kaþólskra helgisíðabóka á öldunum eftir siðaskipti voru sem kunnugt er harla hryggileg og var sú raunin á Íslandi sem og í öðrum löndum þar sem hinn gamli siður vék fyrir nýjum. Þrátt fyrir að enginn hefði lengur not fyrir slíkar bækur inntaksins vegna voru skinnblöðin sjálf þó brúkleig til ýmissa hluta. Þau hentuðu til dæmis sem hlífðarkápur um verðmætari handrit og prentaðar bækur en einnig mátti skera þau í strimla og nota til bókbands enda bókfellið sterkt, allt að því óslítandi. Einnig var hægt að skafa upp blekið og skrifa nýtt efni á blöðin í stað þess gamla. Allt þótti þetta sjálfsögð nýtni á góðu skinni þegar það sem á skræðunum stóð var orðið einskis vert, eða eins og Árni Magnússon ritaði á miða sem fylgdi blöðum úr því sem eitt sinn var fögur messusöngsbók úr Gufudal og kemur við sögu síðar í þessari grein: „Ekki er þetta kirkjunni að neinu gagni.“² Ekki má heldur gleyma því að eflaust hafa ótal handrit eða brot úr þeim hreinlega grotnað niður í aldanna rás í köldum og rökum híbýlum þar sem tilvist þeirra var jafnvel löngu gleymd.

Helgisíðabækurnar gömlu voru af ýmsum toga en stór hluti þeirra hafði að geyma nótur, svokallaðar *neumur*. Sléttsöngur, það sem kallað var *cantus planus* á latínu, var veigamikill hluti hins kaþólska helgihalds. Í stuttu máli voru fjórar gerðir helgisíðabóka algengastar auk saltarans. Þær bækur sem hafa að geyma hina lesnu texta messunnar kallast *missale* en bækur þar sem sungnir messuliðir standa með nótum heita *graduale*. Í tíðasöng má greina sömu skiptingu í rit með og án nótna. *Breviarium* geymir texta tíðasöngs

- 1 Rannsóknin „Söngbókabrot úr kaþólskum sið á Íslandi“ var styrkt af menningar- og viðskiptaráðuneyti gegnum verkefnið Ritmenning íslenskra miðalda.
- 2 Kristian Kålund, *Katalog over den Arnemagnæanske håndskriftsamling* 1:523, sjá einnig Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, „Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,“ *Gripla* 27 (2016): 167.

en nóturnar standa í bókum sem nefnast *antiphonale* eða *antiphonarium*.³ Einnig mátti safna tilteknum messuliðum í sérstök handrit sem þá drógu nafn sitt af efninu: *hymnarium*, *kyriale*, *sequentiarium*, og þannig má áfram telja.⁴

Örðugt er að meta hversu mörg messusöngshandrit hafa glatast af þeim sem skrifuð voru eða notuð í íslenskum kirkjum fram til siðaskipta. Kirkja sem var sæmilega búin að bókakosti þurfti að eiga að minnsta kosti tvær og allt upp í fimm eða sex nothæfar söngbækur, jafnvel enn fleiri. Ef sjálf litúrgían breyttist, til dæmis þegar nýir söngvar voru teknir inn eða nýrri hátíð var bætt við kirkjuárið, þurfti að skrifa nýjar bækur eða uppfæra hinar gömlu. Af máldögum kirkna má ráða nokkuð um hversu mörg slík handrit voru eitt sinn til. Ekki er þó með öllu hægt að treysta á máldaga sem heimild í þessum efnum því að þar veltur allt á nákvæmni skrásetjarans. Stundum eru engar bækur nefndar í kirkjum sem vitað er að áttu bóka-kost.⁵ Talið er að alkirkjur hafi að jafnaði verið yfir 300 á öllu landinu en að meðtöldum hálfkirkjum, fjórðungskirkjum og bænhúsum var fjöldi messu-hæfra guðshúsa um 1000–1400.⁶ Með hóflegu mati má reikna með að á Íslandi í kaþólskum sið hafi verið til nokkur þúsund handrit með nótum. Sé gert ráð fyrir að á tímabilinu 1200–1550 hafi hver alkirkja eignast tvöfaldan forða af bókum — sem virðist einnig hóflega reiknað — slagar heildarfjöldi íslenskra sönghandrita á þessu skeiði upp í 3000 bækur. Slíkar bækur voru þegar öllu er á botninn hvolft grundvöllur þess að hægt væri að halda uppi sómasamlegu helgihaldi hér á landi í meira en fimm aldir.

Fram til þessa hefur ekkert heildaryfirlit verið til yfir íslensk skinn-bókabrot með nótum og því örðugt að átta sig á því hversu mörg slík brot hafa varðveist og hvers eðlis þau eru. Megnið af umræddum brotum er varðveitt í þremur söfnum: Landsbókasafni Íslands — Háskólabókasafni,

3 Sjá nánar Ryder Patzuk-Russell, „The Lost Liturgical Books of Iceland: Understanding the *Aspicensbækr*,“ *Gripla* 33 (2022): 238–239.

4 Þar sem messubækur geta verið af ýmsum toga er ekki ávallt hægt að greina gerð upprunabókarinnar ef aðeins hefur varðveist af henni lítið brot; til dæmis gæti brot með sekvensiúnótum hafa tilheyrst *sequentiarium*, *graduale* eða *missale*.

5 Jón Þórarinnsson, *Íslensk tónlistarsaga*, ritstj. Njáll Sigurðsson og Páll Valsson (Kópavogur: Tónlistarsafn Íslands, 2012), 117.

6 Gunnar F. Guðmundsson, *Íslenskt samfélag og Rómakirkja*, Kristni á Íslandi 2 (Reykjavík: Alþingi, 2000), 181; sami höfundur, „Latínusöngur leikra á miðöldum,“ í *Til heiðurs og hugbótar. Greinar um trúarkveðskap fyrri alda*, ritstj. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir og Anna Guðmundsdóttir, Rit Snorrastofu 1 (Reykholzt: Snorrastofa, 2003), 110.

Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum í Reykjavík og Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn. Einnig eru nokkur brot á Þjóðskjalasafni Íslands og á Konungsbókhöfðum í Kaupmannahöfn og Stokkhólmi. Hin síðarnefndu hafa hlotið litla athygli fræðimanna fram til þessa. Þá má finna stök brot í Uppsölum og í Cambridge í Bandaríkjunum auk þess sem fáein brot eru enn í einkaeigu.

Norskir fræðimenn hafa rutt brautina í rannsóknum á þeirri tónlist sem blöðin geyma. Þar ber fyrstan að nefna tónlistarfræðinginn Erik Eggen en rannsókn hans á sekvensíum í Niðarósbiskupsdæmi kom út að honum látnum árið 1968. Jón Helgason hafði umsjón með útgáfunni og bætti við upplýsingum um handrit sem Eggen hafði yfirsést eða hann ekki haft aðgang að.⁷ Á þessari öld hafa Gisela Attinger og Marit Johanne Høye lagt verulegan skerf til rannsókna á þeirri tónlist sem finna má í íslenskum söngbókabrotum og héldu þær meðal annars áfram þeirri rannsókn á sekvensíum sem Eggen var upphafsmaður að.⁸ Fleiri Norðmenn hafa rannsakað íslensk handritabrot á víðari grunni, einkum helgisíðafræðingurinn Lilli Gjerløw en lykilrit hennar *Liturgica Islandica* kom út árið 1980. Þá hefur Tom Lorenz á síðustu árum rannsakað brot og uppskafninga af íslenskum uppruna frá sjónarhóli handritafræðinnar.⁹

Afrakstur þessara rannsókna á íslenskum söngbókabrotum hefur verið margvíslegur eins og vænta mátti. Af brotunum má ráða margt um handritagerð á Íslandi, jafnvel verk einstakra skrifara. Þá geyma söngbókabrotin dýrmætar upplýsingar um helgihald í kaþólskum sið á Íslandi í stóru jafnt sem smáu. Þegar þau eru borin saman við regluverkið sem birtist í hinum leiðbeinandi ritum Niðarósbiskupa, Orðubók (*Ordo Nidrosiensis*), sem varðveitt er í handritum frá 13. öld, og *Missale Nidrosiensis*, prentaðri bók

- 7 Erik Eggen, *The Sequences of the Archbishopric of Nidarós* (Kaupmannahöfn: Munksgaard, 1968).
- 8 Gisela Attinger, „Icelandic Manuscripts Containing Sequences: A Presentation of Twelve Medieval Fragments,” *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 30 (2004): 119–143; Attinger, „Prosulas in Icelandic Plainchant Sources,” *Studia Musicologica Norvegica* 32 (2006): 7–22; Attinger, „Sequences in Two Icelandic Mass Books from the Later Middle Ages,” í *The Sequences of Nidaros. A Nordic Repertory & Its European Context*, ritstj. Lori Kruckenberg og Andreas Haug (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2006), 165–181; Marit Johanne Høye, „Sequence Melodies in Icelandic and Norwegian Manuscripts,” *Dansk Musikforskning Online* (2016): 27–41.
- 9 Tom Lorenz, „Latin *in situ* Fragments Connected to Iceland: A Survey,” *Scripta Islandica* 75 (2024): 61–94.

frá 1519, má stundum greina frávík í íslensku heimildunum. Til dæmis má nefna að *Jubar mundo*, sekvensía fyrir Pétursmessu og Páls (29. júní), er í þremur íslenskum söngbókabrotum en er ekki nefnd í Orðubók.¹⁰ Þetta gefur vísbendingu um að íslenskir biskupar og prestar hafi að einhverju leyti viljað halda í sjálfstæði sitt gagnvart regluverkinu í Noregi. Raunar má greina sömu viðleitni í prentuðum söngbókum eftir siðaskipti.¹¹

Markmið þessarar greinar er tvíþætt. Annars vegar verður brugðið upp heildstæðri mynd af þeim söngbókabrotum sem varðveist hafa og hins vegar varpað ljósi á nokkur brot sem ekki hefur áður verið fjallað um á prenti. Segja má að helst hafi staðið fyrri rannsóknum fyrir þrifum hversu örðugt var að fá yfirsýn yfir öll brot úr íslenskum söngbókum í hinum ýmsu söfnum þar sem ekki var til heildstæð skrá um efnið. Þótt sum söngbókabrotin séu vel kunn og um þau hafi verið fjallað eru önnur illa skráð eða jafnvel alls ekki. Rannsóknir á söngbókabrotum hafa oft beinst að einu tilteknu safni í hvert sinn en í þeirri vinnu sem hér liggur að baki var reynt að ná víðari sýn. Þannig tókst að tengja saman nokkur brot sem dreifst hafa á fleiri en eitt safn en tilheyrðu að öllum líkindum upphaflega sömu bók — eða eru að minnsta kosti verk sama skrifara.

Söngbókabrot í íslenskum og erlendum söfnum

Sem fyrr segir var lítil virðing borin fyrir kaþólskum helgisíðabókum eftir siðbreytingu Lúthers enda engin not fyrir þau lengur í sinni upprunalegu mynd. Árni Magnússon var síður en svo einn um það að nota skinnblöð úr slíkum handritum í band eða kápur utan um aðrar bækur eða skjöl. Eins furðulegt og það kann að hljóma varð þetta þó til að bjarga þeim blöðum sem varðveist hafa. Harla lítið hefur varðveist af heillegum söngbókum eða smærri brotum sem ekki voru notuð í þessum tilgangi og flest eiga þau

10 Gisela Attinger, „Icelandic Manuscripts Containing Sequences,” 123. Þetta á vitaskuld aðeins við þegar allar líkur eru á því að umrædd handrit hafi verið skrifuð á Íslandi og séu því marktækur vitnisburður um helgihald hér á landi. Attinger nefnir nokkur einkenni sem gefi til kynna íslenskan uppruna handrita, meðal annars au/av-líminga og lítinn hástaf H í texta, sem og „tvöfaldar nótur“, þ.e. þegar tvær nótur standa svo þétt saman að þær virðast næstum ein nóta með tvo hala; hún bendir þó á að þetta atriði þurfi að rannsaka nánar. Sjá Attinger, „Icelandic Manuscripts Containing Sequences,” 142 og Attinger, „Iceland and Norway: Separate Scribal Cultures,” í *Nordic Latin Manuscript Fragments*, ritstj. Áslaug Ommundsen og Tuomas Heikkilä, 224–233.

11 Sjá nánar Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, „Sléttisöngur í lútherskum sið á Íslandi, 1550–1800,” *Gripla* 31 (2020): 295–303.

sameiginlegt að á þeim er annað efni sem söfnurum þótti hnýsilegra, til dæmis vísur og kvæði, mál dagar eða aðrir textar á íslensku.¹²

Það var ekki fyrr en á öndverðri 20. öld sem bókaverðir og fræðimenn tóku að gefa verulegan gaum þeim handritaleifum sem leyndust í bandi bóka og handrita. Á árunum 1911–1913 voru blöð úr handritum í safni Árna Magnússonar leyst úr bandi að frumkvæði Kristians Kålund bóka- varðar í Kaupmannahöfn. Hóf hann að skrásetja þau undir safnmarkinu „AM Accessoria“ og brot úr helgisiðabókum voru sett í sérstakan flokk, Accessoria 7.¹³ Síðan hafa fleiri blöð úr helgisiðabókum verið tekin úr bandi á sama hátt.¹⁴ Til dæmis voru brot fjarlægð úr bandi nokkurra handrita á Árnasafni á árunum um 1960–1980 og var þeim gefið safnmarkið Accessoria 48. Enn eru þó allnokkur handrit ósnert hvað þetta varðar, einkum á Konungsbókhöfðum í Kaupmannahöfn og Stokkhólmi; skinn- blöðin eru þar enn *in situ* og verður þeirra getið síðar í þessari grein.

Stærsta safn brota úr íslenskum söngbókum er tvímælalaust áður- nefnt Accessoria 7 á Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn. Undir því safnmarki eru varðveitt um 500 skinnbrot úr kaþólskum helgisiðabókum af ýmsum toga. Eftir mikla rannsóknarvinnu sem einkum fór fram á síðari hluta 20. aldar hefur brotunum verið skipt í 144 upprunahandrit og er stór hluti þeirra frá Íslandi en einnig eru þar brot úr handritum sem talin eru rituð í Englandi, Þýskalandi og Hollandi. Ríflega 200 af brotunum í Accessoria 7 eru úr söngbókum sem taldar eru hafa verið ritaðar á Íslandi. Varðveitt eru brot úr 19 messusöngsbókum, alls 137 blöð og munar þar mestu um tvær stórar bækur, svonefndar *Missale Scardense* (Hs 1, 58 blöð) og *Graduale Gufudalense* (Hs 2, 34 blöð), sem getið verður nánar hér að aftan. Þá eru einnig brot úr 25 tíðasöngsbókum, alls 72 blöð.¹⁵

12 Hér má til dæmis nefna handrit Þorlákstiða (AM 241 a II fol.) og Nikulástiða (AM 640 4to) sem eru með stærri handritum sem varðveist hafa með kaþólskum kirkjusöng á Íslandi en þó hvorugt heilt; einnig smærri brot með öðrum textum sem vöktu meiri áhuga safnara en sjálfar nóturnar, svo sem AM Dipl. Isl. Fasc. V, 12 (máldagi), AM 687 b 4to (gátur) og AM 80 b 8vo (gjafavottorð), sjá Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Tónlist liðinna alda. Íslensk handrit 1100–1800* (Reykjavík: Crymogea, 2019), 26–29 og 32–33.

13 Sjá Merete Geert Andersen, „Colligere fragmenta, ne pereant“, *Opuscula* 7 (1979): 2–3, 7–8; Attinger, „Sequences in Two Icelandic Mass Books“, 166. Við frumskráningu brotanna í Accessoria 7 var um skeið árið 1914 ráðinn Guðbrandur Jónsson, síðar prófessor, en hann var kaþólskrar trúar og hafði því grundvallarskilning á eðli þeirra helgisiða sem skráðir voru í handritunum.

14 Merete Geert Andersen, *Katalog over AM Accessoria 7. De latinske fragmenter* (Kaupmannahöfn: Reitzel, 2008), xi–xvi.

15 Andersen, *Katalog*, passim. Einnig eru nótur á brotum úr tveimur Breviaria (Acc. 7 Hs

Um 115 söngbókabrot til viðbótar hafa varðveist í öðrum söfnum, flest á Íslandi en einnig í Danmörku, Svíþjóð og Bandaríkjunum. Fjörutíu og fjögur brot með nótnaskrift eru á Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskólabókasafni.¹⁶ Prettán brot eru á Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum auk þeirra 28 sem áður tilheyrðu Þjóðminjasafni Íslands en voru afhent Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum til varðveislu vorið 2011.¹⁷ Sjö söngbókabrot eru á Þjóðskjalasafni Íslands en nokkur þeirra virðast rituð erlendis (sjá bls. 283).¹⁸ Tólf brot eru á Konungsbókhöfðu í Kaupmannahöfn og átta á Konunglega bókasafninu í Stokkhólmi; eru þau ýmist skráð sem slík eða enn varðveitt sem kápur um önnur handrit eða prentaðar bækur. Þá er eitt íslenskt handrit í safni Háskólans í Uppsöllum bundið í blað úr fornri söngbók og sú er einnig raunin með eitt handrit í eigu Harvard-háskóla í Bandaríkjunum. Að minnsta kosti tvö brot til viðbótar eru enn í einkaeigu. Sum þessara blaða eru að því er virðist úr sömu bókum en þó eru þau mun fleiri sem eiga sér ekki hliðstæðu. Með hæfilegri varkárni má því slá föstu að einhver blöð hafi varðveist úr um 130–140 söngbókum sem eitt sinn voru eign íslenskra kirkna og flestar þeirra ritaðar á Íslandi.¹⁹

68 og 69) og fáeinum smábrotum til viðbótar sem fjarlægð voru úr handritum Árnasafns síðar á 20. öld (Acc. 7 Hs 127–129, 133, 135 og 136); sjá *Katalog*, 68–69 og 123–129. Ítarlega rannsókn á sekvensium í *Missale Scardense* og *Graduale Gufudalense* er að finna í grein Gislu Attinger, „Sequences in Two Icelandic Mass Books from the Later Middle Ages,“ 165–181.

- 16 Skrá Jakobs Benediktssonar yfir brot í safni Landsbókasafns kom út á prenti árið 1959 (*Handritasafn Landsbókasafns*, 2. aukabindi). Þar er skráð 101 brot (Lbs fragm 1–81 og JS fragm 1–20), þar af 31 með nótum. Á árunum um 2020 var ráðist í átak á handritadeild Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns til að skrá fleiri blöð, einkum þau sem áður voru höfð utan um önnur handrit (nú Lbs fragm 83–109, þar af ellefu með nótum) og má finna afrakstur þeirrar vinnu á www.handrit.is.
- 17 Brotin úr safni Þjóðminjasafns Íslands bárust því á fyrstu árum og áratugum sem safnið starfaði, flest á árunum 1864–1895. Þau voru gjafir frá einstaklingum víða að af landinu, til dæmis gaf Páll Pálsson stúdent safninu sjö skinnblöð með nótum á árunum 1864–1871. Meðal annarra sem gáfu slíkar gjafir voru Björn Björnsson, bóndi á Álfanesi (tvö blöð), og séra Björn Halldórsson í Laufási (tvö blöð), sbr. skráningu á www.handrit.is.
- 18 Hið merkasta af hinum íslensku söngbókabrotum á Þjóðskjalasafni (nú Þjskjs 2b) hefur að geyma prósessíusöng sem einnig er nefndur í Guðmundar sögu góða. Í þeirri frásögn er hann sunginn daginn fyrir allraheilagramessu og er staðsetning hans á blaðinu á Þjóðskjalasafni í samræmi við það; sjá Róbert A. Ottósson, „Ein Prozessionsgesang der Mönche zu Þingeyrar,“ *Scientia Islandica* 2 (1970): 3–12; Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Tónlist liðinna alda*, 30–31.
- 19 Hér eru ekki taldir með uppskafningar þar sem upprunahandrit voru söngbækur. Nokkur slík handrit hafa varðveist; í sumum tilvikum var upprunahandritið sannarlega ekki

Handritabrot in situ í Kaupmannahöfn og Stokkhólmi

Flest skinnbókabrot hafa verið fjarlægð úr bandi þeirra bóka sem þau eitt sinn vernduðu. Þó eru nokkur handrit enn ósnert hvað þetta varðar, þar eru skinnblöðin enn *in situ* eins og áður greinir. Flest þeirra eru í Kaupmannahöfn og Stokkhólmi en þó finnast slík handrit einnig á Íslandi. Sem dæmi má nefna GKS 3270 4to sem er fagurlega innbundið Jónsbókarhandrit frá miðri 14. öld. Eitt sinn var það í eigu Brynjólfs biskups Sveinssonar en hann sendi það Konungsbókhöfðu árið 1662; bókina hefur verið í vörslu Árnastofnunar frá árinu 1981. Spjaldblöð bókarinnar voru leyst frá spjöldum árið 1972 og eru úr tveimur tíðasöngsbókum; hið fyrra er tvídalur með rauðum og grænum upphafsstöfum og hefur að geyma tíðasöng á laugardögum *per annum*; hið síðara er tvinn úr smærri bók og þar eru skrifaðir víxlsöngvar (*responsoria*) tíðasöngs dagana eftir hvítasunnu (*De Sapientia*). Einnig má nefna að handritið ÍB 450 8vo, sem er sálmasafn frá 17. öld, er bundið inn í bókfell sem þó er mjög máð og í raun ólæsilegt.

Megnið af þeim brotum sem enn eru í bandi bóka er þó að finna á tveimur söfnum, Konungsbókhöfðu í Kaupmannahöfn og Konunglega bókasafninu í Stokkhólmi, og verður hér gerð stuttlega grein fyrir efni þeirra.

Í safni Ottos Thott á Konungsbókhöfðu í Kaupmannahöfn eru fjögur íslensk handrit enn í skinnblöðum sem hafa að geyma nótur; eitt handritsbrot til viðbótar hefur verið tekið úr bandi en er áfram geymt með því yngra handriti sem það áður tilheyrði (sjá *Töflu 1*). Thott greifi (1703–1785) var mesti bókasafnari Dana og valdamikill maður í ríkisstjórninni. Í höll sinni við Kóningsins nýjatorg geymdi hann safn sitt sem taldi yfir 4.000 handrit sem hann ánafnaði Konungsbókhöfðu eftir sinn dag. Thott átti á annað hundrað íslenskra handrita og var handgenginn ýmsum íslenskum menntamönnum, meðal annars Jóni Eiríkssyni konferensráði í Kaupmannahöfn og Hannesi Finnssyni sem síðar varð biskup í Skálholti.²⁰

skrifað á Íslandi (til dæmis Thott 154 fol. á Konungsbókhöfðu í Kaupmannahöfn sem er endurunnin messubók frá Englandi) eða líklega ekki skrifað þar (til dæmis Isl perg 5 8vo á Konunglega bókasafninu í Stokkhólmi sem er handrit sem Gottskálf Jónsson í Glaumbæ skrifaði á spássiur skornar úr stórrí nótabók). Sjá nánar Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, „Copying the Icelandic *Graduale* in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,“ *Opuscula* 18 (2020): 12–26; Tom Lorenz, „Latin *in situ* Fragments Connected to Iceland: A Survey,“ 84–85.

20 Jón Helgason, *Hannes Finnsson biskup í Skálholti* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafjelag, 1936), 33.

Thott 1495 4to er handrit Snorra-Eddu frá 17. öld sem bundið hefur verið í tvinn úr tíðasöngsbók eða *antiphonale* frá 14. eða 15. öld. Til að blaðið næði alveg yfir bókina var á aftari kápu saumað við tvinnið brot úr öðru blaði úr sama handriti. Á blöðunum er tíðasöngur fyrir vikudaga þegar ekki eru sungnar sérstakar messur, eða *feria 2–4 per annum*. Thott 243 8vo er steina- og grasafræði frá 18. öld sem bundin er í tvinn úr *antiphonale* með söng og textum fyrir Pétursmessu og Páls (29. júní). Í handritinu Thott 478 8vo er að finna ljóðaglósar séra Jóns Þórðarsonar í Hvammi, ritaðar árið 1679, sem bundnar eru inn í eitt blað úr *antiphonale*. Á recto-hlið blaðsins, sem snýr út og er því fremur máð, er tíðasöngur fyrir kyndilmessu (*Purificatio Mariae*, 2. febrúar); verso-hlið blaðsins snýr inn að bókinni og er því betur varðveitt og þar stendur tíðasöngur á Agötumessu (5. febrúar). Enn er svo ótalið Thott 513 8vo, rímnahandrit sem skrifað var á Kröggólfsstöðum í Ölfusi árið 1760.²¹ Kápa þess er skinnblað með tíðasöng fyrir aðventu og jólanótt. Blaðið er afar máð og torlesið en þó virðist sem hér sé um að ræða sömu rithönd — og mögulega sama handrit — og *antiphonale* það sem fjögur önnur brot hafa varðveist úr: Lbs fragm 43 og Bjms 194, 954 og 7437 (sjá nánar bls. 288–290).

Af einu íslensku handriti úr safni Thotts hefur skinnblaðskápa verið fjarlægð en liggur enn með bókinni og deilir safnmarki með henni. Thott 1494 4to er handrit Snorra-Eddu frá síðari hluta 17. aldar. Kápa þeirrar bókar var áður blað úr *graduale* frá 15. öld með söngvum sem tilheyrðu krossmessu á hausti (*Exaltatio crucis*, 14. september). Blaðið er með rithönd Jóns Þorlákssonar og verður þess getið nánar hér að aftan.

| <i>Safnmark</i> | <i>Upprunabók</i> | <i>Innihald/messudagar</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Thott 1495 4to | <i>antiphonale</i> , 14. eða 15. öld | <i>feria 2–4 per annum</i> |
| Thott 243 8vo | <i>antiphonale</i> | Pétursmessa og Páls |
| Thott 478 8vo | <i>antiphonale</i> | kyndilmessa; Agötumessa |
| Thott 513 8vo | <i>antiphonale</i> | aðventa og jólanótt |
| Thott 1494 4to (fjarlægt) | <i>graduale</i> , 15. öld | krossmessa á hausti |
| Add. 1 4to (fjarlægt) | <i>graduale</i> , 15. öld | jól |

Tafla 1. Söngbókabrot um íslensk handrit in situ í
Konunglega bókasafninu, Kaupmannahöfn.

21 Sjá einnig um ofangreind þrjú handrit í Tom Lorenz, „Latin *in situ* Fragments Connected to Iceland: A Survey,“ 68–70.

Tvö skinnblöð til viðbótar hafa verið fjarlægð úr bandi bókar á Konungs-bókhlöðu í Kaupmannahöfn. Þau voru áður höfð í band á riti Þórðar Magnússonar, *Compendium Arithmeticum* frá 1723 (Add. 1 4to). Blöðin eru úr *graduale*, líklega frá 15. öld, og hafa að geyma messusöngva á jólum. Eins og Jón Helgason benti á hafa fleiri blöð úr sömu bók varðveist í safninu Acc. 7b og verða tengsl þessara brota rakin nánar hér að aftan.²²

Einnig eru söngbókabrot í bandi eða kápum utan um átta handrit á Konungs-bókhlöðu í Stokkhólmi (sjá *Töflu 2*). Tom Lorenz hefur nýlega gert grein fyrir þessum handritum og öðrum í sænskum söfnum þar sem skinnbrot án nótna eru höfð í band eða kápur. Hér verður því aðeins tæpt á nokkrum atriðum sem tengjast tónlistinni sem Lorenz fjallar ekki um.

| Safnmark | Upprunabók | Innihald/messudagar |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Isl. papp. 4:o 10 | <i>graduale</i> , 15. öld | þrenningarhátíð |
| Isl. papp. 4:o 18 | <i>sequentiarium</i> | krossmessa á hausti (<i>Grates ho-nos hierarchia</i>) og Máritíusmessa (<i>Alludat ledus ordo</i>) |
| Isl. papp. 4:o 19 | <i>graduale</i> , 15. öld | messudagur píslarvotta |
| Isl. papp. 4:o 26 | <i>graduale</i> | himnaför Maríu |
| Isl. papp. 4:o 27 | <i>missale</i> , 14. öld | krossmessa |
| Isl. papp. 4:o 34 | <i>missale</i> | Vincentíusmessa |
| Isl. papp. 8:o 2 (fjarlægt) | <i>graduale</i> , 14. öld | fastir messuliðir (Sanctus/Agnus Dei) |
| Isl. papp. 8:o 15 (fjarlægt) | <i>antiphonarium</i> | á jólum |
| R 717 | <i>missale</i> eða <i>sequentiarium</i> | Cuthbertsmessa (<i>Alme concrepent</i>) |

Tafla 2. Söngbókabrot um íslensk handrit in situ í Konunglega bókasafninu í Stokkhólmi og Háskólabókasafninu í Uppsölum.

Isl. papp. 4:o 10 er handrit af Snorra-Eddu frá síðari hluta 17. aldar.²³ Blað úr kaþólskri messusöngsbók (*graduale*) frá 15. öld hefur verið notað sem kápa og nær yfir fremri hlið og hálfa aftari hlið handritsins; annað skinnblað verið fest þar við til að ná yfir það sem upp á vantar. Á blaðinu eru söngvar fyrir Þrenningarhátíð (sjá *Mynd 1*). Á ytri framhlið er inngangs-

22 Jón Helgason, viðbót við formála fyrir Eggen, *The Sequences of the Archbishopric of Nidarós*, 1:1.

23 Vilhelm Gödel, *Katalog öfver Kongl. Bibliotekets fornisländska och fornorska handskrifter*, 272–273.

sálmur messunnar þann dag *Benedicta sit sancta trinitas*; neðst á sama blaði hefst sekvensían *Benedicta sit beata trinitas* og er framhaldið á innra blaðinu en vantar síðustu tvær hendingar aftan við.²⁴ Nokkuð ljóst virðist að nótnabrotið hafi fylgt handritinu frá Íslandi og sé ritað þar. Upphafsstafur í *Benedicta sit sancta trinitas* er skreyttur með laufteiningum, eins og lengi tíðkaðist í íslenskum handritum, með rauðu, gulu og blágrænu bleki (sbr. einnig brotið Þjms 833 þótt það handrit sé verk annars skrifara). Rithöndinni svipar mjög til þeirrar á Acc. 7, Hs 14, þ.e.a.s. hvað textann varðar. Á spássíu eins nótnablaðsins hefur verið ritað inntak yngra handritsins, á íslensku, og virðist sú skrift vera frá 17. öld.



Mynd 1. Blað úr kaþólskri messusöngsbók frá 15. öld, kápa utan um handrit Snorra-Eddu frá síðari hluta 17. aldar (Kungliga biblioteket, Isl. papp. 4:o 10).

Isl. papp. 4:o 18 er sagnahandrit, hefur að geyma Laxdælu og Vatnsdæla sögu, en er bundið inn í brot úr tveimur handritum, saltara frá 15. öld og sekvensiubók sem Lilli Gjerløw taldi frá 13. öld, og hefur að geyma brot úr tveimur sekvensíum: *Grates honos hierarchia* sem tilheyrir krossmessu

24 Sjá Gjerløw, *Liturgica Islandica*, 1:6.

á hausti (14. september) og *Alludat letus ordo* sem tilheyrir Máritíusmessu (22. september).²⁵ *Grates honos hierarchia* er eignuð þýska munkinum Hermannus Contractus sem bjó og starfaði í Reichenau (sjá *Analecta hymnica* 50, nr. 239) en hún er fremur sjaldséð í heimildum og handritsbrotið í Svíþjóð er eina dæmið sem varðveist hefur á Norðurlöndum.²⁶ Síðari hluti hinnar sekvensiunnar, *Alludat letus ordo* er varðveittur í einu öðru íslensku handriti, AM Acc. 7, Hs 3, sem er brot 13 blaða sem rituð voru af samverkamanni Jóns Þorlákssonar á síðari hluta 15. aldar.²⁷

Til viðbótar þessu eru í bandi íslenskra handrita á Konungsbókhöfðu í Stokkhólmi brot úr fjórum messusöngsbókum og einni tíðasöngsbók (sjá *Töflu* 2). Þá hefur skinnblað verið fjarlægt úr bandi Isl. papp. 8:o 2 þegar það fékk nýtt band en er enn geymt með handritinu, sem er rímnahandrit frá fyrri hluta 17. aldar, undir sama safnmarki. Hefur blaðið að geyma söngva við tvo fasta messuliði, Sanctus og Agnus Dei, sem báðir hafa viðbótar-texta (svonefnda *trópa*), vafalaust til söngs við Maríumessur: „Benedictus Marie filius qui venit in nomine Domini“ og „Agnus Dei Marie filius qui tollis peccata mundi“.²⁸ Aðeins eitt annað tróperað Agnus Dei hefur fundist í íslensku handriti, „Agnus Dei clemens here“ á tvísöngsblaðinu AM 8o b 8vo en þar er aðeins niðurlagið og vantar auk þess stærstan hluta mótraddarinnar (sjá nánar bls. 297).

Auk þessa er í Háskólabókasafninu í Uppsölum rímnahandrit frá 17. öld (R 717) sem er bundið inn í skinnblað frá 13. öld þar sem greina má fáeinar línur úr *Alme concrepent* (AH 10:211), sem er sekvensía fyrir

25 Gjerløw, *Liturgica Islandica*, 1:7; sjá einnig *Orðubók*, 394 og 396.

26 Eggen getur ekki um sekvensiuna í riti sínu enda einbeitti hann sér að söfnum í Noregi, Danmörku og á Íslandi; sjá þó athugasemd Jóns Helgasonar í *The Sequences of the Archbishopric of Nidarós* (1:lii) þar sem hann bendir á að enn séu ókönnuð handritabrot í Konungsbókhöfðu í Stokkhólmi.

27 Handritið bar áður safnmarkið „codex A“; sjá Eggen, *The Sequences*, 2:210 og Andersen, *Katalog*, 15–18.

28 Það kallaðist *trópi* (þýs. *Tropus*, fr./en. *trope*) þegar eldri kirkjusöng var breytt með því að bæta við hann nýjum tónhendingum og/edá texta; um þá gjörð að breyta kirkjusöng með þessum hætti er höfð sögnin að *trópera*, sbr. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Saga tónlistarinnar. Tónlist á Vesturlöndum frá miðöldum til nútímans* (Reykjavík: Forlagið, 2016), 33–34. Sömu Sanctus- og Agnus Dei-trópa og standa í ofan nefndu broti er meðal annars að finna í síðari viðbót við tíðasöngsbók frá 12. öld í Háskólabókasafninu í Utrecht (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms. 406, 237v; sjá <https://cantusdatabase.org/source/123641>, sótt 21. mars 2025). Oft voru fastir messuliðir eins konar viðbót aftast í messusöngsbókum og þar mátti einnig rita fasta messuliði sem bundnir voru tilteknum hátíðum eins og raunin var með trópa af þessu tagi.

Cuthbertsmessu. Þessi sekvensía er sjaldgæf utan Durham-sóknar í norð-austur-Englandi en hana er einnig að finna í öðru íslensku handritsbroti (AM Acc. 7 Hs 14) og telst því annað dæmi um tilbeiðslu Cuthberts hér á landi.²⁹ Rímnahandritið kom til safnsins í Uppsölum með bókum Salan-bræðra árið 1717 en virðist hafa verið á Íslandi ekki löngu áður. Á spássíu nótnablaðsins sem er brotin inn á innri kápu eru skrifuð nöfnin Þorgrímur Þorkelsson og „Hallur Eiríksson með eigin hendi“ og er líklegt að þar sé um að ræða son Eiríks Hallssonar sem varð prestur á Höfða í Grýtubakkahreppi eftir föður sinn. Hallur er talinn fæddur um 1662 og lést árið 1747.

Nefna má eitt skinnbókarblað til viðbótar sem enn er í bandi bókar. MS Icelandic 7 í bókasafni Harvard-háskóla er handrit Konungs skuggsjár, líklega frá um 1700. Konrad Maurer átti handritið og eftir hans dag komst það í eigu sagnfræðiprófessorsins Archibalds Cary Coolidge sem gaf Harvard-safninu það árið 1904. Ekkert meira er vitað um uppruna bókarinnar en líklega eignaðist Maurer hana í Íslandsferð sinni árið 1858.³⁰ Bókin hefur verið í slæmu ástandi þegar hún barst safninu. Líklega náði skinnbókarblaðið eitt sinn alveg utan um kverið en svo er ekki lengur, nú er aðeins kjölurinn eftir og smáræmur að framan og aftan. Bæði nótur og texti eru mjög máð og því er ekki að svo komnu máli unnt að fullyrða um efni blaðsins eða hvort það er með sömu hendi og önnur brot sem varðveist hafa.

Brot úr erlendum söngbókum og söngbókum frá því eftir siðaskipti

Enn eru hér ótalin nokkur brot úr handritum sem ólíklegt er að hafi verið skrifuð á Íslandi. Þrjú brot eru með strenglausum neumum og því rituð áður en nótnastrengir komu til sögunnar á 11. öld. JS fragm 10 er blað úr tíðasöngsbók og geymir söngva þriðju viku lönguföstu. Lbs fragm 29 er uppskafningur og virðist upphaflega lesmálið vera brot úr *antiphonarium* með strenglausum neumum yfir texta.³¹ NKS 1265 II e fol. er blað úr *antiphonarium* með tíðasöng á Andrésarmessu (30. nóvember). Ekki er vitað hvenær ritun helgisíðabóka hófst hér á landi en vænta má þess að í árdaga

29 Sjá Lorenz, „Latin *in situ* Fragments,“ 78–79; Eggen, *The Sequences*, 1: 248–250.

30 Sjá Kasimir von Rózycki, *Katalog der Bibliothek des verstorbenen Universitätsprofessors Konrad von Maurer* (München, 1903), 2. hluti, 99.

31 Magnús Már Lárusson, „Próun íslenzkrar kirkjutónlistar,“ í *Fróðleikspættir og sögubrot* (Hafnarfirði: Skuggsjá, 1967), 82.

kristindóms hafi erlendar bækur verið fluttar inn og á það mögulega við um ofantalin brot.³²

Einnig eru í söfnum yngri skinnbókabrot sem hafa borist til landsins með einum eða öðrum hætti. Lbs fragm 91 er brot úr *breviarium* frá 14. eða 15. öld með nótum af þeirri gerð sem kölluð er *Hufnagelschrift* og tíðkaðist á þýskumælandi svæðum en ekki í norðurálfi.³³ Brotin Þjskjs 1a–c eru líklega komin erlendis frá og voru notuð um reikninga frá lokum 16. aldar. SÁM 175 er eitt yngsta brotið af þessum toga sem komið hefur í íslenskt safn; það er blað úr tíðasöngsbók sem Margaret Cormack færði Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum árið 2018 en hún hafði keypt það í fornmunabúð í Kaupmannahöfn meira en þremur áratugum áður.³⁴

Fáein brot í ofanefndum söfnum eru íslensk en rituð eftir siðaskipti og hafa að geyma lútherskt efni við texta á íslensku. Þetta á við um brotin Lbs fragm 11 og 12, sem bæði eru uppskriftir á skinn úr hinum prentaða Grallara Guðbrands Þorlákssonar, og Þjms 827 þar sem innsetningarorð messunnar eru rituð á íslensku á það sem eitt sinn var autt blað í *missale* eins og sjá má á hinni hlið blaðsins, fagurlega lýstri, þar sem standa messutextar uppstigningardags.³⁵ Þá eru nokkur brot hreinlega of smá til þess að hægt sé að greina innihald þeirra, að minnsta kosti að nokkru ráði. Þetta á til dæmis við um Lbs 1230 8vo, Lbs fragm 76, AM Acc. 7 Hs 126 og 144 og AM Acc. 48 h.

Rannsóknir á íslenskum handritabrotum hafa að mestu miðast við handrit sem rituð voru og notuð á Íslandi. Þó má vera að einhverjir íslenskir skrifarar hafi einnig starfað í Noregi eða sent handrit sín þangað. Gisela Attinger hefur leitt líkur að því að brot úr messusöngsbók sem nú er á Þjóðskjalasafninu í Ósló (Lat. fragm. 281) kunni að vera ritað á Íslandi eða af íslenskum skrifara sem starfaði í Noregi og bendir á efnisleg

32 Hér má einnig nefna messubókina Stokkh. Kungl. Bibl. Isl. perg. 8°, no. 8 þar sem ritaðar eru strenglausar neumur við *communio*-sönginn *Confundantur superbi*, sjá Lilli Gjerløw, *Liturgica Islandica*, 1:11 og 2:1.

33 Smákverð sem nefnt er Codex Lindesianus (John Rylands Library, Manchester, Icelandic MS 1) er einnig bundið í brot úr söngbók með *Hufnagelschrift* og á það blað tæpast uppruna sinn á Íslandi.

34 handrit.is, Sólveig Hrönn Hilmarsdóttir skráði (11. ágúst 2021).

35 Um Þjms 827 sjá nánar Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Tónlist liðinna alda*, 60–61. Einnig má nefna þrjú smábrot úr Grallarauppskrift á íslensku (líklega frá um 1600) sem tilheyra safnmarkinu Accessoria 7 í Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn; þau eru ekki skráð í úttekt Merete Geert Andersen sem eingöngu nær til brota með latneskum texta. Sjá Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, „Copying the Icelandic Graduale in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,“ *Opuscula* 18 (2020): 4.

einkenni handritagerðarinnar, í þessu tilviki óvenju dökkt blek og nótna-skriftina, þ.e. „tvöfaldar“ nótur, máli sínu til stuðnings.³⁶ Vera má að með frekari rannsóknnum verði unnt að bera kennsl á fleiri brot í erlendum söfnum sem bera „íslensk“ einkenni af þessu tagi þótt vitaskuld sé erfitt að fullyrða um slíkt með neinni vissu.

Handrit sem heyra saman

Mikið starf hefur þegar verið innt af hendi við skráningu og rannsóknir á brotum úr kaþólskum helgisíðabókum, eins og vikið er að hér að framan, og er skrá Merete Geert Andersen um brotin undir safnmarkinu Accessoria 7 veigamesta afurð þeirrar vinnu. Þó verður líklega seint full-lokið þeirri vinnu að greina sömu rithönd eða brot úr sama handriti í ólíkum söfnum. Erfitt getur verið að álykta um skyldleika handritabrota þegar ekki er unnt að bera þau saman hlið við hlið. Með góðum ljós-myndum og skráningu má þó komast nær því að fullyrða um slíkt. Hér verður gerð grein fyrir fáeinum slíkum tilvikum þar sem ekki hafa áður verið tengd saman handritabrot sem virðast heyra saman.

Í kaþólskum sið voru sungnar þrjár messur á jólum: á miðnætti (*ad primam missam in nocte*), við sólarupprás (*ad secundum missam in aurora*) og á jóladag (*ad tertiam missam in die*). Í Kaupmannahöfn er að finna megnið af þessu efni úr einu og sama handritinu á alls fjórum blöðum í tveimur söfnum. Fyrra brotið er í Konungsbókhöfðu og var upphaf-lega haft utan um handrit Þórðar Magnússonar um reikningskúnst, *Compendium Arithmeticum* frá 1723 (Add. 1 4to), en Þórður var bróður-sonur Árna Magnússonar. Tvö söngbókarblöð hafa verið fjarlægð úr bandi bókarinnar og eru þau ekki skert að öðru leyti en því að skorið hefur verið af hornum. Nú eru þau 18,4 × 23,3 cm en ritflötur er 13,5 cm. Á fyrra blaðinu standa söngvar messu á jólanótt, sekvensían *Nato canunt omnia* og fórnarsöngurinn *Laetentur caeli*. Á seinna blaðinu er sekvensían *Caelica resonant*, sem sungin var við messu á jóladag, en nokkuð vantar framan á hana; á verso-hlið er einnig fórnarsöngurinn *Tui sunt celi*.³⁷ Hvorug sekvensían er þekkt úr öðru íslensku handriti. *Nato canunt omnia* er þekkt úr tveimur norskum handritum en í báðum vantar seinni hluta söngsins; *Caelica resonant* er hvergi varðveitt í norrænum handritum nema hér.³⁸

36 Gisela Attinger, „Iceland and Norway: Separate Scribal Cultures,“ 231–232.

37 Sjá Lilli Gjøløw, *Ordo Nidrosiensis Ecclesiae*, 153 og 155.

38 Sjá Eggen, *The Sequences*, 13–15, og formála Jóns Helgasonar að sama riti, l. Gisela Attinger

Blöðin úr bandi Add. 1 4to í Konungsbókhöfðu eru úr sömu bók og þau brot sem nú eru skráð sem Hs 15 í Accessoria 7 á Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn.³⁹ Þar er einnig um að ræða tvö blöð, lítið eitt skörin, sem áður voru í bandi utan um handritið AM 103 4to. Söngvarnir í Hs 15 tilheyrir einnig jólum, þ.e. nætursöng og messu við sólarupprás. Fyrst kemur niðurlag *Liber generationis*, ættartölu Krists úr Matteusarguðspjalli, þá inngangssöngur morgunmessu, *Lux fulgebit*. Því næst koma aðrir söngvar sömu messu: Graduale, Alleluia og loks sekvensían *Celeste organum* en síðustu tvær hendingarnar vantar.⁴⁰ Af þessu er ljóst að blöðin í Add. 1 4to lágu upphaflega á milli þeirra tveggja sem nú bera safnmarkið Hs 15. Saman geyma þau efni fyrir allar þrjár jólamessur en tvö blöð hafa tapast innan úr, eitt þar sem áður var upphaf *Liber generationis* og annað með upphafssöngvum þriðju jólamessu.



Mynd 2. Blöð úr íslenskri messusöngsbók frá síðari hluta 15. aldar:

a) KB Add. 1 4to; b) Accessoria 7, Hs 15, ljósmyndari: Suzanne Reitz.

Þjallar eingöngu um brot í íslenskum söfnum í annars framúrskarandi yfirliti sínu yfir sekvensiur í kaþólskum sið, „Icelandic Manuscripts Containing Sequences: A Presentation of Twelve Medieval Fragments.“ Texti *Caelica resonant* er í *Analecta hymnica* 53: 19.

39 Sjá Andersen, *Katalog*, 29; Eggen, *The Sequences*, 1: xlv og 25–26.

40 Sjá Eggen, *The Sequences*, 1: 25–26. Sekvensían *Celeste organum* var prentuð í íslenski þýðingu (*Hátið þessa heimsins þjóð*) í lúthersku sálmabókunum 1589 og 1619 auk Grallarans frá og með útgáfunni 1691, sjá Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, „Sléttisöngur í lútherskum sið á Íslandi, 1550–1800,“ *Gripla* 31 (2020): 306 og 315–316.

Söngurinn *Lux fulgebit* (Hs 15) er skreyttur með stórum rauðum bókstaf enda markar hann upphaf messunnar. Þessi skreyting á samsvörun í rauðum upphafsstaf við *Nato canunt omnia* í Add. 1 4to þótt sá sé öllu smærri. Athygli vekur að Árni Magnússon og Þórður bróðursonur hans skuli hafa bundið tvær bækur sínar í brot sem ekki aðeins komu úr sama handriti heldur úr sama hluta þess, þ.e. helgihaldi jólanna. Árni átti eflaust í fórum sínum vænan stafla af slitrum kaþólskra söngbóka sem hann notaði í band eftir þörfum. Vitaskuld voru slík brot það síðasta sem þótti ríða á að bjarga frá eldinum voðalega í Kaupmannahöfn árið 1728. Þar fuðruðu upp á augabragði þau blöð sem ekki höfðu þá þegar mætt hnífi bókasafnarans.

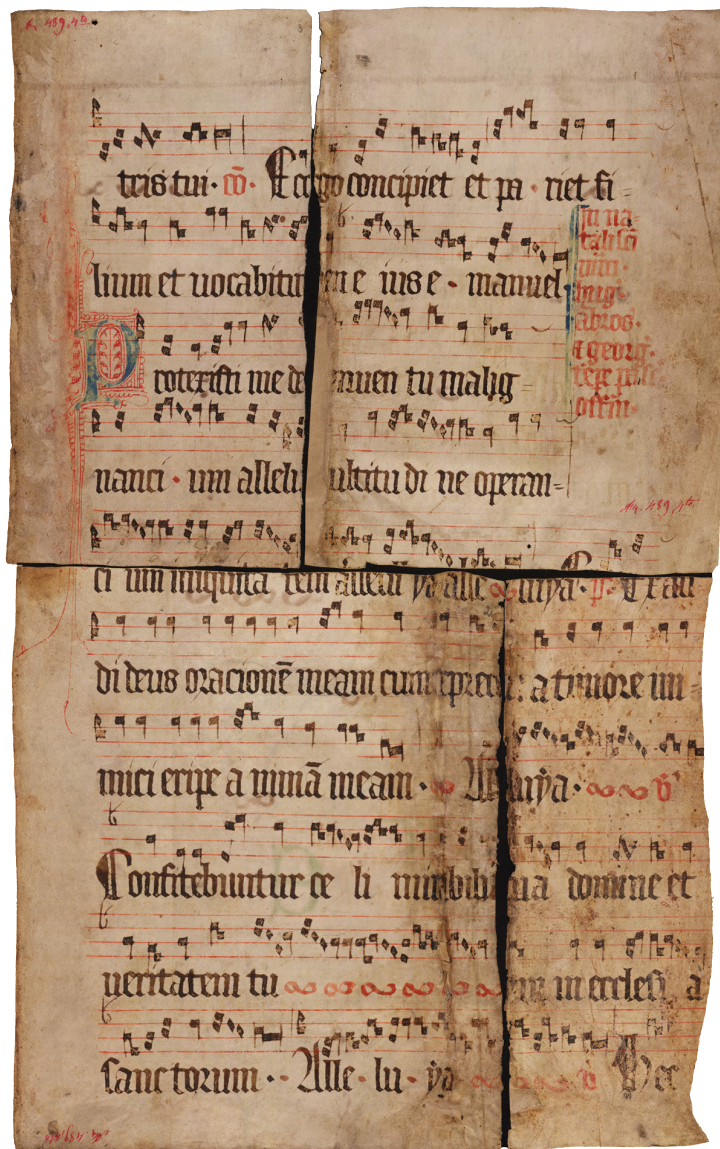
Árni Magnússon notaði blöð úr gömlum skinnbókum einnig utan um prentaðar bækur sínar. Flestar prentaðar bækur hans glötuðust eins og kunnugt er í brunanum mikla en nokkrar slíkar eru enn varðveittar og tvær þeirra eru enn bundnar í blöð úr íslenskum söngbókum. Brot með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar, að öllum líkindum úr Gufudalsgrallara, er enn utan um prentaða skrá sem var í eigu Árna yfir uppboð á bókum úr eigu Lovísu Danadrottningar (*Catalogus Selectiorum*, Kaupmannahöfn 1723, sjá *Töflu* 3). Á blaðinu er meðal annars brot úr sekvensíunni *Celi enarrant gloriam*, fyrir *Divisio Apostolorum* eða skilnað postulanna, 15. júlí.⁴¹ Svo vill til að seinni hluti sekvensíunnar er á blaði úr *Missale Scardense* á Árnasafni og því liggur beinast við að ætla að samliggjandi blöð hafi verið í safni Árna Magnússonar og hann notað annað þeirra utan um sitt prentaða rit en hitt hafi legið óhreyft ásamt öðrum blöðum úr sömu messubók. Önnur prentuð bók úr safni Árna, *Caroli Lundii Notæ ac Observationes* (Uppsölum, 1703), er bundin í blað úr *Missale Scardense* sem ritað er af þeim sem kallaður hefur verið „skrifari B“ eða Jón á Hóli eftir tillögu Stefáns Karlssonar (sjá nánar hér að aftan).⁴²

Stundum eru öll brot sem varðveitt eru úr tiltekinni bók á sama safni sem gerir hægara um vik að skoða þau saman. Þetta á til dæmis við um brot úr kaþólskri messusöngsbók, líklega frá 15. öld, sem varðveitt eru á Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum og bera þrjú safnmörk: AM Accessoria 48 a, AM Accessoria 48 d og AM 471 4to. Í hinu síðastnefnda, sem er söguhandrit frá um 1450–1500, eru blöðin enn í bandinu sem fremri og aftari saurbloð en voru upphaflega tvinn sem skorið var í tvennt. Efri hluti tvinnis er nú aftara saurbloð, neðri hluti tvinnis er fremra

41 Sjá Eggen, *The Sequences*, 1: 201–205; Andersen, „Colligere fragmenta,“ 22.

42 Andersen, „Colligere fragmenta,“ 19.

saurblað (á hvolfi). Acc. 48 a er fjögur brot sem áður voru eitt blað. Með því að raða þeim saman má sjá nokkurn veginn hvernig blaðið leit út í upphafi, en þó hefur tapast nokkuð efni þar sem blaðið var skorið (sjá Mynd 3).



Mynd 3. AM Accessoria 48 a.

Blöðin eru skreytt með rauðum og grænum upphafsstöfum, nótnastrengir eru með rauðu bleki og einnig eru rauðar lykkjur hafðar undir tónarunum þegar sungið er lengi á sama atkvæði. Á blöðunum í AM 471 4to er að finna messusöngva fyrir 11. og 12. sunnudag eftir þrenningarhátíð. Accessoria 48 a geymir brot úr *sanctorale*-hluta bókarinnar, nánar tiltekið fyrir messur heilags Filippusar (3. maí) og Jakobs (11. maí), en Accessoria 48 d tilheyrir fjórða sunnudegi í föstu (*Laetare* eða *Domenica IV in Quadragesima*). Ekkert var til sparað við gerð söngbókarinnar, hún var í stóru broti (um 381 mm × 270 mm, að því er virðist) og spássiur breiðar.

Fimm blöð hafa varðveist úr því sem virðist hafa verið eitt tíðasöngs-handrit, eða í það minnsta verk sama skrifara: Thott 513 8vo, Lbs fragm 43 og Þjms 194, 954 og 7437 (sjá *Mynd 4*). Handritið virðist ritað um 1500 eða á síðari hluta 15. aldar og í því voru rauðir og grænir upphafsstafir og rauðar fyrirsagnir. Flest þessara brota eru mjög máð en hafa sömu ein-kenni, einkum ávala leturgerð og upphleypt letur á skinninu. Brotið sem ber safnmarkið Thott 513 8vo er enn band utan um rímnahandrit ritað á Kröggólfsstöðum í Ölfusi árið 1760; á söngbókarbrotinu er tíðasöngur fyrir fjórða sunnudag í aðventu og jólanótt. Blaðið Þjms 194 er einnig snjáð og máð en þó að mestu læsilegt. Það hefur að geyma tíðasöng á messudögum heilagrar Agnesar og heilags Vincentíusar, 21.–22. janúar. Á Lbs fragm 43 er ritaður tíðasöngur sunnudags í föstuinngang (*Dominica in Quinquagesima*), Þjms 954 geymir söng á jóladag (1r) og áttadag/nýársdag (*In circumcissione Domini*, 1v) en söngvarnir á Þjms 7437 eru við messu Jóhannesar postula og guðspjallamanns (27. desember).



Mynd 4. Brot úr tíðasöngsbók frá um 1500: Thott 513 8vo, innra band (a);
Lbs fragm 43, verso brot (b); Þjms 954, recto, brot (c).

Þegar rýnt er í sögu þessara fimm blaða sést að þau bárust víða að. Þjms 194 kom til Þjóðminjasafns 26. september 1864 frá Birni Björnssyni bónda á Breiðabólstað á Álftanesi. Þjms 954 kom til Þjóðminjasafns 14. júlí 1873 frá Jónatan Þorlákssyni á Þórðarstöðum í Fnjóskadal. Þjms 7437 kom úr Þjóðskjalasafni en þar var það fjarlægð úr bandi á

sálnaregistri Mývatnsþinga (1785–1815) í mars 1917. Lbs fragm 43 er úr safni Valdimars Ásmundssonar ritstjóra, sem var fæddur og uppalinn í Suður-Þingeyjarsýslu, en ekki er vitað nánar hvernig eða hvenær honum áskotnaðist blaðið. Séu blöðin öll úr sömu bók eru þau úr sama hluta hennar og geyma tíðasöng í desember og janúar auk sunnudags í föstuinn-gang. Ekki er þó hægt að útiloka að hér sé um að ræða brot úr fleiri tíða-söngsbókum sama skrifara. Lélegt ástand blaðanna gerir örðugra en ella að bera saman blæbrigði skriftar og frágangs. Lilli Gjerløw gat sér þess til að handritið ætti mögulega uppruna sinn á Hólum en Gisela Attinger hefur bent á að of lítið sé vitað um upprunann til að hægt sé að slá því föstu.⁴³

Einnig má geta þess að tvö skinnblöð úr tíðasöngsbókum, Þjms 166 og Acc. 7 Hs 53, eru augljóslega verk sama skrifara þótt ekki séu þau komin úr sömu bók (sjá *Mynd* 5). Þjms 166 er næstum heilt blað (13 heilir nótnastrengir með texta en vantar þó a.m.k. neðstu línu texta og nótna); blaðið hefur að geyma tíðasöng sunnudaga eftir páska og er breidd leturflatar 155 mm. Hs 53 er ögn smærra handrit, breidd leturflatar er 140 mm, og hefur verið skorið meira neðan af blaðinu; á því eru aðeins sjö nótnastrengir. Blaðið geymir tíðasöng fyrir messu Filippusar og Jakobs (1. maí), og kross-messu á vori (3. maí).⁴⁴ Skriftin er augljóslega sú sama á báðum brotum, bæði texti og nótur. Meðal þess sem einkennir stafagerðina er skreytt S sem kemur fyrir á báðum blöðum.⁴⁵ Neumurnar eru fingerðari en oft tíðkaðist í íslenskum söngbókum og eru meiri á lengd en á breidd, fremur en hreinir ferningar. Ljóst er að bæði handritin höfðu rauða nótnastrengi þótt þeir séu vart greinanlegir lengur á Þjms 166 þar sem skriftin er mjög máð.

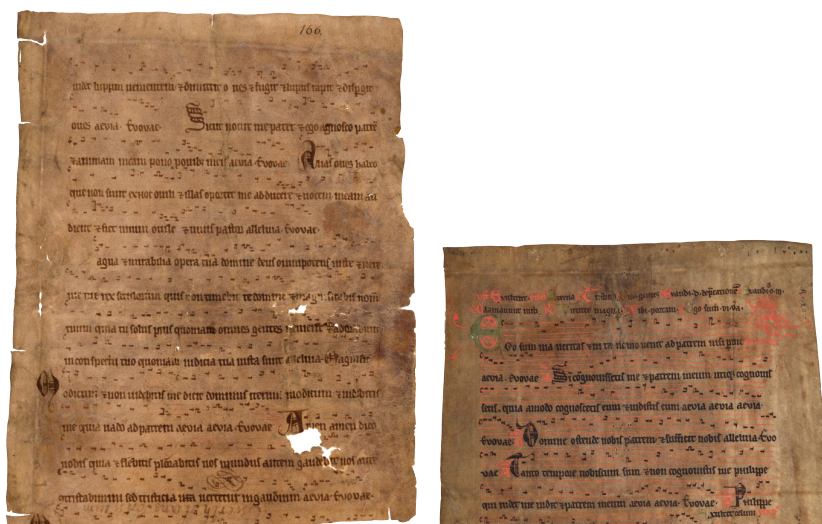
Ekki hafa varðveist nægar upplýsingar um umrædd blöð til að neitt verði ályktað um tilurðarstað þeirra, hvað þá mögulegan skrifara. Þó er ljóst að handritin voru skrifuð á Íslandi um 1300.⁴⁶ Brotið Þjms 166 kom til Þjóðminjasafns hinn 27. september 1864 og var gjöf frá Jóni Ólafssyni, síðar ritstjóra *Þjóðólfs*, en hann var þá 14 ára gamall prestssonur

43 Lilli Gjerløw, *Antiphonarium Nidrosiensis Ecclesiae*, 259–261; Gisela Attinger, „Monastic Musical Fragments,“ 8.

44 Andersen, *Katalog*, 57–58.

45 Svipað S er að finna í öðrum brotum sem augljóslega eru verk annarra skrifara (sjá t.d. Þjms 612) en þar eru lykkjurnar fleiri og ekki fyllt upp í aðra hverja þeirra með lóðréttum strikum eins og í þeim brotum sem hér um ræðir.

46 Andersen, *Katalog*, 57.



Mynd 5. Brot úr tíðasöngsbókum sama skrifara frá um 1300: Þjms 166, recto (t.v.) og Acc. 7 Hs 53, recto (t.h.), ljósmyndari: Suzanne Reitz.

frá Kolfreyjustað á Fáskrúðsfirði.⁴⁷ Allt er óvíst um það hvernig honum áskotnaðist blaðið, hvort það hafi verið á æskuheimili hans fyrir austan og þá væntanlega gefið Þjóðminjasafni með samþykki föður hans, séra Ólafs Indriðasonar, eða hvort hann hafi eignast það í Reykjavík þar sem hann hóf nám við Lærða skólann árið 1863, ári áður en hann gaf það á safn. Blaðið í safni Árna Magnússonar var áður utan um handritið AM 439 12mo sem er lítið kver sem Stefán Ólafsson, síðar prestur í Vallanesi, átti og skrifaði í eigin kveðskap þegar hann var á unglingsaldri. Fremst í kverinu stendur að Stefán hafi byrjað ritið á Kirkjubæ í Hróarstungu árið 1636 þegar hann var 18 ára gamall.⁴⁸ Athyglisvert er að bæði brotin skuli tengjast ungum mönnum af Austfjörðum með næstum 250 ára bili. Það hlýtur þó fyrst og fremst að teljast skemmtileg tilviljun enda óvíst hvort skinnblaðið sem nú ber safnmarkið AM Acc. 7, Hs 53 var utan um kvæðabók Stefáns frá upphafi eða kom til síðar.

47 Sólveig Hrönn Hilmarsdóttir, skráning á handrit.is.

48 Kålund, *Katalog* 2:486.

Söngbækur Jóns Þorlákssonar

Aðeins er unnt að nafngreina einn íslenskan nótnaritara í kaþólskum sið með fullkominni vissu. AM 8o b 8vo er stakt blað úr grallarahandriti, ritað af Jóni Þorlákssyni árið 1473 og gefið klaustrinu á Munkaþverá eins og lesa má á gjafavottorði sem stendur milli lína Credo-tvísöngs á blaðinu sem varðveist hefur. Líklega var þetta næstsíðasta blað bókarinnar því að nokkuð vantar aftan á nóturnar en varla hefur slíkt vottorð staðið í miðri bók.⁴⁹ Jón Þorláksson var kunnur skrifari á sinni tíð og hefur oft verið vitnað í sögn þá sem séra Jón Egilsson í Hrepphólum (1548–1639?) hafði eftir afa sínum, séra Einari Ólafssyni, að sagt hefði verið „að iij fingurnar á hægri hendinni hefði aldrei á honum dauðum stirðnað, og það hefði talað verið, að þeir hefði látið pennann í höndina á honum dauðum, en hann hefði átt að skrifa þessi orð: ‘gratia plena, dominus tecum’.“⁵⁰

Um verk Jóns Þorlákssonar og það hver hann var hefur margt verið skrifað og verður því ekki fjölýrt um það hér.⁵¹ Þegar allt er talið saman hafa allmörg brot varðveist með hendi Jóns úr hinum ýmsu handritum. Þar ber helst að nefna *Missale Scardense* en af þeirri messubók hafa varðveist 65 blöð og eru 44 þeirra með hendi Jóns.⁵² Hin blöðin eru rituð af einhverjum sem fræðimenn nefndu lengi „skrifara B“ (Lilli Gjerløw kallaði hann „fellow-scribe“ Jóns, sjá *Liturgica Islandica* 1:59) en er nú almennt talinn hafa verið bróðir og alnafni Jóns, og kallaður „Jón á Hóli“ en hinn kallaður „Jón í Langeyjarnesi“ til aðgreiningar. Vera má að kirkjan á Skarði hafi eitt sinn einnig átt tíðasöngsbók með hendi Jóns í Langeyjarnesi. Að minnsta kosti er brotið Lbs fragm 41, sem er mjög tætt brot úr *antiphonale*, aðeins fimm nótnastrengir hvoru megin, komið úr bréfabók Eggerts „ríka“ Björnssonar á árunum 1632–1673, en Eggert var búsettur á Skarði mestan hluta ævinnar.⁵³

49 Sjá Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, „Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,“ *Gripla* 27 (2016): 162–163.

50 Tilvitnun í Ólafur Halldórsson, „Jónar tveir Þorlákssynir,“ í *Afmálsrit til dr. phil. Steingríms J. Þorsteinssonar prófessors 2. júlí 1971 frá nemendum hans*, ritstj. Aðalgeir Kristjánsson et al. (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1971), 130.

51 Sjá einkum Ólafur Halldórsson, „Jónar tveir Þorlákssynir,“; Stefán Karlsson, „Sex skriffingur,“ *Opuscula* 7 (1979): 36–43; Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, „Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,“ *Gripla* 27: 162–198.

52 Blöðin með hendi Jóns eru AM Acc. 7, Hs 1, 1r–15r og 41r20–65v auk fyrrisagna á 15v–65r, NKS 1265 II a fol. og Lbs fragm 19. Sjá einnig Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, „Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,“ *Gripla* 27: 172.

53 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár frá landnámstímum til ársloka 1940*, 1–5 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka bókmenntafélag, 1948–1952), 1: 314.

Ólíkt messubókinni á Skarðsströnd virðist Jón „í Langeyjarnesi“ hafa verið einn að verki þegar ritað var *graduale* fyrir kirkjuna í Gufudal, að líkindum á tímabilinu 1450–1470. Úr svonefndum Gufudalsgrallara hafa varðveist 37 blöð og öll með hendi Jóns, flest í Accessoria 7 (Hs 2, 34 blöð) en einnig tvö blöð sem varðveitt eru á Íslandi (AM 266 4to) og eitt blað í bandi utan um prentaða bók Árna Magnússonar sem fyrr er getið.⁵⁴

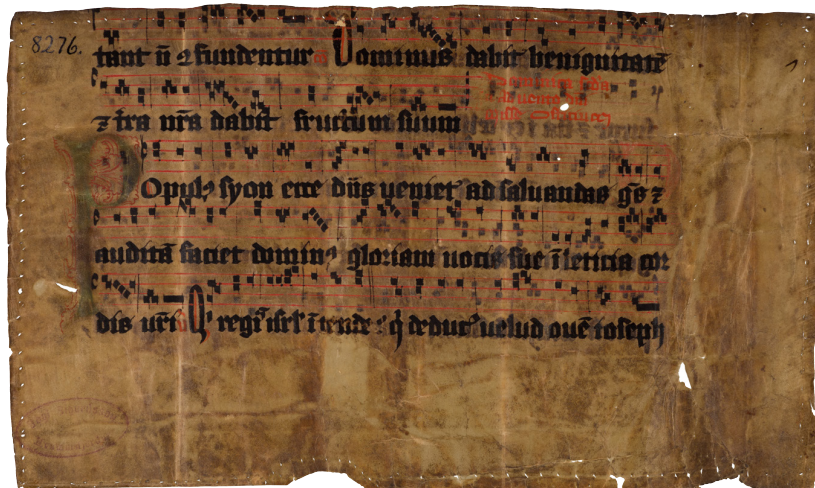
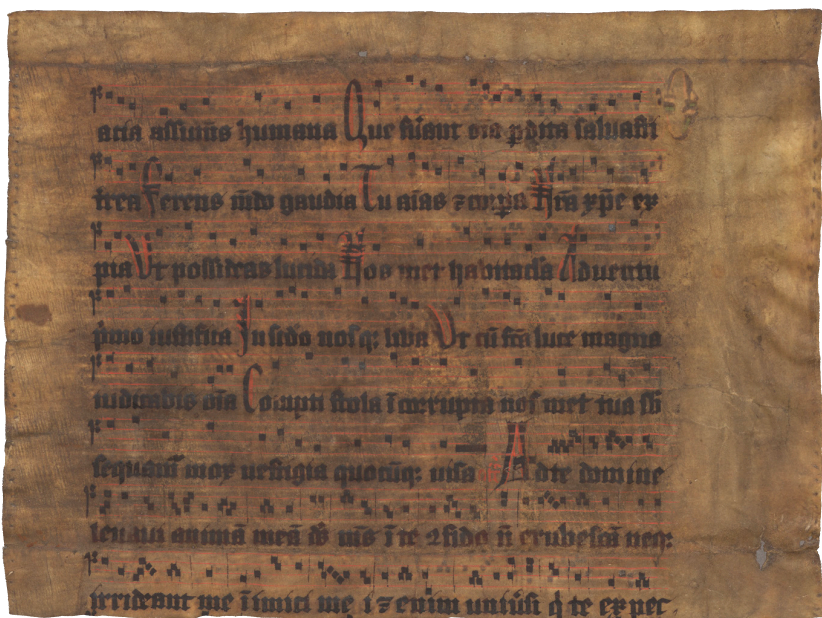
Jafn fær skrifari og Jón Þorláksson hlýtur að hafa ritað margar kirkju-söngsbækur og líklega hafa brot varðveist úr nokkrum þeirra. Þó er vandasamt að fullyrða um slíkt þegar um er að ræða fleiri en eina bók sama skrifara með sama efni. Jakob Benediktsson getur þess í skrá sinni um skinnbrot í Landsbókasafni að Lbs fragm 45 og Lbs fragm 46 séu líklega úr sama handriti og Jón Helgason getur þess í athugasemd sem fylgir hinu síðarnefnda að líklega séu brotin Þjms 30, 716 og 3411 úr sömu bók.⁵⁵ Enn eitt brot má nefna til sögunnar í þessu samhengi, Þjms 8276, sem er neðri hluti sama blaðs og Lbs fragm 45 (sjá *Mynd 6 og 7*).⁵⁶ Á efri hluta recto-blaðs stendur meðal annars brot úr sekvensíunni *Salus eterna*, sem var einn meginliður messunnar við upphaf aðventu, en á neðri hlið sama blaðs hefst messusöngur fyrir annan sunnudag aðventu eins og lesa má af rúbrikku sem rituð er með rauðu bleki: „Dominica secunda advento“. Hvaðan af landinu blaðið er upprunnið verður ekkert sagt með vissu: Þjms 8276 var áður í eigu Boga Sigurðssonar í Hvammsfirði en Lbs fragm 45 barst til Landsbókasafns úr dánarbúi Jóns Péturssonar dómstjóra sem starfaði víða um land.⁵⁷ Þegar blöðin eru lögð saman sést að á þeim eru 13 nótnastrengir og á það við um fleiri brot úr gröllurum með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar (t.d. Þjms 4126); vel má vera að þar sé komið annað blað úr sömu messu-söngsbók.

54 Prentaða bókin er *Catalogus Selectiorum omnis generis variique idiomatis Librorum* (Kaupmannahöfn, 1723), sjá Andersen, *Katalog*, 10); um AM 266 4to sjá Magnús Már Lárusson, „Orðubrot frá Gufudal,“ *Kirkjuritið* 24 (1958): 203–214; endurprentað í *Fróðleikspættir og sögubrot*, 62–72.

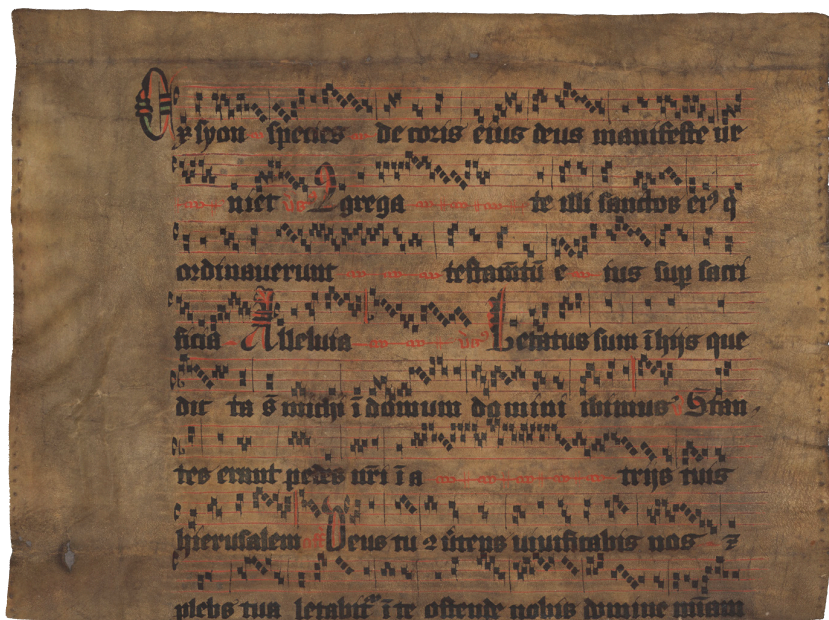
55 Lilli Gjerløw nefnir aðeins Lbs fragm 46 í riti sínu (*Liturgica Islandica* 1: 61) og segir blaðið standa stakt, en nefnir ekki Lbs fragm 45. Hún getur þess að Lbs fragm 46 séu 14 nótnastrengir en það á aðeins við um recto-hlið blaðsins og virðist neðstu línunni hafa verið bætt við síðar á neðri spássú.

56 Sbr. Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir, „Lýsingar í íslenskum handritum á 15. öld,“ 171. Bjarni Þorsteinsson kallar blaðið Lbs fragm 45 „Lbs VIII“ og birtir upphaf söngsins *Ex Syon species* í þjóðlagasafni sínu, sjá *Íslenzk þjóðlög*, 193–194.

57 Bjarni Þorsteinsson, *Íslenzk þjóðlög*, 193; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár* 3: 248–249.



Mynd 6. Lbs fragm 45 (efri hluti) og Þjms 8276 (neðri hluti), recto-hlið.
 Blaðið hefur að geyma niðurlag sekvensíu og fórnarsöng (Communio)
 messunnar fyrsta sunnudag í adventu og inngöngusöng (Introitus) messu
 annan sunnudag í adventu sbr. Orðubók, bls. 133 og 138.



Mynd 7. Lbs fragm 45 (efri hluti) og Pjms 8276 (neðri hluti), verso-hlið.

Blaðið hefur að geyma breytilega liði messunnar annan og þriðja sunnudag í adventu, sbr. Orðubók bls. 138 og 141.

| <i>Safnmark</i> | <i>Uppruni</i> |
|--|--|
| AM Acc 7, Hs 1, 40 blöð | <i>Missale Scardense</i> |
| NKS 1265 II a fol. | blað úr <i>Missale Scardense</i> |
| Lbs fragm 19 | þrjú brot úr <i>Missale Scardense</i> , sbr. Gjerløw, <i>Liturgica Islandica</i> , bls. 59–60; Andersen, „Colligere fragmenta,“ bls. 19. |
| AM Acc 7, Hs 2, 37 bl. | <i>graduale</i> úr Gufudal (Gufudalsgrallari) |
| AM 266 4to | tvö blöð úr Gufudalsgrallara |
| <i>Catalogus Selectiorum ... Librorum</i> (1723) | blað úr Gufudalsgrallara |
| AM 80 b 8vo | blað úr <i>graduale</i> , með tvísöngvum |
| Lbs fragm 46, Þjms 30, 716 og 3411 ⁵⁸ | <i>graduale</i> , fjögur blöð |
| Thott 1494 4to | <i>graduale</i> , eitt blað (tilheyrir mögulega sömu bók og Lbs fragm 46 o.s.frv.) |
| AM 241 b IV fol. | tvinn úr <i>graduale</i> , Hallvarðsmessa og Pétursmessa og Páls. |
| AM 241 b III β fol. | <i>antiphonale</i> , hluti af Ólafstiðum (29. júlí) |
| Lbs fragm 41 | <i>antiphonale</i> , eitt blað (tilheyrir mögulega sömu bók og AM 241 b III β fol.) |
| Lbs fragm 45 og Þjms 8276 | <i>graduale</i> , eitt blað (fyrsti og annar sunnudagur í aðventu) |
| Þjms 4126 | <i>graduale</i> , eitt blað |

Tafla 3. Söngbókabrot með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar („Jóns í Langeyjarnesi“).

Af þeim handritabrotum sem varðveist hafa með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar er tvísöngsbrotið AM 80 b 8vo hið merkasta hvað sögu tónlistar á Íslandi snertir. Það hefur að geyma brot úr tveimur tvísöngvum og er elsta heimild um slíkan söng á nótum hér á landi þótt ljóst sé að hann hafi verið iðkaður löngu áður. Lárentíus Kálfsson, biskup á Hólum á fyrri hluta 13. aldar, vildi hvorki „láta tripla eða tvísýngja, kallandi þat leikaraskap, heldr syngja sléttan söng eftir því sem tónað væri á kórbókum“ eins og getið er um í

58 Sjá miða með hendi Jóns Helgasonar, dags. 25. júní 1958, með Lbs fragm 46. Lilli Gjerløw taldi mögulegt að Lbs fragm 46 hefði tilheyrt sömu bók og AM 80 b 8vo, Munkaþverárbrotið frá 1473 (*Liturgica Islandica*, 1: 61) en það fæst varla staðist þar sem nótnastrengir eru svartir á því broti en rauðir á Lbs fragm 46 og Þjms-brotunum. Aftur á móti eru einnig svartir nótnastrengir á brotinu AM 241 b IV fol. og má vera að það hafi upphaflega tilheyrt sömu messusöngsbók og AM 80 b 8vo.

Lárentíus sögu.⁵⁹ Engar tvísöngsnótur hafa varðveist frá 13. öld en líklega var sá tvísöngur sem þá var iðkaður mjög í ætt við þann sem stendur á blaðinu AM 80 b 8vo.

Á blaðið AM 80 b 8vo eru ritaðir tveir af hinum föstu liðum messunnar, Agnus Dei (með trópa, Agnus „clemens here“) og Credo (sjá *Mynd 8*).⁶⁰ Blaðið hefst á miðjum Agnus Dei-söngnum og voru honum ætlaðir sex nótnastrengir þar sem efri og neðri rödd tvísöngs fylla til skiptis sinn nótnastrenginn hvor. Ekki fór það þó alveg eins og ætlað var því að hinn eiginlegi tvísöngur fyllir aðeins fyrri hluta fyrstu tveggja nótnastrengjanna. Eftir það heldur neðri röddin (þ.e. sléttsöngurinn) áfram allt til enda en efri röddina vantar; raunar hefur mun smærri nótum verið bætt við síðar á síðari hluta efsta nótnastrengs og við upphaf hins þriðja. Ekki er ljóst hvað olli því að Jón Þorláksson, sem augljóslega var reyndur nótmaskrifari og hlýtur að hafa verið vel að sér í tónlist, lauk ekki við að skrifa upp mót-röddina. Vera má að hann hafi ritað eftir forriti sem ekki var heilt en hann ekki áttað sig á því fyrr en í miðjum klíðum. Tvísöngur af þessu tagi, þar sem neðri rödd var sléttsöngur samkvæmt venju, var að hluta til spunahefð þótt hann væri oft festur á blað. Var stundum talað um að syngja „super librum“, þ.e. að bæta annarri rödd við það sem á bókina væri ritað. Þetta viðhorf má einmitt greina í orðalagi Lárentíus sögu þar sem hann vildi aðeins að sungið væri það sem ritað væri í kórbækur — og látið í veðri vaka að það eigi ekki við um tvísöng og „tripl“. Hafi forritið brugðist Jóni Þorlákssyni við ritun Agnus Dei-tvísöngsins hefur kunnátta hans í þessum efnum að minnsta kosti ekki nægt til þess að hann gæti sjálfur bætt mót-rödd við kirkjusönginn eftir eigin smekk.

59 *Biskupa sögur III*, 375–376. Sjá einnig *Laurentius saga biskups*, ritstj. Árni Björnsson (Reykjavík: Handritastofnun Íslands, 1969), 99.

60 Trópin „Agnus clemens here“ er í *AH* 47:398. Sjá nánar Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, „These are the Things You Never Forget: The Written and Oral Traditions of Icelandic *Tvísöngur*“ (doktorsritgerð, Harvard University, 2003), 48–50.

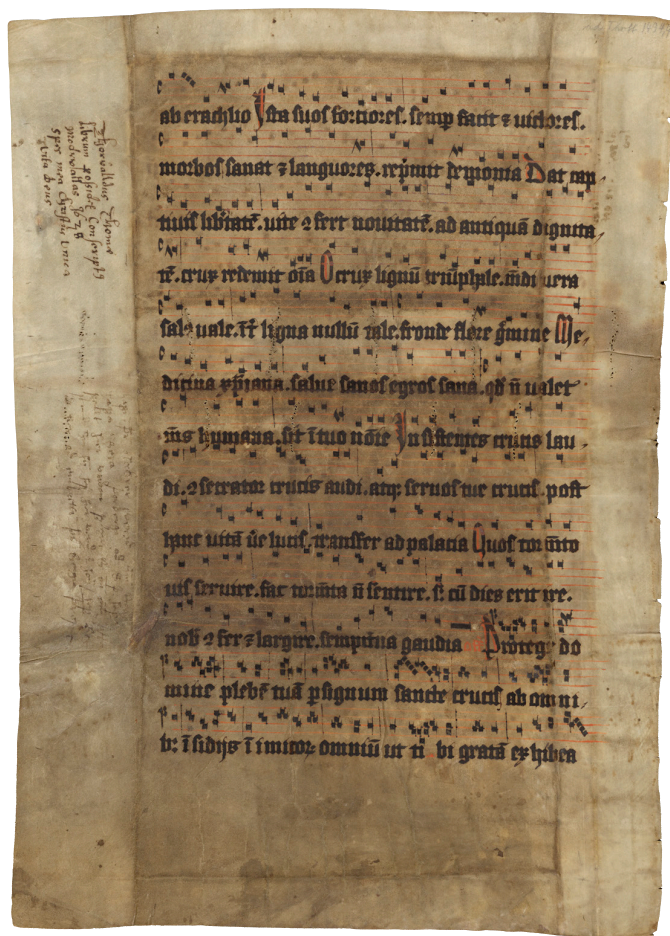


Mynd 8. AM 80 b 8vo, recto-hlið (efri hluti blaðs).

Tvísöngsbókin sem blaðið AM 80 b 8vo er úr var gefin klaustrinu á Munkaþverá. Vera má að fleiri klaustur og kirkjur á Norðurlandi hafi átt söngbækur ritaðar af Jóni Þorlákssyni. Vísbendingu um slíkt má finna á blaðinu Thott 1494 4to sem hefur verið fjarlægt úr bandi um handrit Snorra-Eddu frá 17. öld (sjá Mynd 9). Á blaðinu er messusöngur á krossmessu á vori (3. maí) með hendi Jóns, niðurlag sekvensíunnar *Laudes cruces attollamus* og upphaf fórnarsöngsins *Protege domine plebem tuam*. Blaðið var upphaflega utan um bók sem sett var saman á Möðruvöllum í Eyjafirði árið 1630 og séra Þorvaldur Tómasson átti en hann var prestur á Hrafnagili í Eyjafirði frá 1642 til dauðadags 1662.⁶¹ Á vinstri spássíu verso-síðu er eftirfarandi spássíukrot: „Thorvalldur Thomæ Librum possidet conscriptus modruvallas 1638. Spes mea Christus unica vita Deus.“⁶² Ólafur Halldórsson vakti athygli á þessu broti árið 1990 en ekki hefur áður verið kannað hvort það kunni að tilheyra sömu bók og önnur brot með hendi Jóns. Á blaðinu eru 13 nótnalínur, rétt eins og á nokkrum öðrum brotum með hendi Jóns, og stærðin og bleikið benda til skyldleika við önnur grillarabrot sama skrifara (þ.e.a.s. Lbs

61 Ólafur Halldórsson, eftirmáli við „Jónar tveir Þorlákssynir,“ í *Grettisfærsla, Safn ritgerða eftir Ólaf Halldórsson gefið út á sjötugsafmáli hans 18. apríl 1990*, ritstj. Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al. (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1990), 270; *Íslenzkar æviskrár* 5: 249.

62 Neðar á sömu síðu er torlesnara spássíukrot þar sem greint er frá „séra Þorbergi“ og virðist þar átt við Þorberg Ásmundsson (um 1580–1659) sem var prestur meðal annars að Tjörn í Svarfaðardal og að Hólum á fyrri hluta 17. aldar, sjá Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár* 5: 81.



Mynd 9. Blað sem áður var í kápu utan um handritið KB Thott 1494 4to.

fragm 45, Lbs fragm 46, Þjms 30, 716, 3411, 4126 og 8276). Eins og Ólafur Halldórsson bendir á hefur slík bók þá væntanlega verið á Möðruvöllum.⁶³ Í þessu samhengi má benda á að brotið Þjms 4126, sem einnig er úr messusöngsbók með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar, kom til Þjóðminjasafns í júlí 1895 frá Jóni Hjaltalín, skólastjóra á Möðruvöllum.⁶⁴

63 Ólafur Halldórsson, eftirmáli við „Jónar tveir Þorlákssynir“, *Grettisfærsla*, 270.

64 Í málðaga Möðruvallakirkju í Eyjafirði frá 1461 eru „grallarar tveir vondir“ sagðir eign kirkjunnar; sjá *Diplomatarium Islandicum* 5, 307. Ekki hafa varðveist yngri málðagar kirkjunnar með bókaskrá.

Söngbókabrot í einkaeigu

Vitað er um að minnsta kosti tvö söngbókabrot úr kaþólskum sið sem enn eru í einkaeigu. Annað þeirra er í eigu Jóns Gunnars Zoëga í Reykjavík og er stakt blað úr tíðasöngsbók, líklega frá 14. öld eða fyrri hluta 15. aldar. Blaðið er nokkurn veginn heilt en skorið af jöðrum og mótar mjög fyrir útlínunum bókarinnar sem blaðið var haft utan um. Upphafsstafir eru rauðir og grænir. Á blaðinu eru tíðasöngvar sem tengjast sálumessu, meðal annars *Cognoscimus Domine quia* og *Manus tuae domine fecerunt* (bæði fyrir óttu-söng eða *matutinum*).

Hitt blaðið er brot úr tíðasöngsbók (um fjórar neðstu línur blaðsins) frá 13. öld sem er í eigu sr. Geirs Waage. Blaðið er haft utan um yngra handrit og aðeins sjást merki um skrift á þeirri hlið sem snýr að bókinni. Á blaðinu má greina tíðasöng á messudegi Maríu Magdalenu (22. júlí), víxlsönginn *O diligens Christum*. Áslaug Ommundsen hefur bent á að skriftin líkist mjög þeirri á AM Acc 7, Hs 32. Mögulega kom þetta blað beint á eftir blaði 3r–v í því broti sem einmitt hefur einnig að geyma óttusöng á messudegi Maríu Magdalenu.⁶⁵

Margt hefur áunnist í rannsóknum á íslenskum söngbókabrotum á þeim nærri sex áratugum sem liðnir eru frá því að hið mikla rit Eriks Eggen um sekvensíur kom út. Því fer þó fjarri að búið sé að rannsaka til fulls öll þau söngbókabrot sem varðveist hafa úr kaþólskum sið. Margt er enn óljóst varðandi uppruna handritanna og hin smærri atriði söngvanna sem þau hafa að geyma, til dæmis laggerðir söngvanna á Íslandi í samanburði við önnur svæði álfunnar. Í þessari grein hefur verið sýnt fram á mikilvægi þess að slíkar rannsóknir taki til greina heildarsafn þeirra brota sem varðveist hafa, þvert á söfn. Aðeins þannig fæst viðunandi mynd af þeirri tónlist sem var lykilþáttur í íslensku trúarlífi og menningu í kaþólskum sið svo öldum skipti.

65 Ommundsen, tölvupóstur til Guðvarðar Mús Gunnlaugssonar, 14. október 2015.

HEIMILDIR

HANDRIT

Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn, Reykjavík

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| ÍB 450 8vo | Lbs fragm 41 |
| JS fragm 10 | Lbs fragm 43 |
| Lbs 1230 8vo | Lbs fragm 45 |
| Lbs fragm 11 | Lbs fragm 46 |
| Lbs fragm 12 | Lbs fragm 76 |
| Lbs fragm 19 | Lbs fragm 91 |
| Lbs fragm 29 | |

Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Reykjavík

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| AM 266 4to | SÁM 175 |
| AM 471 4to | Þjms 30 |
| AM 687 b 4to | Þjms 166 |
| AM 80 b 8vo | Þjms 194 |
| AM 439 12mo | Þjms 716 |
| AM Acc. 48 a | Þjms 954 |
| AM Acc. 48 d | Þjms 3411 |
| AM Acc. 48 h | Þjms 4126 |
| AM Dipl. Isl. Fasc. V, 12 | Þjms 7437 |
| GKS 3270 4to | Þjms 8276 |

Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands, Reykjavík

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Þjskjs 1a | Þjskjs 2b |
| Þjskjs 1b | Þjskjs 2c |
| Þjskjs 1c | |

Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Institut for Nordiske Studier og Sprogvidenskab, Københavns Universitet, Kaupmannahöfn

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Isl. papp. 4:o 26

Isl. perg. 8:o 5

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R 717

The John Rylands Library, Manchester

Icelandic MS no. 1 (Codex Lindesianus)

Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge (MA)

MS Icelandic 7

Einkasafn, Jón Gunnar Zoëga

Skinnblað úr messusöngsbók, um 15. öld

Einkasafn, sr. Geir Waage

Brot úr blaði úr tíðasöngsbók, 13. öld

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ÁGRIP

„Ekki er þetta kirkjunni að neinu gagni.“ Íslensk söngbókabrot úr kaþólskum sið

Efnisorð: tónlist, helgisíðir, handrit, handritabrot, Jón Þorláksson

Fjölmörg brot hafa varðveist úr þeim kaþólsku messu- og tíðasöngsbókum sem notaðar voru á Íslandi fram til siðaskipta. Fram til þessa hefur ekkert heildaryfirlit verið til yfir íslensk skinnbókabrot með nótum og því örðugt að átta sig á því hversu mörg slík brot hafa varðveist og hvers eðlis þau eru. Megnið af umræddum brotum er varðveitt í þremur söfnum: Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskólabókasafni, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum í Reykjavík og Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn. Einnig eru nokkur brot á Þjóðskjalasafni Íslands og á Konungsbókhöldum í Kaupmannahöfn og Stokkhólmi, stök brot eru í Uppsölum og í Cambridge í Bandaríkjunum og að minnsta kosti tvö söngbókabrot með nótum eru enn í einkaeigu. Alls hafa varðveist um 320 brot úr söngbókum sem taldar eru hafa verið ritaðar á Íslandi eða að minnsta kosti verið eign íslenskra kirkna og virðast þau hafa tilheyrð að minnsta kosti 130–140 bókum.

Í þessari grein er brugðið upp heildstæðri mynd af þeim íslensku söngbókabrotum sem varðveist hafa og varpað ljósi á nokkur brot sem ekki hefur áður verið fjallað um á prenti. Einkum er sjónum beint að brotum á Konungsbókhöldu í Kaupmannahöfn og Konunglega bókasafninu í Stokkhólmi þar sem allnokkur brot eru geymd sem hafa litla athygli hlotið fram til þessa. Bent er á nokkur

handritabrot sem tilheyrðu upphaflega sömu söngbók, til dæmis Add. 1 4to á Konungsbókhöfðu og Accessoria 7/Hs 15 í Árnasafni í Kaupmannahöfn, sem hafa að geyma söng við jólamessur. Að lokum eru könnuð söngbókabrot með hendi Jóns Þorlákssonar en hann var afkastamikill nótnaritari á 15. öld og sá eini sem starfaði við slíkt á miðöldum sem unnt er að nafngreina.

SUMMARY

“This is of no use to the church”: Plainchant Fragments from Medieval Iceland

Keywords: music, liturgy, manuscripts, manuscript fragments, Jón Þorláksson

Hundreds of fragments have survived from the Roman Catholic liturgical books that were used in Iceland until the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century. These include fragments from music books, such as graduals and antiphoners. These fragments belong to many different collections, both in Iceland and abroad. The most substantial holdings are those of the National and University Library in Reykjavík, the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík and the Arnarnagæan Collection in Copenhagen, but fragments from liturgical books with music are also found in the National Archives (Reykjavík), the Royal Libraries in Copenhagen and Stockholm, and libraries in Uppsala and Cambridge (MA); in addition, at least two fragments with music are still privately owned. The total number of music fragments from books that were written or used in Iceland can be estimated at around 320, and these seem to have belonged to at least 130–140 separate books.

This article gives an overview of the surviving fragments from Icelandic liturgical books with music, including several that have received little attention from scholars until now. The main focus is on the collections of the Royal Libraries in Copenhagen and Stockholm, where several fragments are still *in situ* as part of binding used for younger manuscripts. Several examples are given of fragments in different collections that were originally part of the same book, such as Add. 1 4to (Royal Library, Copenhagen) and Accessoria 7/Hs 15 (Arnarnagæan Collection, Copenhagen), which are leaves from the same original manuscript, containing music for masses at Christmas. Finally, a survey is given of the musical output of Jón Þorláksson, a productive Icelandic scribe in the second half of the fifteenth century, and the only Icelandic music scribe known by name.

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TIFFANY NICOLE WHITE

ECHOES OF EDEN'S END

Adams óður as a Poetic Hymn and Its Source in Konungs skuggsjá

1. Introduction*

This article provides an edition of the previously unedited medieval Icelandic poem *Adams óður* and demonstrates that it is a poetic rendition of the Christian story of the Fall of Man found in the thirteenth-century prose text *Konungs skuggsjá* (hereafter *Ksk*).¹ In addition to tracing the poem's source, I will show that the poem was sung as a hymn.² *Adams óður* (hereafter *Aó*) is an anonymous poem that retells what happened in the Garden of Eden that led to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise. The poem is preserved in three late sixteenth-century parchment manuscripts, one early printed text, and two later paper copies. The three parchment manuscripts, AM 622 4to (A), AM 713 4to (B), and AM 720 b 4to (C), are all housed at Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum in Reykjavík. A is dated to 1549 and is missing the end of the poem, while B is dated to c. 1540–1560 and is missing the beginning and ending of the poem. C, dated to c. 1600, preserves the poem in its entirety and is used as the base text for the edition below. The poem was first printed

* I would like to thank the following colleagues for their discussions and suggestions for improvement concerning various aspects of this article and edition: Natasha Bradley, Margaret Cormack, Jonas Koesling, Roberto Pagani, Beeke Stegmann, and Liam Waters.

1 The earliest attestation of *Ksk* is in a thirteenth-century Norwegian manuscript, while Icelandic attestations are only extant from the sixteenth century and later. I will refrain from speculating on the mode of transmission because there remains a possibility of transmission from both Norwegian or Icelandic manuscripts. Given the number of lost medieval manuscripts, it would be a futile endeavour to speculate on the matter based only on extant copies.

2 The poem was certainly sung as a hymn in early post-reformation Iceland, but it is more difficult to say how far back this practice goes.

in Guðbrandur's *Visnabók* (V), published in 1612.³ It is not known which source was used for the poem printed in V. There are two later paper copies; the first, ÍBR 74 8vo, dated to 1852 is a copy of V, while the second, MS 992 fol. held in Trinity College, Dublin, is an eighteenth-century copy of A. The three parchment manuscripts preserve thirty-four verses, while V preserves one additional verse near the end, bringing its total to thirty-five. The poem must be medieval, not least because its earliest attestation is fragmentary and is dated to c. 1540–1560, but also because its early modern attestations usually contain a reference to its age, or that it was a Catholic poem. For example, V states in its subtitle, *Afgamalt kvæði um mannsins sköpun og fall* (A very old poem about humanity's creation and fall).⁴ At the same time, it must be later than *Ksk* (c. thirteenth century), its source.

Parchment Manuscripts Used in the Edition

AM 622 4to (A), known as *Helgubók* (also *Hólmsbók*), is a parchment manuscript written by Gísli Jónsson (1515–1587), who later served as Lutheran bishop of Skálholt from 1558 until his death.⁵ The manuscript is believed to have been completed in 1549 and is divided into three parts. The first part contains Psalms, most of which include musical notation; the second part contains Catholic religious poems (*helgikvæði*); and the third part features five additional poems, *Gimsteinn*, *Mariúvisur*, *Michaelsflokkur*, *Nikulásdrápa*, and *Mariúblóm*. *Aó* appears in the second section, beginning on the lower half of 45r. The poem is untitled in the manuscript, but its beginning is marked by a prominent capital A. It ends abruptly at the bottom of 46v at verse 27, suggesting that the text originally continued on the following leaf. The ending of *Aó* is missing, as is the beginning of the next poem, *Ellikvæði*, implying the loss of at least one leaf. There is a stub of a leaf at that location, although it is unclear whether this represents the remains of a cut leaf or a singleton bound into the quire. The note given in the copy of this manuscript (E, see below) shows that this leaf was already

3 *Visnabók* could be translated as 'book of verse'. The most recent edited version of the *Visnabók* is Jón Torfason and Kristján Eiríksson, eds., *Visnabók Guðbrands* (Reykjavík: Bókmenntafræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2020).

4 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

5 A more detailed account of AM 622 4to's scribe and its contents can be found in Guðrún Nordal, "Á mörkum veggja tíma: Kaþólskt kvæðahandrit með hendi siðbótarmanns, Gísla biskups Jónssonar," *Gripla* 16 (2005): 209–228.

missing in the eighteenth century. In A's current form, a note slip (marked as "i") is bound in front of the leaf on which *Aó* begins, between 44v and 45r. The insert carries a note in Árni Magnússon's hand, which reads: "vide visnabok p. 193. þennann Adams od hefi eg uppskrifadan ur 8vorum Exemplaribus, ok kan so þetta þar vid ad confererast" (See *Vísnaþók* page 193. This *Adams óður* I copied from 8vo exemplars [i.e. manuscripts], and this can therefore be compared to it.)

Much less is known about AM 713 4to (B) and AM 720 b 4to (C). B (c. 1540–1560) is written on parchment in one hand, which is the same hand as in AM 604 4to a–h, also known as *Staðarhólsþók*. In front of B, several paper leaves were inserted into the binding. On them is writing in Árni Magnússon's hand, including, among others, a table of contents (marked "a"), which includes an entry for *Aó* on the verso: "+10. Carmen de lapsu Adami & Evæ; et restitutione generis humani incipit Brynjar sig med systrum siq (er partur ur Adams od sem stendur i Visnabok)" (A song/poem about the Fall of Adam and Eve and the redemption of the human race. Incipit: *Brynjar sig med systrum siq* (is a part of *Adams óður* found in *Vísnaþók*)). Árni's use of the Latin *carmen* to describe the poem is noteworthy, as it may suggest that he understood the poem to be sung. In early Latin usage, *carmen* frequently denoted religious chants and later became the standard word for 'song', while simultaneously retaining the meaning of 'poem, verse' more broadly.⁶ The beginning and ending of the poem are missing in this manuscript. The text begins on 20r with a capital B, for the beginning of verse 10, *Brynjar*. Despite the absence of the initial verses, the use of a large capital consistent with other section openings in the manuscript suggests that the scribe intended to begin the poem at this point. There is no title indicating the name of the poem. It ends at verse 32, line 224, where the next poem follows immediately, indicating that the ending was likely deliberate. The manuscript as a whole preserves a range of religious poetry, including *Lilja*; several poetic saints' lives; and various prayers and hymns to the Virgin.

AM 720 b 4to (c. 1600) is also written on parchment in a single, unidentified hand. Formerly part of a larger compilation known as *Hólsþók*, it includes a table of contents bound into the volume in Árni Magnússon's

6 Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 292–293.

hand. Unlike the other two manuscripts, however, Árni provides no commentary on the poem, noting only the title, “8. Adams odur.” The poem begins in the middle of 10v with the title *.adams odur.*, followed by a large three-line space for a decorative capital A (for *Allra*), which was never drawn in.⁷ The poem ends on 11v, just before *Kross grátur*.

Paper Copies and Cataloguing Challenges

In the attempts to locate the poem, two errors appear. Firstly, the manuscript SÁM 48 contains a poem that is titled *Adamsóður eður Sethskvæði* (124r), but the poem itself is *Sethskvæði*.⁸ Secondly, the editors of the most recent *Vísnaþók* state that the poem appears in ÍB 84 8vo, but this is incorrect.⁹ This erroneous claim is the result of a print error in *Om digtningen på Island* (1888), in which Jón Þorkelsson states that the poem is found in “IBfél. D. á Ísl. 84. 8^{vo}.”¹⁰ The editors of the most recent *Vísnaþók* must have used this as a source, assuming that Jón referred to ÍB 84 8vo. However, Jón is using an older reference system: IBfél refers to the Íslenska Bókmenntafélag, and the “á Ísl.” means it is the Icelandic branch (as opposed to the Danish branch), indicating the modern call number would be ÍBR, now held at the National Library in Reykjavík (*Landsbókasafn*). However, even with the correction of ÍB to ÍBR, *Aó* is not found in ÍBR 84 8vo. A manual search through the printed catalogue for manuscripts held at Landsbókasafn reveals that *Aó* is found in ÍBR 74 8vo (hereafter D).¹¹ Jón Þorkelsson thus incorrectly prints 84 instead of 74, an error which is subsequently inherited in later references until this decade. This paper manuscript was written/copied by Jón Bjarnason

7 None of the spaces for capitals were filled in in the entire manuscript.

8 Housed in Reykjavík at Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. The combination of the two titles by the manuscript’s scribe is interesting. While both *Adams óður* and *Seths kvæði* are about the Fall of Man, their topic material varies widely – *Adams óður* focusing on what happens inside Paradise, and *Seths kvæði* focusing on what happens after Adam and Eve’s expulsion. For more information on *Seths kvæði*, see Tiffany Nicole White, “The ‘Quest of Seth’ in Old Icelandic Literature. *Sethskvæði* and Its Antecedents,” *Gripla* 33 (2022): 329–362.

9 Jón Torfason and Kristján Eiríksson, *Vísnaþók Guðbrands*, 469. ÍB 84 8vo is a rather short manuscript (14 leaves) written by Ólafur Eyjólfsson in 1830. The pamphlet of sorts is titled “Álfheimur eður Undirheimar.”

10 Jón Þorkelsson, *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. århundrede* (Copenhagen: Andr. Fred. Høst & Sønns Forlag, 1888), 99.

11 Páll Eggert Ólason, ed., *Skrá um Handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins*, Vol. 3 (Reykjavík: Ríkisprentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1935), 240.

(1791–1861) in 1852 and includes a variety of religious poetry, including *Lilja*, *Gimsteinn*, and *Veronikukvæði*. The *Aó* portion appears to be a copy of V. Despite its introduction of minor spelling variations, D still closely replicates V and thus will not be included in the edition below.

MS 992 fol. housed in Trinity College, Dublin (E), also contains a later copy of *Aó*.¹² The manuscript is written on paper in a single cursive hand and dated to the eighteenth century. The scribe is unknown. E contains only religious poetry, comprising *Lilja*, *Elli kvæði*, *Píslar grátur*, *Gimsteinn*, *Mariu vísur*, and *Michaels flokkur*. *Aó* appears on page 100 and ends abruptly with verse 27 on page 106. After the last verse, there is a note in an unknown hand, “her fattes 1. blad i Membrana” (here one leaf of parchment is missing). This note, the fact that *Aó* ends at the same place as A, and that there is little variation between A and E, indicates the scribe is copying A; this manuscript will thus also not be included in the edition below.

Purpose and Use

The final two lines of the first verse indicate the presence of a refrain after the first six lines, suggesting that the poem was intended to be sung. In A and C (as B is missing the beginning), the first stanza consists of six lines, followed by two lines containing a refrain: *allt mitt traust er under þeim / med ordi skapadi þenann heim*. In subsequent stanzas, a shortened cue appears to prompt repetition of the refrain. This varies in form, ranging from a simple *A*: to partial quotations such as *Allt mitt traust*, the most common being simply *Allt*. In both A and C, these reminders are inconsistently applied, and sometimes omitted, while B is completely absent of reminders, preserving only the full refrain tagged on to the final verse.¹³ In A, a Gothic capital “C” (presumably for the Latin *Capitulum*) is occasionally used as an abbreviated cue for the refrain (Figure 1).¹⁴

12 I would like to thank Aisling Lockhart of the Manuscripts and Archives Research Library at Trinity College, Dublin, for providing me with images of MS 992 for research purposes.

13 Additionally, verse 29 lacks any reminder in B, C, and V (A is missing this part of the poem).

14 This practice is found throughout the manuscript. It is likely a symbol used for the Latin *Capitulum* (the basis of our modern word ‘chapter’), used in the Middle Ages to mark a new section or paragraph. This use of C eventually turned into the modern pilcrow, or paragraph sign, ¶.

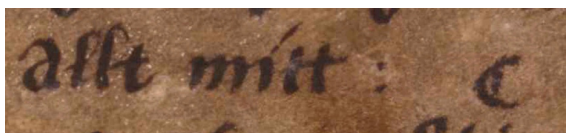


Figure 1: 46r in AM 622 4to. Gothic capital C used as a reminder for the refrain.

The first modern reprint of V reproduces the original 1612 text faithfully.¹⁵ This version shows a similar practice of fully writing out the refrain only after the first verse, followed by partial cues or omissions. By contrast, the most recent edited reprint of V includes the refrain after every verse, undoubtedly an endeavour to produce a version representing exactly how the hymn would have been sung. The edition below follows the 1612 text as reproduced by Sigurður Nordal.

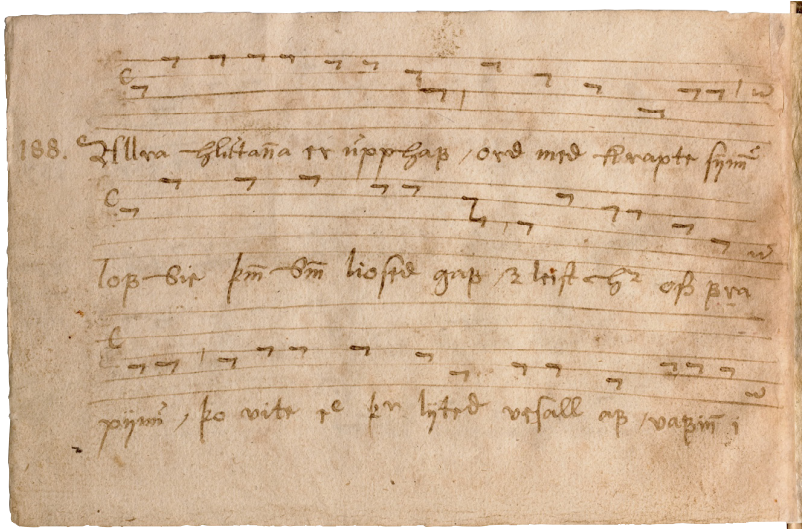
Beyond the refrain markers in the manuscripts, external evidence also supports that the poem was sung as a hymn.¹⁶ An adjacent poem in V, *Eitt kuæde af sið daudlegum Syndum* (A Poem on the Seven Deadly Sins), has the subtitle, *Ton sem Adams Oodur* ([to be sung to] the same tune as *Adams óður*).¹⁷ This indicates not only that *Aó* was sung, but that its tune was familiar enough to serve as a template for other hymns. Further confirmation is found in the manuscript Rask 98 (c. 1660–1670), also called *Melodía*, which preserves 223 songs in musical notation and has been associated with the Skálholt Latin School.¹⁸ *Aó* is not named in the manuscript, but appears marked as song number 188 (63v–64r) (Figures 2a and 2b).

15 Sigurður Nordal, ed., *Bishop Guðbrand's Vísnaðók, 1612*, Monumenta Typographica Islandica, V (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1937).

16 Jón Þorkelsson also suggests more generally that Catholic religious poems could have been used as hymns: “Jeg har ovenfor fremsat den mening, at nogle af de religiøse digte i katholsk tid er blevne brugte som salmer, eftersom flere af dem er af den beskaffenhed at de godt kunde lade sig synge” (I have suggested above that some of the religious poems in Catholic times were used as hymns, since several of them are of such a nature that they could well be sung). Jón Þorkelsson, *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. århundrede*, 99.

17 Sigurður Nordal, *Bishop Guðbrand's Vísnaðók, 1612*, 223.

18 The manuscript is housed in Copenhagen at the Arnarnagnæan Samling. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Tónlist liðinna alda. Íslensk handrit 1100-1800* (Reykjavík: Crymogea, 2019), 103. Árni Heimir also provides a more detailed overview of Rask 98 and its contents, beginning on p. 103.



Figures 2a and 2b: 63v and 64r of Rask 98. Reproduced with permission.

The first verse of the poem is reproduced in full as a model for how each verse in the poem should be sung:

Allra hlutanna er upphaf / ord med krapte synum / lof sie þeim sem
 liosid gaf / ok leist hefur oð fra pijnum / þo vite ec þar lijted vesall
 af / vafinn i sinda lijnum / allt mitt traust er under þeim / sem med
 ordi skapadi þennann heim.

(The beginning of all things / is the Word with its power / praise
 be to him who gave the light / and has delivered us from torments /
 though I, wretched, know little of it / wrapped in the chords of sin,
 / all my trust is in Him / who with the Word created this world.)

The text is identical to that of V, making it highly likely that the text in Rask 98 was copied from the printed edition. The text beneath the musical notation is divided into verses with slashes (“/”), indicating an acknowledgement of its poetic structure. The first verse of *Aó*, as preserved in *Melodía*, was edited by Bjarni Þorsteinsson in his *Íslenzk þjóðlög*, alongside other hymns from the same manuscript.¹⁹

Having established the poem's performance as a hymn, we now turn to a summary of its narrative content, which reveals the theological richness embedded in its verses.

Summary of the Poem

Aó opens with a brief invocation and praise of Christ (verse 1), before transitioning in verse 2 to the narrative of the Fall, beginning with the creation and fall of Lucifer and the angels. The poem goes on to describe Adam's creation out of four elemental parts and the subsequent creation of Eve from Adam's rib. God places the couple in Paradise and commands them not to eat from the tree. Motivated by jealousy, the Devil plots to deceive Eve by speaking to her through the body of a snake, for he believes Eve to be easier to convince than Adam. The Devil arms himself with the seven deadly sins before slyly asking Eve if God has forbidden them from anything. She responds that they are prohibited from eating of the tree under penalty of death. The Devil then tells Eve that, on the contrary, by eating the apple they will gain knowledge and eternal life. Eve hesitates, fearing death. She suggests that the snake eat of the apple first; if he does not die, she will then eat of it. The snake recalls that he is already condemned and

19 Bjarni Þorsteinsson, ed., *Íslenzk þjóðlög* (Copenhagen: S. L. Møller, 1906), 299–300.

thus cannot be harmed further, then takes a bite of the apple. When Eve sees that he is unharmed, she is convinced and eats, calling to Adam to do the same. Adam is eventually convinced and eats the apple. The snake then disappears, and both Adam and Eve become aware of their nakedness. They hide themselves on account of their shame, and God calls out for them asking where they are. Adam blames Eve, and Eve blames the snake, while at the same time blaming God for creating the snake. This angers God and he banishes them from Paradise, giving them two garments of skin²⁰ to wear and condemning Eve to suffer in childbirth. The couple are cursed to till the earth, specifically in Hebron, and all their descendants are made to bear the burden of their sin. The final verses (30–34), as well as the additional verse found in V, provide a solution to Adam and Eve's sin through the Virgin birth and the Crucifixion of Christ. Verse 31 specifically recounts the Harrowing of Hell,²¹ and the poem concludes with a reminder of God's mercy.

2. The Contents of *Adams óður* and Its Relation to *Konungs skuggsjá*

Beyond its narrative structure, *Aó* draws heavily on earlier theological writings. Its striking parallels with *Ksk*, in particular, invite a closer comparative analysis. Scholarly engagement with *Aó* remains virtually nonexistent; when the poem is mentioned, it is typically only in passing – either as part of a manuscript description or in reference to its printing in V.²² Yet

- 20 For a detailed history of the skin shirts given to Adam and Eve, both in Christian and Old Norse-Icelandic literature, see Tiffany Nicole White, "Defining the Human: Skin, Shapeshifting, and Sin," *Scripta Islandica* 75 (2025): 197–241.
- 21 This one verse addresses a huge theological problem, namely, what happened to those who had died before the Incarnation (namely, Adam and Eve)? The previous verse discusses the Crucifixion (salvation for those after Christ), and this verse deals with the redemption of Adam and Eve (and thus also those before Christ) through the Harrowing of Hell. This idea was fixed into the liturgy and creed of the Church by the eighth century. For more on this topic, see Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 107.
- 22 *Íslenzk fornkvæði* contains two poems from AM 622 4to, *Óláfs vísur* and *Kvæði af syndugri konu*, but does not mention any further contents: Jón Helgason, ed., *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, Vol. 4, Editiones Arnarnagæðar B13 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963), XIII–XIV, 11–15. *Íslenzk miðaldakvæði* contains many religious poems, including ones found in AM 622 4to and AM 713 4to, but does not include *Adams óður*: Jón Helgason, ed., *Íslenzk miðaldakvæði*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1938). Jón Þorkelsson mentions the poem briefly,

the poem contains several intriguing elements within its verses that offer valuable insight into the theological and exegetical knowledge available to medieval Icelandic Christians. Many elements in *Aó*'s interpretation of the Fall echo the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Honorius of Autun's *Elucidarium*, apocryphal and pseudepigraphal sources, and even Jewish exegetical sources. The poem closely follows the narrative structure of the Creation and Fall as presented in the thirteenth-century *Konungs skuggsjá*, and I would not hesitate to argue that *Aó* is directly based on this source.

Accordingly, my thematic analysis applies to both *Aó* and *Ksk*, especially given the absence of any comparative treatment in previous scholarship.²³ The following sections examine the most significant shared motifs between the two texts, with attention to their historical and theological context. While numerous similarities exist, I will focus on five key themes: the serpent's consumption of the apple; the embodiment of the Devil; the naming conventions applied to the devil figure; Lucifer's jealousy; and the theological notion that humankind was created to replace fallen angels. A more detailed table outlining the textual correlations between the poetry and prose is provided in Appendix I.

The Snake Bites the Apple First

A strikingly unique scene in the poem is when Eve asks the snake to eat of the apple first. Eve is too scared that she will die if she takes a bite, so

noting the first verse and stating that the poem cannot be older than 1500-1525: Jón Þorkelsson, *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. århundrede*, 98–99. Guðrún Nordal has written extensively on the manuscript AM 622 4to; when *Adams óður* is mentioned, it is often in the context of which poems in the manuscript were printed in *Vísabók*. Guðrún Nordal, "Á mörkum tveggja tíma: Kaþólskt kvæðahandrit með hendi siðbótarmanns, Gísla biskups Jónssonar"; Guðrún Nordal, "Helgubók--Kvæðasafn á mörkum kaþólsku og lútersku," in *Konan kemur við sögu*, ed. Svanhildur María Gunnarsdóttir and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2016), 131; Guðrún Nordal, "Helgubók," in *Góssíð hans Árna. Minningar heimsins í íslenskum handritum*, ed. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2014), 21–36; Guðrún Nordal, "Handrit, prentaðar bækur og pápísk kvæði á siðskiptaöld," in *Til heiðurs og hugbótar. Greinar um trúarkvæðskap fyrri alda*, ed. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir and Anna Guðmundsdóttir, Snorrastofa rit 1 (Reykholzt: Rannsóknarstofnun í miðaldafræðum, 2003), 131–143.

- 23 Sverre Bagge offers short interpretations of themes found in *Ksk* in his Appendix to *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror* (Odense University Press, 1987), including an evaluation of "The Story of the Fall in the King's Mirror" (pp. 225–233), but does not always evaluate the same themes treated here. When I treat themes he has discussed, I expand beyond his analysis.

she suggests that the snake bite first, and if he does not die, then she will take a bite (lines 96–99): *utan ec siae þier eire þad / ef þu vogar at þreyta / ok ef þig skadar um ecki þar / eplis mun eg þa neyta* (Unless I see that you are unharmed by it – if you dare to try it – and if it harms you, not even the smallest amount, then I will eat of the apple).²⁴ The snake (really the Devil) then laments how he cannot fall a second time, for he has been in trouble with God since he was cast out of heaven (lines 101–106): *Ormurinn svarar med illzku mauk / at eplinu giordi vikia / eta ma eg þui vid illzku tauk / i aullu skal eg mig likia / eg er folginn adur i sauk / vid faudur himnanna rijkia* (The snake answers with ill intent, turned towards the apple. ‘I may eat it, bound by evil’s grip, in all things I shall make myself alike. I have already fallen into guilt against the father of the heavenly kingdom’). The serpent eats of the apple and then gives Eve another one (verse 16, line 110): *at hann eplid og annad gaf* (he [Devil/snake] ate the apple and gave another [to Eve]). Eve then sees that it is ‘safe’ after the snake is unharmed, and then goes on to offer the apple to Adam. This scene plays out almost exactly in *Ksk*.²⁵ The same dialogue takes place between Eve and the serpent, wherein she suggests he bite the apple first so she can see whether he dies: *Ek hræðumk, ef ek et, at ek deyja, með því at guð hét mér því. Nú et þú fyrri, svá at ek sjá, ok ef þú deyr eigi, þá mun ek eta...* (‘I fear that, if I eat, I shall die, for such is God’s threat. Now you eat first while I look on, and if you do not die, I will eat...’)²⁶ The comment by the snake, however, is portrayed as an inner dialogue in *Ksk*: *En andinn sá er leyndisk í orminum, þá svaraði með sjálfum sér: “Ek má vel eta eplit, því at ek em ekki at sekari né dauðligri, þar sem ek er áðr í fullri reiði guðs.” En þessi orð heyrði Eva eigi* (Then the spirit that was concealed in the serpent said to himself:

24 All translations of *Aó* are my own.

25 The main difference is that there are four apples involved in the *Ksk* version. The snake bites the first apple, then Eve takes a second apple from the tree and bites it, and then she takes two more apples from the tree, one for her to eat to show Adam it is safe, and one for Adam himself. The poem does not specify the number of apples involved. Anne Holtsmark shows that the number of apples depicted in medieval church paintings also varies widely, and even goes as far as positing that the textual renditions were influenced by church art. Anne Holtsmark, “Kongespeilet og eplene i Edens have,” *Viking* 20 (1956): 141–155.

26 Rudolph Keyser, Peter Andreas Munch, and Carl Rikard Unger, eds., *Speculum Regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet. Et philosophisk-didaktisk skrift, forfattet i Norge mod slutningen af det tolfte aarhundrede* (Christiania: C. C. Werner, 1848), 113–114. Laurence Marcellus Larson, trans., *The King’s Mirror* (New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1917), 265.

'I may indeed eat the apple, for it will make me no more guilty or mortal, inasmuch as I am already in the full wrath of God.' But these words the woman did not hear).²⁷ Sverre Bagge, in his study on *Ksk*, notes that he was unable to find any direct parallels to this story in Christian literature or theology.²⁸ The snake biting the apple is, of course, found neither in the canonical biblical account nor in *Stjórn I*. There is, however, a very close parallel found in the medieval Jewish Mishnah (a written collection of Jewish oral traditions), specifically, a tale found in the Avot (ethical teachings) edited by Rabbi Nathan.²⁹

And the snake further said to her, 'If it was as to not eating of the tree that you say the Holy One, blessed be he, has laid a commandment on us, lo, I am going to eat of it, but I shall not die. You too may eat of it and you will not die.' [...] So she went and took of the fruit and ate it and gave it to Man and he ate, as it is said, *And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and an appealing sight.* (Gen. 3:6)³⁰

27 Keyser, Munch, and Unger, *Speculum Regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet*, 112–113; Larson, *The King's Mirror*, 265.

28 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 229.

29 I want to thank Daria Segal for her help with navigating this vast body of literature. The collection was edited and translated into Latin in Francis Taylor, trans., *Tractatus de Patribus Rabbi Nathan Auctore, in Linguam Latinam Translatus* (London: E. Cotes, 1654), and it was most certainly known before 1550. Dating beyond that is impossible and any link in transmission is beyond the scope of the current study. It is, however, well documented that medieval Christians had a deep interest in Hebrew studies and that medieval Icelandic clerics were familiar with and owned pseudepigraphal texts. Those who studied Hebrew were called 'Christian Hebraists' and the most famous centre for this was the Abbey of St Victor (Paris) in the twelfth century. Generally, this interest only grew amongst Christians after the Reformation, when Hebrew texts commenting on the Old Testament were printed and often translated by Christians who were dedicated to a closer study of the Old Testament. For more on this post-medieval development, see Marvin J. Heller, "Christian-Hebraists: The Talmud (Mishnah) in Translation," in *Printing the Talmud: Complete Editions, Tractates, and Other Works and the Associated Presses from the Mid-17th Century through the 18th Century*, Brill's Series in Jewish Studies 62 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 315–38; for more on the medieval practice, see Beryl Smalley, "Andrew of St. Victor, Abbot of Wigmore: A Twelfth Century Hebraist," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 10 (1938): 358–373.

30 Jacob Neusner, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan. An Analytical Translation and Explanation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 9. This is the most recent critical edition of the A-Text, translated from the Hebrew. A less critical and more elaborate version based on the A- and B-Texts and translated from a German translation into English, can be found

This foundational imagery is expanded and elaborated upon in other forms of Jewish exegetical texts (see footnote 28). Interestingly, Bagge acknowledges that the account in *Ksk* is influenced by Jewish sources elsewhere. He traces the idea that the serpent itself could speak before the Fall to Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum naturale*, which he believes can then be traced to Josephus (c. 37–100), the Roman-Jewish historian.³¹ Siân Grønlie, likewise, discusses possible borrowings from Jewish midrashim in the retelling of the Fall story, specifically the parable about the four daughters of God.³² These connections between voice, agency, and external influence set the stage for a closer examination of how the serpent and devil figure are portrayed in the text, a topic on which the following sections will focus.

The Talking Serpent

Concerning the snake-as-Devil or Devil-as-snake trope, both *Aó* and *Ksk* specify that Lucifer goes looking for a snake's body to use or possess in order to speak to Eve. Verse 9 (lines 59–60) of *Aó* states “*Evo skal eg at andinn kvad / orms i liking finna*” (I shall find Eve, declared the spirt, in the form of a serpent). *Ksk* clarifies that Lucifer has no voice and therefore chooses the snake in order to speak; the snake is depicted in the story as having the face of a woman and walking on two feet like a man; but this is not specified in *Aó*.³³

“Með því at ek em nú úsýniligr andi, þá má ek eigi sýniliga koma í tal við líkamligan mann, nema ek skríða mína hina ljótligu ásjón með nökkurri líkamligri fegrð. Nú mun ek ganga inn í orm þenna, er guð hefir skapaðan með meylligu andliti, ok líkastr er mannligri fegrð, ok mun ek tala með hans munni við Evu konu Adams...”

in Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews. Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob: Reference Edition*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Quadriga, 2020), 186–187.

31 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 226–227.

32 Siân Grønlie, *The Old Testament in Medieval Icelandic Texts: Translation, Exegesis and Storytelling* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2024), 121–123.

33 This was a common belief in the Middle Ages, found in Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* and elsewhere. The imagery was known in medieval Iceland, evident in an illumination of a snake with a woman's face twirled around a tree, with Adam and Eve on either side, found on the bottom of 1v in AM 227 fol. (Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum).

(“Inasmuch as I am now an invisible spirit, I cannot visibly come to have speech with physical man, unless I adorn my ugly countenance with a certain corporeal beauty. I shall therefore enter this serpent which God has created with the face of a maiden and which most resembles man in beauty, and I shall speak with his tongue to Eve, Adam’s wife...”)³⁴

Several medieval theologians posited that it was not the snake itself who tempted Eve but rather the Devil using the snake as a medium with which to tempt her. Henry Ansgar Kelly traces the idea that the snake was possessed and not able to speak itself to Andrew of Saint Victor (d. 1175), who systematically drew on the works of Jewish commentators.³⁵ But the idea goes back further, and likely was not transmitted directly from Jewish text to Andrew. Augustine, in his *De Genesi ad litteram* (On the Literal Meaning of Genesis) claims that the Devil could only use the snake’s body with God’s permission.³⁶ These ideas answers the theological question of whether God’s creation (a snake) could tempt and deceive with ill intent, and on a larger scale, whether God created evil.

Ksk is very precise about how it discusses the serpent. It is sometimes called simply “the serpent” (*ormurinn*), but never explicitly Lucifer.³⁷ Rather, the reader is given a reminder that the serpent is not acting of its own will because it is possessed. For example, when Lucifer initially approaches Eve he has possessed the body of the snake, which is very clearly described in *Ksk*: *En þá er sá hinn illgjarni andi kom til fundar við Evu huldr*

34 Keyser, Munch, and Unger, *Speculum Regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet*, 112–113; Larson, *The King’s Mirror*, 263–264.

35 Henry Ansgar Kelly, “The Metamorphoses of the Eden Serpent during the Middle Ages and Renaissance,” *Viator* 2 (1971): 303.

36 John E. Rotelle, ed., “The Literal Meaning of Genesis,” in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: On Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New York City Press, 2002), 431.

37 In the biblical story of the Fall as found in Genesis, the biblical serpent is in fact never equated with the Devil. James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent. How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 275–281. Also, “The serpent is not identified as the devil in Genesis or anywhere else in the Old Testament. The word *nāḥāš* is the ordinary word for snake, and it is identified as a ‘beast of the field’ (Gen 3:1, NIV ‘wild [animal]’).” John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton, *Demons and Spirits in Biblical Theology: Reading the Biblical Text in Its Cultural and Literary Context* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2019), 132.

með likami þess orms... (And when the evil-minded spirit came to Eve concealed in the body of this serpent...).³⁸ Similarly, when Lucifer's internal dialogue is expressed, *Ksk* does so by specifying that he, not the snake, is talking to himself: *En andinn sá er leyndisk í orminum, þá svaraði með sjálfum sér...* (Then the spirit that was concealed in the serpent said to himself...).³⁹ This practice is not carried over into *Aó*; instead, a variety of names are used to refer to the possessor of the snake, although it is not always clear that the snake cannot be equated with its possessor. We will now take a more detailed look at the naming of the figure inhabiting the snake – a complex interplay of terms like Lucifer, Satan, and *andinn*.

The Devil's Names: Lucifer, Satan, andinn

Building on the previously discussed idea that the Devil was simply inhabiting or possessing the snake, this section turns to the terminology used for the snake and its possessor in *Aó* and *Ksk*. The name Lucifer is used to discuss the fallen angel in *Aó* (verse 2, line 11), but *Satan* is the one who is jealous of the first couple and wants them expelled from Paradise (verse 7, line 45). The term *andinn* ('the spirit' or 'angel') is used in verse 9 (lines 49–50) to describe the entity that possesses the serpent, aligning with the terminology used in *Ksk*. However, in verse 16 (line 109) of *Aó*, it is again *Satan* who offers Eve the apple. By contrast, *Ksk* consistently uses only *Lucifer* as the proper name for the devil figure. The use of *Satan* in *Aó* – particularly in verse 31 (line 213), where he appears as the adversary of Christ and ruler of Hell – demonstrates a conflation of multiple theological identities.

The conflation of Lucifer and Satan (as proper names), and Devil/demon as one entity who was simultaneously the fallen angel, ruler of Hell, and adversary of Christ, started to develop early on with the Church Fathers and became more systematic by the twelfth century. The conflation is essentially the result of translation issues, which caused the merging of three originally distinct figures into a unified protagonist, thus joining very separate dialogues into one.⁴⁰ The use of Lucifer as a proper name

³⁸ Keyser, Munch, and Unger, 113; Larson, 264.

³⁹ Keyser, Munch, and Unger, 114; Larson, 265.

⁴⁰ The term *Satan* originates from Hebrew, where it simply means 'adversary'. In the Old Testament, with the exception of the Book of Job, Satan appears infrequently and plays a minor role. In contrast, the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels of Luke and

for the fallen angel developed over a long period but is ultimately tied to a misreading of Isaiah 14:12, wherein Isaiah is mocking the fall of the King of Babylon, using the Hebrew term *hēlāl* (Shining one) to describe the king. The Hebrew term was then translated in the Vulgate using the Latin *lucifer*.⁴¹ Lucifer as a Latin word simply means 'light bringer' or 'morning star' and often refers to the planet Venus.⁴² Gregory the Great (d. 604), for example, rarely uses the name Lucifer in his extensive writings on the Devil, for he believes it also to be a name for Christ.⁴³ The origin of the connection between Lucifer and Satan is murky but already shows popularity within the writings of Tertullian (d. 240).⁴⁴ These associations are extra-biblical and often reflect medieval interpretive traditions. For example, *Stjórn I* attributes both mentions of Lucifer as a fallen angel to Peter Comestor's twelfth-century *Historia scholastica*, while also acknowledging *lucifer* as a celestial body.⁴⁵ Intriguingly, according to Astås' name index for *Stjórn*, the name Satan does not appear at all within the work. The term *andinn* in *Aó* and *Ksk* corresponds closely to the Greek *daimon*, a spirit figure that evolved over time into the concept of demon, reflecting a long and complex trajectory in the development of Christian demonology.⁴⁶

The use of diverse terminology for the devil figure in *Aó* thus reflects a learned composer familiar with a range of theological sources and traditions concerned with the problem of evil. Similarly, the scribe of *Ksk* was informed

Matthew, an 'accuser' or 'slanderer' appears using the Greek term *diabolos*. This term was later translated into Latin as *diabolus*. The conflation of the Hebrew adversary *satan* with the Greek accuser *diabolos* arose when Alexandrian Jews translating the Hebrew scriptures into Greek rendered *satan* as *diabolos*, thereby linking the figures linguistically despite their distinct meanings. This linguistic evolution has contributed to historical misunderstandings, as the English word 'devil' derives from *diabolus* but carries connotations from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin sources. For a more detailed account of this evolution, see Luther Link, *The Devil: A Mask without a Face* (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), 19.

41 Link, *The Devil: A Mask without a Face*, 23.

42 Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 1080.

43 Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*, 97. For more on Jesus as Lucifer, see Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 164–167.

44 Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, 179.

45 Mentions of Lucifer as fallen angel are found on pages 19 and 52; the use of *lucifer* for a star is found on page 313 (all in volume 1). Reidar Astås, ed., *Stjórn. Tekst Etter Håndskriftene*, 2 vols., Norrøne Tekster 8 (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2009).

46 In the Classical world, statues were thought to be inhabited by a *daimon* or a spirit, which then in the early Christian world, eventually turned into idols being inhabited by demons. This Christian verbiage works well with the idea of possession, in this case, with the serpent.

of a very specific exegetical tradition that placed Lucifer, the fallen angel, as the jealous inciter of the Fall, while also carefully preserving the theological distinction that God's creation, the snake, could only have committed evil acts if it was used as a vessel by another (one who himself chose to sin).

Lucifer's Jealousy

Another well-documented exegesis of the Fall story in early and medieval Christian thought was that Lucifer decided to come to Paradise and inhabit the snake to coerce the first couple due to his jealousy of Adam.⁴⁷ This account, which places the fall of angels prior to the creation of Adam, is not found in the canonical Bible but appears widely in extra-biblical sources. The tradition is reflected in both *Aó* and *Ksk*, as well as *Stjórn I*. In *Stjórn I*, the fall of the angels is recounted before the narrative of creation, and when God separates light from darkness, it is interpreted as the moment when good angels were separated from bad angels.⁴⁸ A similar idea is found in *Aó* in lines 11–12 of verse 2: *Lucifer sem hydrinn veit / ljossins þessa misti* (Lucifer, as people know, lost his light). This is an interesting play on the name Lucifer (from the Hebrew *hēlēl*, 'light bringing'), who, after his fall, apparently could not live up to his name. This loss of light is echoed in *Ksk*, after the detailed account of the fall of angels, where it is stated, *ok skildisk með því myrkr frá ljósi* (and in this way, darkness was separated from light).⁴⁹ The ordering of these events in both texts supports the exegetical interpretation that Lucifer's reason for coming to Paradise was his jealousy of Adam and thus his desire to see him also fall, and that his possession of the serpent presupposes his prior fall from grace.⁵⁰ Lucifer's jealousy (told as Satan's jealousy in *Aó*), is described in verse 7 (lines 45–50): *Sathan ofundar sælu þa / er hann sier adam setta / kostgiæfer þann krok at sia / med klokskap sinna pretta / at virding*

47 Russell describes how this scene is also found throughout pseudepigraphal literature, such as the *Vita Adae et Evae* and *The Apocalypse of Moses*. However, in these accounts, the angel Michael orders Lucifer to bow down to Adam, which he refuses to do, thereby creating his fall (thus, here the fall of angels occurs *after* the creation of man). This event then incites Lucifer's jealousy of Adam and results in his 'visit' to Paradise. D.S. Russel, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (London: SCM, 1987), 21.

48 Reidar Astås, ed., *Stjórn: Tekst etter håndskriftene*, 1: 13–19. The fall of angels in *Stjórn I* is more generally discussed in Grønlie, *The Old Testament in Medieval Icelandic Texts*, 144–148.

49 Keyser, Munch, and Unger, *Speculum Regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet*, 112; Larson, *The King's Mirror*, 263.

50 However, nowhere in the canonical Biblical account of Genesis is the snake said to be the Devil.

þeirre vellti hann fra / ok sem vodasamligast detta (Satan envies the bliss that he sees granted to Adam; he devises that deceitful trap with the cunning of his tricks, so that he might strip him of that honor and cause him to fall in the most terrible way). Lucifer/Satan's *klokskap* (normalised as *klókskapur*, meaning 'wiliness' or 'cunning') is described in great detail in *Ksk*, in a speech he delivers to his fellow fallen angels:

En eptir þat er guð hafði mann skapaðan, ok hann var skipaðr í sældarlífi í Paradísu, þá mælti Lucifer til sinna félaga: „Þessum mun guð hafa ætlat ríki þat, er hann rak mik ífrá, ef hann gerir eigi misbrigði í gegn hans vilja. En þóat hann skipaði öðrum englum í vart ríki, þá mættim vér þat aldri þola, ef vér féngim nökkut at gört; en þetta er oss ofmikil skömm, at maðr sá er görr var af leiri eða saurgu jarðar duppti, skal vera leiddr í þá eilífa sælu, er vér várum frá reknir. Fyrir því skulum vér jafnan berjask við hvern þeirra, er þannug stundar, ok hefna várs skaða með grimligri heipt á öllum þeim, er vér fám sigrat. Fyrir því skal ek við leita at vinna sigr á hinum fyrsta manni, er guð hefir skapat, at þá megi aðrir mínir félagar vinna sigr á hinum, er síðar koma.”⁵¹

(But when God had made man and had given him a blissful life in Paradise, Lucifer said to his companions: 'It is evidently God's intention to give this one the dominion from which He drove me out, unless he shall act counter to God's will. Even if God should appoint other angels in our stead, we could never allow it, if we could do anything to prevent it; but our disgrace would be too great, if a man formed of clay or the filthy dust of the earth were to enter into the eternal happiness from which we were expelled. Therefore we must fight incessantly against everyone who has such ambitions and revenge our injuries with fierce hatred upon all those whom we can overcome. Now I shall try to gain a victory over the first man that God has created, so that my companions may be able to overcome those who come later.')⁵²

51 Keyser, Munch, and Unger, 112.

52 Larson, *The King's Mirror*, 263.

This passage explicitly connects Lucifer's jealousy to a broader theological motif: the idea that Adam and Eve, and by extension humanity, were created to replace Lucifer and the other fallen angels. It is to this theme that the following section now turns.

Humans Created to Replace Fallen Angels

The idea that Lucifer is envious of Adam, thus inciting his desire to make him fall and be expelled from paradise, is connected to a theme which was common in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, that humans were created to replace the fallen angels. According to this tradition, Lucifer's envy comes from his idea that Adam might enjoy the life he previously did, but no longer can. Although Bagge identifies sources for the depiction of Lucifer's envy in *Ksk*,⁵³ he does not treat the connected theme of the creation of humanity to fill the void left by fallen angels. This exegetical and extra-biblical idea, that angels fell *before* the creation of humans, thus making their creation necessary to replace the said fallen angels, goes back (at least) to Augustine.⁵⁴ The most probable line of transmission goes from Augustine, to Gregory the Great (via his *Homilies*), to Anselm, and then to Peter Lombard.⁵⁵ The idea was kept alive through its inclusion in Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* (Sentences), which was compulsory reading for students of theology up to the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ Given its status as a standard curriculum text, any medieval Icelander studying Latin and theology abroad would have encountered and interacted with this text. In the *Sentences*, Peter Lombard discusses the idea in relation to Augustine's works:

It is held by some that men shall be restored in proportion to the number of angels who fell, so that the heavenly city may neither

53 For this theme, Bagge cites Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis*, Petrus Comester's *Historia Scholastica*, and Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Naturale*, which also quotes Hugh of St Victor and Ambrose. Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 225.

54 Novotný posits that Augustine's ideas could be based on Origen's and/or early versions of the *Vita Adae et Evae*. Vojtěch Novotný, *Cur Homo? A History of the Thesis of Man as a Replacement for Fallen Angels* (Prague: Karolinum, 2014), 22–29. Russell claims, however, the idea was likely solidified in the Middle Ages through the writings of Gregory the Great. Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*, 97.

55 Novotný, *Cur Homo?*, 14.

56 Novotný, *Cur Homo?*, 127.

be deprived of the number of its citizens, nor rule over a great abundance of them. This appears to be the view of Augustine in his *Enchiridion*, who does not assert that more men will be saved than angels were ruined, but that they will not be fewer. He says: "The heavenly Jerusalem, *our mother*, the city of God, will not be defrauded in the number of her citizens, and perhaps shall even reign over a great abundance. For we do not know the number either of saintly men, or of unclean demons. In the latter's place shall succeed the children of the Catholic mother, who seemed sterile on earth, and they will remain without end of time in that peace from which the others fell. But the number of these citizens, as it now is, or as it was, or as it will be, is in the contemplation of that artificer *who calls [into existence] the things which are not as much as those which are.*" See, he plainly says that no fewer men will be saved than angels were ruined, but he does not assert what more will be.⁵⁷

In addition to the quotation in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, the same idea appears, in a more concise form, in Honorius of Autun's *Elucidarium*, a text that was translated into Old Norse relatively early. In the translation, the concept is presented through a brief dialogue between Master and Disciple:

Discipulus: Þvarr tala heilagra víþ fall vandra engla.

Magister: Þvi vas maþr scapaþr at fyldesc tala heilagra.

Disciple: Did the number of saints decrease with the fall of the bad angels?

Master: Man was created to make up the number of the elect.⁵⁸

This was clearly a theme that was well known amongst medieval Icelandic clerics, and from somewhat early on in the Icelandic Church, given that the translation of *Elucidarius* can be dated to the early thirteenth cen-

57 Giulio Silano, trans., *Peter Lombard. The Sentences: Book 2, On Creation*. Mediaeval Sources in Translation 43 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 42–43. Emphasis is added by Silano and refers to Romans 4:17 and chapter 29 of Augustine's *Enchiridion*.

58 Evelyn Scherabon Firchow, trans., *The Old Norse Elucidarius: Original Text and Translation* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1992), 14–15.

tury and the creation of *Ksk* to c. mid-thirteenth century, with the oldest Icelandic fragment dated to c. 1300.⁵⁹ The presence of this theme in both translated and native texts not only underscores its theological significance but also attests to the deep integration of the Icelandic Church into wider European intellectual and ecclesiastical networks.

3. Conclusion

Adams óður stands as a compelling witness to the vibrancy and theological sophistication of medieval Icelandic religious poetry and its composers. Though long neglected in scholarship, its close structural and thematic correspondence to the account of the Fall in *Ksk* demonstrates that *Aó* is not an isolated composition but a poetic adaptation of a learned theological tradition, mostly that which is found in *Ksk*. By tracing its textual transmission, situating it within manuscript culture, and identifying its hymnological function, this study has brought to light the depth of both *Ksk*'s and *Aó*'s engagement with Christian exegesis, including ideas drawn from patristic authors, medieval theologians, and Jewish exegetical traditions.

Rather than presenting a simplified retelling of Genesis, the poem reveals a complex theological and exegetical landscape shaped by centuries of commentary and interpretation. The integration of themes such as Lucifer's jealousy, the instrumental use of the serpent, and the salvific arc from Fall to Redemption points to a composer deeply immersed in exegetical discourse. At the same time, its poetic form and refrain structure suggest an intended oral and musical dimension, underscoring the role of devotional poetry in shaping religious understanding.

In bringing *Adams óður* into conversation with *Konungs skuggsjá*, this study has highlighted how medieval Icelandic texts engage with continental theological currents while maintaining distinct local expressions. The poem deserves further attention not only as a literary and poetic work but also as a vehicle for theological reflection and instruction in both medieval and post-medieval Iceland.

59 Namely, AM 655 XXVIII b 4to (Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling).

Appendix 1: The Correlation Between *Adams óður* and *Konungs skuggsjá*

| Verse in <i>Adams óður</i>
cf. edition below | Prose in <i>Konungs skuggsjá</i>
cf. Rudolph Keyser, Peter Andreas Munch, and Carl Rikard Unger, eds., <i>Speculum Regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet</i> . (Christiania: C. C. Werner, 1848) |
|---|---|
| Verse 1 | No parallel |
| Verse 2 | p. 111, line 22. (<i>En þat er upphaf...</i>) to p. 112, line 17 (... <i>gagn-staðligir þinni ráðagerð</i>) |
| Verse 3 | p. 112, line 17 (<i>En þá er guð...</i>) to p. 112, line 22 (... <i>myrkr frá ljósi</i>) |
| Verses 4, 5, & 6 | No parallels |
| Verses 7 & 8 | p. 112, line 23 (<i>En eptir þat...</i>) to p. 112, line 34 (... <i>er síðar koma</i>) |
| Verse 9 | p. 112, line 38 (<i>Því næst mælti...</i>) to p. 113, line 8 (... <i>sætt við hann</i>) |
| Verse 10 | p. 112, line 34 (<i>Því næst skráddisk...</i>) to p. 112, line 38 (... <i>bergi-samlig lostasemi</i>) |
| Verse 11 | p. 113, line 11 (<i>En þá er...</i>) to p. 113, line 20 (... <i>hlutum.</i>) |
| Verses 12 & 13 | p. 113, line 20 (<i>En þegar er...</i>) to p. 113, line 36 (... <i>hluta ok illra.</i>) |
| Verse 14 | p. 113, line 36 (<i>En þá er...</i>) to p. 114, line 3 (... <i>sér.</i>) |
| Verse 15 | p. 114, line 3 (<i>En andinn sá...</i>) to p. 114, line 6 (... <i>eigi.</i>) |
| Verse 16 | p. 114, line 6 (<i>Því næst tók...</i>) to p. 114, line 9 (... <i>hafði sagt henni.</i>); p. 114, line 10 (<i>en hon kallaði...</i>) to p. 114, line 11 (... <i>þessa hluti.</i>) |
| Verses 17 & 18 | p. 114, line 11 (<i>En með því...</i>) to p. 114, line 18 (... <i>síðr en hon.</i>) |
| Verses 19 & 20 | p. 114, line 10 (<i>Því næst...</i>) to p. 114, line 10 (... <i>augliti Evu.</i>); p. 114, line 18 (<i>Sem þau höfðu...</i>) to p. 114, line 30 (... <i>á hverri stundu.</i>) |
| Verse 21 | p. 115, line 27 (<i>Því næst kallaði...</i>) to p. 115, line 35 (... <i>bannaða ykk.</i>) |
| Verse 22 | p. 115, line 35 (<i>En þegar er...</i>) to p. 116, line 5 (... <i>en miskunn-ar.</i>) |
| Verses 23 & 24 | p. 116, line 20 (<i>Því næst mælti...</i>) to p. 116, line 25 (... <i>at göra lögbrot.</i>) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Verse 25 | p. 116, line 11 (<i>En þá er guð...</i>) to p. 116, line 24 (<i>...var eigi lofat.</i>); p. 116, line 31 (<i>„Svá sýnisk mér...</i>) to p. 117, line 7 (<i>...uppfæði þeirra.</i>) |
| Verse 26 | p. 117, line 21 (<i>þvi næst gaf...</i>) to p. 117, line 27 (<i>...fyrir önd-verðu.</i>); p. 117, line 5 (<i>Börn þau er...</i>) to p. 117, line 7 (<i>...í uppfæði þeirra.</i>) |
| Verses 27 & 28 | p. 116, line 34 (<i>fyrir þvi skulu...</i>) to p. 116, line 39 (<i>...frjálsligrar sælu.</i>); p. 117, line 14 (<i>þvi næst mælti...</i>) to p. 117, line 24 (<i>...matar á jörðu.</i>) |
| Verses 29 & 30 | No parallels |
| Verse 31 | p. 117, line 33 (<i>Hryggr mun ek...</i>) to p. 117, line 38 (<i>...ok sigri týnt.</i>) |
| Verses 32, 33, 34, & the extra verse in V | No parallels |

Appendix II: Edition of *Adams óður*

All abbreviations are expanded in *italics*. Minor spelling variations have not been noted as variants, including the following cases: a/ǣ/ia/ja/aa for á; e/ie/je for é; ij for í; o/uu for ó; u/uu for ú; ij for ý; variations between au/o/ö/ø/ø; y for i and vice versa; y for u and vice versa; u for v and vice versa; variations between f/u/v; variations between ck/k/kk; ck/k for g; f for p and vice versa; dzt for st; zt for s; -e for -i; variations between -it, -ed, and -id, as well as -inn and -en; eirn for einn; at/ad; edur/eda; alternation between single and double consonants (ex. pp vs. p; nn vs. n) where the difference does not affect grammar; variations between capital and lower case usage.

When there are two (or more) variants which have differences listed above, I have chosen to list the variant with the designated manuscript letter (A-C, V) which comes first alphabetically. The following Latin abbreviations are used: *om.* (L. *omittit*, E. omitted); *add.* (L. *addidit*, E. added) to denote a word added *after* the indicated lemma. Editor's comments are presented in *italics* in the footnotes.

Texts:

A: AM 622 4to, 1549

B: AM 713 4to, 1540-1560

C: AM 720 b 4to, 1600 (base text)

V: *Vísnaþók*, 1612

- [1] [Missing A Capital]llra hlutana er upphaf
ord með krapti sijnum
lof sie þeim sem liosit gaf
og leyst hefur oss fra pijnum
5 þo viti eg þar litid veslegur af
vafinn i synda linum
allt mitt traust er under þeim
med ordi skapadi þenann heim.

¹ Missing A capital] 3-line A capital with descender into the bottom margin A ⁴ leyst hefur oss] leysti oss fra V pijnum] pinu A ⁵ viti] vites A eg] om. A veslegur] vesall V ⁶ linum] linu A ⁸ med] sem med A, V þenann] þenna A

- [2] Epter skapada eingla sueit
¹⁰ var eirn af þeim hinn fyrsti
 lucifer sem lydurinn veit
 liossins þessa misti.
 því ofmetnadur og ofundin heit
 miog med honum gisti.
¹⁵ Allt mitt traust er under þeim.
 ok 00
- [3] Ræser himnanna rak hann sier fra
 J rar helvjtis sveita
 og svo med honum alla þä
²⁰ sem ofmetnadarins leita.
 hver mann skyldi hugxa upp ä
 heidrann gudi at veita.
 Allt:
- [4] Af fíorum hlutum enn fyrsta mann
²⁵ fader himnanna upp vackti
 Adam liet gud heita hann
 sem hann sialfr skapti.
 Efa upp af rife hans rann
 med ríjkum guddoms krapti.
³⁰ Allt mitt traust.
- [5] Híoninn þessi j hædzta valld
 himna kongurinn setti
 utan hann baud þeim bodorda halld
 og bregda ei sijnum rietti.
³⁵ daligt lä vid daudans gialld
 er drottinn sialfur setti.
 Allt mitt:

¹⁰ hinn] enn V ¹¹ lucifer] *only luci is visible due to damage A* sem] *unreadable due to damage A* ¹³ ofundin] *only ofu visible due to damage A* ¹⁴ miog] of miog A, V med] hia V ¹⁵ Allt mitt traust er undir þeim] þeim *unreadable due to damage A*; Allt mitt Traust er un. V ¹⁶ *An unknown symbol appears after ok C; line om. A, B, V* ¹⁷ himnanna] himna V ¹⁹ og] *om. A* ²² heidrann] hlydni A ²¹ hver] hugr V hygxa] huxa V upp] *om. V* ²² heidrann] hlydinn A ²³ Allt:] allt mitt C A; Allt mitt V ²⁴ enn] hinn A ²⁵ himnanna] himna V ²⁷ sem hann] *om. A* sialfr] *likely an archaism from an earlier exemplar C*. ²⁸ upp] ut V ³⁰ Allt mitt traust] allt: A; Allt mitt V ³¹ valld] rann valld A ³³ utan] *om. V* þeim] *add. eirnen V* ³⁵ gialld] *gialld is written in the margin A* ³⁷ Allt mitt:] allt: A

- [6] Bannadi Gud þad skyllði skie
sem skadi var þeirra barna
40 at bergia af því blomgudu trie
er bar þann frodleiks kiarna
giorvallt annat gull og fie
giordi þeim einskis varna.
Allt mitt:
- [7] Sathan ofundar sælu þa
er hann sier adam setta
kostgiæfer þann krok at sia
med klokskap sinna pretta
at virding þeirre vellti hann fra
50 og sem vodasamlegast detta.
Allt:
- [8] Skrafar hann þa sem talizt við tveir
traudlega mä eg þad lijda
at madur sie gior af molldu og leir
55 mega þar sælu bijda
þvi mun eg kostgiæfa og keppa meir
um koll þann ofann at rijda.
Allt:
- [9] Evo skal eg at andinn kvad
60 orms j liking finna
hana mun hægra og hygg eg þad
helldur enn adam ginna
ef bondann lieti hun beygia af
o odordum ecki sinna.
65 Allt:

40 blomgudu] blomsturs A; blomstur V 41 er] sem V 42 gull] Goss V 44 Allt mitt:] allt: A; om. V 46 er hann sier] er sier hann A; sem sier hann V 47 sia] fa V 49 vellti hann] hann vellte V 50 ok] om. V v odasamlegast] vodaligast V; add. ad V 51 Allt] om. V 53 traudlega] trautt V eg] add. ei V 54 madur] Maduren V sie gior] skaptur V 55 mega] og mega A; meige V þar] þa A, V 56 þvi... kostgiæfa] eg skal þui kosta V 57 þann] þau A 58 Allt:] allt mitt: C A; om. V 61 eg] e / sic in V 63 beygia] bergia A; bregda V 64 Beginning of 11r damaged C. o odordum] ok bodordum A, V

[10] Brynjar sig med systur siau
 svikari allra allda
 000pt og reidi hatur og spie
 hioninn munu þess gjallda
 70 feinga eg unnid fyrstu tvo
 j fiotrum skal eg þau hallda.
 Allt mitt:

[11] Ormurinn fra eg evo fann
 og giorer svo ordum vikia
 75 sæl erttu og svo þinn mann
 sett j virðing slíka
 sie yckur ecki sett fyrir bann
 af sælum himna ríjka.
 Allt:

[12] Eva svarar og seiger svo sie
 ef sannlega verður kannat
 utann eplid af einu alldinn tre
 er ockur þverrlega bannat
 daudinn er viðs ef skal svo skie
 85 skiotur enn ecki annat.
 Allt:

[13] Hefur mier ed sanna sagt
 af syndum yckar fleira
 þa list mier vera hin minsta mack
 90 svo mun yckur þetta eira
 þið hafid þa alla heimsins mack
 heidur og viðsdom meira.
 Allt:

⁶⁶ B begins here. siau] VII V ⁶⁷ svikari] suikarin B, V ⁶⁸ 000pt] heipt A, V; 0eipt B ⁶⁹ þess] þetta B ⁷⁰ feinga] fe000a A; fien00 B unnid] add. hin V ⁷¹ þau] þeim V ⁷² Allt mitt:] om. B, V ⁷³ eg] add. ad A, B, V ⁷⁴ giorir svo ordum] svo giorir ordum A; Ordum giorer so V ⁷⁵ ok] missing due to damage A ⁷⁷ ecki] eckert V ⁷⁸ sælum] sældum B; Sæmdum V ⁷⁹ Allt:] Allt mitt traust: C A; om. B; Allt mitt V ⁸¹ ef] om. B ⁸² utann] om. V ⁸⁶ Allt:] Allt mitt traust: C A; om. B; Allt mitt Traust er under þeim V ⁸⁷ hefur] hafir A, V; add. þu A, B, V ed] hid A, B ⁸⁸ syndum] syndunum B; Sæmdum V ⁸⁹ minsta] mesta B ⁹⁰ svo] og V mun] megi B ⁹¹ mack] ack B; fragt V ⁹² viðsdom] virðing B ⁹³ Allt:] Allt mitt A; om. B, V

[14] Orad list mier eo eva kvad

⁹⁵ ut af því at breyta
utan eg siae þier eire það
ef þu vogar at þreyta
og ef þig skadar um ecki par
eplis mun eg þa neyta.

¹⁰⁰ Allt:

[15] Ormurinn svarar med illzku mauk

at eplinu giordi vikia
eta ma eg þui vid illzku tauk
j aullu skal eg mig likia
¹⁰⁵ eg er folginn adur i sauk
vid faudur himnanna rijkia.
Allt:

[16] Svo sviksamlega sem sagt er af

sathan giordi at spialla
¹¹⁰ at hann eplid og annad gaf
efu at hun skyldi falla
gledilega gast henne ad
og giordi á Adam kalla.
Allt:

[17] Bidur hun hann at bijta upp á

og bydzt at honum at rietta
Adam ried at ansa þä
ockur er bannat þetta.
dauda hiet mier drottinn sia
¹²⁰ sem dæmir allt hid rietta.
Allt:

⁹⁴ eo] ad A, B, V ⁹⁵ því] þessu B, V ¹⁰⁰ Allt:] om. B; Allt mitt V ¹⁰¹ illzku] andans A, B, V ¹⁰² giordi] giører V; add. at A, B, V ¹⁰³ ma] skal V þui] þinn A vid] om. V ¹⁰⁴ skal] ma V ¹⁰⁵ folginn] fallen B, V ¹⁰⁶ himnanna] himna B, V ¹⁰⁷ Allt:] Allt mitt: C A; om. B ¹⁰⁸ af] fra B ¹¹⁰ eplid] eple B og] enn V ¹¹¹ hun skyldi] skyllde hun V ¹¹² gledilega] gledilegana A, B ¹¹³ giordi] giorer B ¹¹⁴ Allt:] Allt mitt: A, V; om. B ¹¹⁵ hun] om. B hann] honum V upp ai] uppa V ¹¹⁹ sia] sa B, V ¹²⁰ hid] ed V ¹²¹ Allt:] Allt mitt: C A; om. B

[18] hvert ætlar þu ed Eva kvad
 at þig muni eg vilia pretta
 þvi eta mattu ecki par
¹²⁵ angr giorer mier þetta
 Adam tok og at j stad
 þad ad honum giordi hun rietta.
 Allt:

[19] Epter þetta stundlega starf
¹³⁰ bar stora neyd til handa
 af augsyn þeirra ormurinn hvarf
 enn adam leit þau standa
 hroplega nakinn so hyliazt þarf
 hann hugsar nu sinn vanda.
¹³⁵ Allt:

[20] Fara þau nu og fela sig fliott
 þvi falsarinn hefr þau prettad
 nockra lima þau skammazt skiott
 skilia ma vel þetta
¹⁴⁰ hrædandizt þa hefndar gnogt
 sem hier fyrer mun þeim detta.
 Allt:

[21] Drottinn spyr hvar Adam er
 og þau hioninn bædi
¹⁴⁵ edur fari þid nu at felazt fyrer mier
 ef feingit hafi þid giædi
 þvi braust þu þad sem baud eg þier
 edur ber þu nu meire frædi.
 Allt.

¹²² hvert] Huortt A, B, V ed] ad A, B, V ¹²³ muni] mun A ¹²⁴ þvi eta mattu] eta mattu þui A, V; eta mattu fyst þvi B ¹²⁵ mier] mig B ¹²⁷ þad] sem V það...rietta] þad hun giordi at honum rieta B ¹²⁸ Allt:] om. B ¹²⁹ stundlega] add. hid A; stundlegt V ¹³⁰ bar] add. þau B ¹³¹ af] om. B; ur V þeirra] add. ad A, V ¹³² leit] sa B standa] only stand is visible due to damage A ¹³³ hyliazt] hylia V ¹³⁴ hugsar] hugxar A; huxar V nu] um V ¹³⁵ Allt:] om. A, B; Allt mitt V ¹³⁶ Fara] Fora B ok] at B, V ¹³⁷ þau] only þ is visible due to damage A; written in the margin B ¹³⁸ nokkra] nacktar A, B; naktra V lima] Limanna V þau] om. V ¹⁴⁰ hefndar] hefnda A, B gnogt] gnott V ¹⁴¹ mun] ma B þeim] þau B ¹⁴² Allt:] Allt A; om. B, V ¹⁴³ Drottinn] 0000tenn B due to damage ¹⁴⁶ ef] ad V giædi] 00æde B due to damage ¹⁴⁷ braust þu] brauztu A; buztu B ¹⁴⁹ Allt:] Allt A; om. B, V

- [22] Þvi dirfdizt þu at drottinn kvad
 um daudann ecki at sinna
 Adam ried at ansa j stad
 sem ei er hans brot at minna
 chríste vill nu kenna þad
¹⁵⁵ at konu liet hann sig ginna.
 Allt:
- [23] Fra eg at Evo fretti ad
 fader himna ríjkia
 þvi bodordum hefdi hun brugdit af
¹⁶⁰ bondann giort at svikia
 oradit þad ormurinn gaf
 efter giord eg vikia.
 Allt:
- [24] Enn orðslægi ormurinn sa
¹⁶⁵ eva liet skraf af lietta
 breytt hefd eg hvorgi bodordum fra
 og bondinn giortt hid riett<a>
 ef skapad hefder þu ei skepnu þa
 sem skammlega giordi at pretta.
¹⁷⁰ Allt mitt:

¹⁵⁰ Þvi] Þ₀₀ damaged B þu] þid nu V at] ef A ¹⁵³ sem] om. V hans brot] brot hans B at] inserted above the line B ¹⁵⁶ Allt:] om. B, V ¹⁵⁷ at] om. B ¹⁵⁸ himna] himnanna A ¹⁵⁹ bodordum] Bodorde V ¹⁶⁰ bondan] og bondann A, B, V ¹⁶¹ oradit] orad B; Oraade V þad] þui V; add. sem B, V ormurinn] or₀₀₀₀₀₀. damaged B ¹⁶² giord] giordi A; giorda B ¹⁶³ Allt:] Allt: C A; om. B ¹⁶⁴ Enn] Hinn V ormurinn] unreadable due to damage B sa] so B ¹⁶⁵ eva liet skraf] sem allt liezt skrapa A, B; sem allt ried skrafa V ¹⁶⁶ hefd] hefda V hefd eg hvorgi bodordum] unreadable due to damage B; bodordum] Bodorde V ¹⁶⁷ ok bondinn] nie ad Bonda V hid riett] hid rietta A; ₀₀₀ oietta damaged B; ad rietta V ¹⁶⁸ þu] om. B, V ei] ecki B ¹⁶⁹ at] om. B; mig V giordi] giordo damaged B ¹⁷⁰ Allt mitt:] Allt A; om. B, V

[25] Eg gaf adam ^evo þier^
 til yndis og godra rada
 enn nu vilie þid kyndug kenna mier
 klokskap yckar rada
¹⁷⁵ þvi verdr at setia harda hier
 hegning yckur brada.
 A:

[26] Adam far þu ur augsyn mier
 og þid hioninn bædi
¹⁸⁰ skinnkyrtla tvo skicka eg þier
 skal þad yckar klædi
 born mun Eva giefaf af sier
 bædi með sorg og mædi.
 Allt.

[27] J daudann fullann dalinn Ebron
 drottinn baud þeim vikia
 fyrer logbrot sitt og lifsins tion
 er lietu þau sig svikia
 flæmduzt svo hin fyrstu hion
¹⁹⁰ fra faudur himna rijkia.
 Allt.

¹⁷¹ *evo þier* is written in the margin of C *eg*] unreadable due to damage B *gaf*] noted in the margin A
¹⁷² *ok*] *om.* B *rada*] *næda* V ¹⁷³ *enn*] *om.* V ¹⁷⁴ *yckar*] *yckra* V ¹⁷⁵ *vordr*] *r* is barely visible C; *høøø* B;
add. *eg* B, V ¹⁷⁷ A:] Allt mitt: A; *om.* B, V ¹⁷⁸ *far þu*] *fardu* D *augsyn*] *aøøsyn* B ¹⁸⁰ *tvo*] *om.* B
skicka] *skick* A ¹⁸¹ *skal*] *skulu* A, B, V ¹⁸² *giefaf*] *geta* A, B; *bera* V ¹⁸⁴ Allt.] *om.* B ¹⁸⁵ *daudann*] *dauda* A, B, V *dalinn*] *dal* V ¹⁸⁶ *baud þeim*] *þeim* *baud* V *þeim*] *þau* B ¹⁸⁷ *log brot*] *Laga Brot*
V ¹⁸⁸ *er*] *ad* V ¹⁸⁹ *flæmduzt*] *flæduzt* A *hin*] *hinu* B; *enu* V ¹⁹⁰ A *ends after 'himna'* *himna*] *himnana* B ¹⁹¹ Allt.] *om.* B, V

[28] Þau bygdu nu *sem* bokinn tier
 og bar þa neyd til handa
 at þeirra kyn *sem* [^]kunn[^]igt er
¹⁹⁵ varð j kvolum og storum vannda
 unzt himna kongurinn sialfr sier
 at svo mä ecki standa.
 Allt:

[29] Allur skadi og andar tion
²⁰⁰ er á Adams kyn ried detta
 vill himna kongurinn hialpar von
 og hugnad veita um þetta
 því sendi hann sinn sæta son
 syndum j burtt at lietta.

[30] Hann liet berazt af Mariu mey
 með myskunn heilagx anda
 þann pindu á krossi gydinga grey
 grædara himins og landa
 fyrer vora skulld hann villde dey
²¹⁰ at vier værum ei hia fianda.
 Allt:

[31] Sonur Mariu sigrinn vann
 sathan batt og meidde
 allt helvijti eyddi hann
²¹⁵ og adam j burttu leiddi
 það hialpar rad sem faderinn fann
 flockinn allann greiddi.
 Allt.

¹⁹² bygdu] biuggu V ¹⁹³ þa] þau V neyd] Naud V ¹⁹⁴ kunnigt] *kunn* is noted in the margin C ¹⁹⁵ varð] *om.* V stor] storum B, V ¹⁹⁶ sialfr] *likely an archaism from an older exemplar C*; bretta B ¹⁹⁸ Allt:] *om.* B, V ²⁰⁰ er] *om.* V ried] mun V Adams...ried] adam nam skiott B ²⁰² og] *om.* V hugnad] huggann B; huggun V ²⁰³ sendi] sendir B hann] honum B son] *om.* B ²⁰⁴ syndum] fra syndunum B i] *om.* B at] *om.* B ²⁰⁶ heilagx] heilags B; heilax V ²⁰⁷ þann] þau B ²⁰⁹ vora] vorar V skulld] Synder V ²¹⁰ at] so V vier] *om.* V værum] *illegible due to damage* B ²¹¹ Allt:] *om.* B, V ²¹⁴ eyddi] eyðð B ²¹⁵ i] *om.* B ²¹⁷ flockinn] flokan V ²¹⁸ Allt] *om.* B; Allt mitt Traust er under þeim V

[32] Hann for þa upp sem fra er nu sagt

²²⁰ til faður og heilagx anda
eirn og þrennr j eingla makt
sem odaudlega mun standa
manneskiunni hefur lucku lagt
og leyst fra kvolum ok vanda.

²²⁵ Allt.

[33] Hingat kemur með hvellann rom;

huggari lyds og landa
yfer at seigia þann ognar dom
sem æfinnlega skal standa
²³⁰ ander skiptast við eingla blom
enn iller j kvaler og vanda.

Allt.

* *V includes an extra verse inserted here:*

Þad veite oss enn mæte Mariu Son
Mildding Himens og Landa
ad hliota mættum vier Heill og von
og hialp hins helga Anda
so drøgunst alldrei j Diøfla dom
nie Daar hins jlla fianda

[34] Oðar smidit Adamz hier

endazt mun fyrst at sinne
²³⁵ lagfæri sa sem betri er
og Gud giefur til minne
bidiandi sieut þier nu fyrir mier
svo myskunn guds eg finne.
Allt mitt traust er under þeim.

²⁴⁰ með ordi skapadi þennann heim.

²¹⁹ Hann] Hønn B upp] om. B er nu] var V ²²⁰ til...heilagx] og fōður heilags B; til fōðurs og heilags V ²²¹ eirn] greidde ein B ²²² sem] om. B ²²⁴ B ends here ²²⁵ Allt] om. V ²²⁷ huggari] Herran V lyds] Himens V ²²⁹ skal] mun V ²³⁰ blom] hliom V ²³¹ kvaler] Kuøl V ²³² Allt.] om. V ²³⁴ mun fyrst] nu V ²³⁵ betri er] les og sier V ²³⁶ Gud giefur til] leggie vel j V ²³⁷ bidiandi sie ut þier nu] bidie aller Bragnar V ²³⁸ myskunn] blessun V ²⁴⁰ með] sem med V

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SUMMARY

Ecchos of Eden's End: *Adams óður* as a Poetic Hymn and Its Source in *Konungs skuggsjá*

Keywords: biblical studies, Icelandic poetry, the Fall of Man, hymns, demonology, Apocrypha

This article provides an edition of the previously unedited medieval poem *Adams óður* and demonstrates that it is a poetic rendition of the Christian story of the Fall of Man found in the thirteenth-century prose text *Konungs skuggsjá*. In addition to tracing the poem's source, I show that the poem was sung as a hymn. *Adams óður* is an anonymous poem that retells what happened in the Garden of Eden that led to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise. Several prominent themes that are shared between *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Adams óður* are examined in the article, including the serpent who bites the apple first; the talking serpent; Lucifer, Satan, and *andinn* as names for the Devil; Lucifer's jealousy; and the idea that humans were created to replace fallen angels. Appendix I provides a comparison between the poem and prose, and Appendix II provides an edition of *Adams óður* based on three parchment manuscripts and one early printed source.

ÁGRIP

Bergmál frá aldingarðinum Eden: *Adams óður* sem andlegur kveðskapur og tengsl hans við *Konungs skuggsjá*

Efnisorð: biblíufræði, íslenskur kveðskapur, fall mannsins, sálmar, djöflafræði, apókrýfar bókmenntir

Í þessari grein er birt fræðileg útgáfa á áður óútgefnu miðaldakvæði, *Adams óður*, og sýnt fram á að kvæðið er skáldleg úrvinnsla kristinnar frásagnar um synda-fall mannkyns eins og hún birtist í prósaverkinu *Konungs skuggsjá* frá þrettánda öld. Auk þess sem rakið er til hvaða heimilda kvæðið sækir er sýnt fram á að það hafi verið sungið sem sálmur. *Adams óður* er höfundarlaust kvæði sem segir frá atburðum í aldingarðinum Eden sem leiddu til brottreksturs Adams og Evu úr Paradís. Í greininni eru greind nokkur veigamikil þemu sem tengja saman *Konungs skuggsjá* og *Adams óð*, þar á meðal: að ormurinn bíti fyrst í eplið; talandi ormur; nafnanotkun djöfulsins – *Lúsifer*, *Satan* og *andinn*; öfund Lúsifers; og sú hugmynd að mannkynið hafi verið skapað til að taka sæti hinna föllnu engla. Í viðauka I er að finna samanburð á kvæðinu og prósaefninu, en í viðauka II er birt útgáfa á *Adams óð* byggð á þremur skinnhandritum og einni prentaðri útgáfu.

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TERESA DRÖFN FREYSDÓTTIR NJARÐVÍK

TVENNAR RÍMUR AF FERTRAM OG PLATÓ FRÁ 17. ÖLD

*Rímur Jóns Eggertssonar og brot af
glataðri rímu Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða?*

Á vordögum árið 2024 fékk ég á skrifborð mitt lítinn pappakassa sem innihélt þó nokkuð stóra ráðgátu. Innan í kassanum var eitt stakt blað úr handriti sem hafði fundist innan í bókbandi gamallar sálma bókar sem prentuð var á Hólum. Titilsíðu sálma bókarinnar vantaði en hún mun vera prentuð á Hólum áður en Hólaprent var lagt niður 1799. Það er þó með öllu óvíst hvenær handritsbrotið var nýtt í bókband hennar því að það gæti vel hafa verið einhvern tíma á 18.–19. öld. Þrátt fyrir allt, þá var blaðið nokkuð læsilegt en á því mátti þó sjá saumfór og uppábrot eftir dvöl þess innan í bókbandinu. Blaðið er í oktavó-broti, með skreyttum upphafsstaf og smá flúri aftan við textann – en textinn bar það með sér að vera úr rímu. Þarna var þá komið í leitirnar óþekkt handritsbrot og eigandi þess, fornbókasafnarinn Eypór Guðmundsson,¹ bað mig um að líta á það og athuga hvort ég gæti með einhverju móti fundið út úr því hvaða texti væri á brotinu og hve gamalt það væri. Handritabrotið nefnist hér eftir EG fragm. 1.

Spurningunni um aldur handritsins var nokkuð auðsvarað því að það virtist nokkuð ljóst að um handrit frá 18. öld væri að ræða. Ég óskaði eftir álit frá Beeke Stegmann sem benti á að brotið væri skrifað á handgerðan pappír með engum sýnilegum vatnsmerkjum og frá Guðvarði Má Gunnlaugssyni, sem leit á leturgerð og stafsetningu, en bæði starfa þau á

1 Eypór Guðmundsson er með verkefnið *Old Icelandic Books* þar sem hann m.a. safnar gömlum prentuðum bókum, gerir þær upp og bindur inn í nýtt band. Hann hefur fundið fleiri handritabrot í prentuðum bókum sínum eins og má m.a. lesa um í viðtali við hann sem Ólafur Pálsson tók fyrir Morgunblaðið 26.2.2023, https://www.mbl.is/frettir/innlent/2023/02/26/fann_butu_ur_yfir_500_ara_gomlu_skinhandriti/, sótt af vef 25.3.2025. Hann heldur úti Instagram-síðu um verkefni sitt: <https://www.instagram.com/oldicelandicbooks/>

menningarsviði Árnastofnunar. Þau tóku undir þá niðurstöðu að handritið væri frá 18. öld, líkast til frá 1750 eða þar um bil.²

Að greina rímnatextann reyndist örlítið flóknara. Leit í rímnasafni eftir stökum braglínum skilaði engum niðurstöðum svo að rímurnar virðast ekki vera skráðar í Karel – Rannsóknarvettvang rímna.³ Þegar uppskrift af brotinu var gerð kom í ljós að í rímnabrotinu er minnst á tvær nafngreindar persónur – Fertram og Eyvind. Þar með virtist ljóst að þetta væru *Rímur af Fertram og Plató*, sem fékkst staðfest með samanburði efnisins við *Fertrams sögu og Plató* í handriti. Þar var hægt að finna efni rímnabrotsins í 7. kafla sögunnar en á rímnabrotinu eru 16 vísur aftan úr V. rímu og svo ein vísa sem er upphaf VI. rímu – það sést bæði á millifyrirsögn á blaðinu og niðurlagsvísu. Þá var aðeins eftir að finna hvaða *Fertrams rímur og Plató* væru á brotinu því að fleiri en einn rímnaflokkur af því efni eru þekktir. Sigurður Breiðfjörð orti *Fertrams rímur og Plató* á 19. öld en þar sem handritabrotið er nokkru eldra þá komu rímur hans ekki til greina. Eftir leit í *Rímnatali* Finns Sigmundssonar⁴ virtust tveir möguleikar koma til greina þar sem tvö nafngreind skáld ortu *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* á 17. öld. Annars vegar Jón Eggertsson (1643–1689) og hins vegar Jón Guðmundsson lærði (1574–1658). Yrði þá ekki auðfundið svarið við því hvaða *Fertrams rímur og Plató* eru á brotinu?

Ekki jafn auðfundið og maður hefði haldið. Það virðast vera skiptar skoðanir meðal fræðimanna um það hvort Jón Eggertsson og Jón lærði Guðmundsson hafi yfirhöfuð ort *Rímur af Fertram og Plató*, hvort aðeins annar þeirra hafi gert það eða hvort þær rímur séu varðveittar.

Fertrams rímur og Plató: Handrit og varðveisla

Fertrams rímur og Plató eru varðveittar í alls 14 handritum en í þeim eru þó fleiri en einn rímnaflokkur um sama efni. Langflest handritin eru með *Fertrams rímur og Plató* eftir Sigurð Breiðfjörð, eða alls tólf handrit, en hann orti rímurnar snemma á 19. öld. Eiginhandarrit hans af rímunum er varðveitt í handritinu ÍB 465 8vo, sem er skrifað um 1830, en rímurnar

2 Beeke Stegmann og Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, persónuleg samskipti, 22.5.2024.

3 Sjá Karel – Rannsóknarvettvang rímna, vefstj. Pétur Húni Björnsson, <https://rimur.adlib.is/karel/rimur/>, sótt af vef 24.3.2025.

4 *Rímnatal*, I. bindi, útg. Finnur Sigmundsson (Reykjavík: Rímnafélagið, 1966), bls. 130; *Rímnatal*, II. bindi, útg. Finnur Sigmundsson (Reykjavík: Rímnafélagið, 1966), 77 og 81.

voru prentaðar 1836 af Helga Helgasyni í Viðey aftan við *Rímur af Jómsvíkingasögu*.⁵ *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* Sigurðar Breiðfjörðs eru varðveittar í handritunum: ÍB 465 8vo, ÍBR 37 4to, JS 473 8vo, JS 489 8vo, Lbs 2292 4to, Lbs 3170 4to, Lbs 4667 4to, Lbs 5178 4to, Lbs 3845 8vo, Lbs 4477 8vo, Lbs 5200 8vo, MB 038.

Rímnaflokkur Sigurðar Breiðfjörðs af Fertram og Plató er þó með öllu óskyldur þessu leyndardómsfulla rímnabroti þar sem rímur hans eru fyrst ortar þó nokkru eftir að brotið er skrifað auk þess sem á brotinu eru engar vísur sameiginlegar rímnaflokki hans. Á brotinu geta því aðeins verið eldri *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató*. Eftir standa þá eftirfarandi handrit sem gætu mögulega tengst rímnabrotinu EG fragm. 1: Lbs 695 4to og ÍB 746 8vo.⁶ Lbs 695 4to er skrifað á 19. öld, á árunum 1823–1824, en ljóst er að þar eru ekki *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* eftir Sigurð Breiðfjörð sem virðist hafa ort sínar rímur nokkrum árum seinna. Þarna er annar rímnaflokkur um sama efni, en rímurnar eru alls tíu að tölu, og hefur sá flokkur verið eignaður Jóni Eggertssyni eins og fjallað er um nánar hér á eftir. Handritið ÍB 746 8vo, sem skrifað er á 18. öld, inniheldur brot af þessum sama rímnaflokki og er í Lbs 695 4to. Lbs 695 4to er mögulega eftirrit ÍB 746 8vo og gert meðan rímurnar voru enn heilar í handritinu. Brot rímnanna í ÍB 746 8vo nær yfir átta blöð, frá 5r–12v, þar er hluti I. rímu og II. rímu en þó vantar framan af I. rímu og aftan af II. rímu. Í ÍB 746 8vo eru aðeins rímnabrot af fjórum rímnaflokkum, *Biðils rímu*, *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató*, *Geiralls rímum* og svo tvenn brot af *Klarus rímu keisarasonar* og *Serená dramblátu*. Önnur handrit *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* eru ekki þekkt.

Fertrams saga og Plató

Fertrams saga og *Plató* er enn sem komið er óútgefin en sagan er flokkuð með frumsömdum riddarasögum síðari alda. Prósagerðin virðist þó ekki vera eldri rímunum: *Fertrams saga* og *Plató* er að öllum líkindum afurð þess að einhver sneri efni *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* yfir í prósa. Eldri saga af sama efni er ekki þekkt. Um *Fertrams sögu* og *Plató* segir í skrá Rudolfs Simek og Hermanns Pálssonar:

- 5 *Rímur af Jómsvíkingasögu ásamt Fertrams rímum og Plató* (Viðey: Helgi Helgason, 1836), 113–190.
- 6 Finnur Sigmundsson í *Rímnatali* telur það brot af sömu rímu og varðveitt er í Lbs 695 4to en í bókinni er prentvilla þar sem hann skrifar ÍB 748 8vo í stað ÍB 746 8vo.

Fertrams saga ok Platos ist eine spät- oder nachma. originale Riddarasaga über Fertram und Plato, die beiden Söhne des »König Artus von Frankreich«, von denen Fertram durch drei schwarze Berserker nach Indien entführt wird und von Plato erst nach vielen Abenteuern befreit werden kann. Die Saga ist voller Reminiszenzen an gelehrte oder sagenhafte Texte: z.B. besitzt Fertram das Pferd Bussifal, das einst Alexander dem Großen gehörte, und Attilas Schwert.⁷

Sagan er varðveitt í alls 32 handritum frá 17. öld og allt fram á 20. öld. Sagan virðist því hafa verið nokkuð vinsæl öldum saman. Flest eru handrit hennar varðveitt á Íslandi: AM 395 fol., AM 537 4to, ÍB 165 4to, ÍB 228 4to, ÍB 233 4to, ÍB 139 8vo, ÍB 185 8vo, ÍB 260 8vo, Lbs 633 fol., Lbs 824 4to, Lbs 998 4to, Lbs 1226 4to, Lbs 1502 4to, Lbs 5176 4to, Lbs 1705 8vo, Lbs 2153 8vo, Lbs 2405 8vo, Lbs 2986 8vo, SÁM 170, SÁM 133, Jón Samsonarson 3 4to (einkaeign). En erlendis má þó finna ellefu eintök, þar af flest í London: BL Add. MS 4857, BL Add. MS 4863, BL Add. 24972, BL Add. 11158 I (London); Rask 30, Rask 32, Rask 35 (Kaupmannahöfn); Holm papp. 46 fol. (Stokkhólmi); ISDA JB6 1 (Winnipeg); UBB Ms. 1491 (Bergen).

Elsta handrit *Fertrams sögu og Plató* er BL Add. 4857 en það handrit mun vera úr bókasafni Magnúsar Jónssonar í Vigur (1637–1702), og er að mestu með hendi skrifara hans Þórðar Jónssonar.⁸ Titilsíða handritsins ber titilinn:

Agjætar historiur af ymsum köngum köngasonum og Velbordnum frægðar mœnnum Vtann landz, þeirra Hreyste verkum og Margfœlldum manndöms Gjørningum sem þeir ä sijnum Døgum frœmdu, Miøg skiemtelegar Ad lesa og Heira, ei Sydur

7 Rudolf Simek og Hermann Pálsson, *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur*, 2. útg. (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2007), 90.

8 Ekki er vitað hvenær Þórður Jónsson er fæddur. Hann var faðir Jóns Þórðarsonar sem var sömuleiðis skrifari í þjónustu Magnúsar Jónssonar í Vigur. Ekki er heldur vitað hvenær Jón Þórðarson er fæddur en sonur hans Jón Jónsson á Hjöllum í Ögursveit er fæddur 1681 svo að Jón Þórðarson er þá væntanlega fæddur fyrir 1660 og Þórður þá líkast til fæddur fyrir 1640. Hvorki Þórður né Jón eru í manntalinu 1703 svo að þeir hafa líklegast látist fyrir það. Báðir eru a.m.k. á lífi 1681 og þá skráðir til heimilis á Strandaseli og Birnustöðum í Ögursveit.

Nitsamlegar, ä sier Göd Dæme af ad Draga. Ad Nyu yfer siednar Og forbetradar Med stoorre Kostgiæfne Af Ærugøffgum, Vysum og Virduglegum Høfdings Manne Magnuse JónsSyni Ad Vigur, og Sydann Ad Hanns forlæge Vppskrifadar Anno 1669.⁹

Aftan við uppskrift *Fertrams sögu og Plató*, sem er á blöðum 97v–109v, er stutt skrifaraklausa, þar sem segir: „Skriffad og endud Fertrams Saga af þörde Jönßyne, ä Skarde vid Skøtufiórd .7. Martij. Anno 1670.“ Yngst handrita með *Fertrams sögu og Plató* er Lbs 1502 4to sem skrifað er árið 1902 af Magnúsi Jónssyni í Tjaldanesi. Í handriti sínu skrifar Magnús stuttan formála um hverja sögu sem í handritinu er. Um *Fertrams sögu og Plató* skrifar hann:

Saga þessi er skrifut eptir sögubók er Guðbrandur á Hvítadal hefr skrifað, en þá sögu segist hann hafa fengið hjá Sigurði Árnasyni í Kirkjuhvammi ásamt fleiri sögum. Þessi saga er víða í handriti, ok vafalaust at tiltölu heldr gömul; allar eru þær líkar at efni ok orðfæri þær er ek hefi séð, ok eru þær nú nockut margar. Sigurðr Breiðfjörð hefr ort rím af Fertam ok Plató sem víða eru kunnar.¹⁰

Þó nokkur handrit með hendi Guðbrands Sturlaugssonar á Hvítadal (1820–1897) eru varðveitt en ekkert þeirra hefur að geyma *Fertrams sögu og Plató*.

Engin prósagerð *Fertrams sögu og Plató* er varðveitt sem er eldri *Fertrams rímum og Plató*. Líklegast er að sagan sem nú er varðveitt sé sett saman eftir rímunum en það væri þarft verkefni að kanna það nánar og sömuleiðis hvort fleiri en eina gerð *Fertrams sögu og Plató* sé að finna í þessum handritum. Það virðist vera nokkuð algengt að Magnús í Vigur hafi einmitt látið skrasetja prósagerðir með efni rímnna og ýmist sjálfur sett saman sögur með efni rímnanna eða fengið skrifara sína í það verk. Dæmi um slíkt er prósagerðin *Þóris saga háleggs* sem Magnús setti sjálfur saman eftir samnefndum rímum þar sem prósagerð eldri rímunum hafði ekki varðveist. *Þóris sögu háleggs* skrifar hann að beiðni Árna Magnússonar sem vildi fá inntak rímnanna.¹¹ *Bragða-Ölvis saga*, sem er samin eftir *Ölvis*

9 BL Add. 4857, bl. 1r.

10 Lbs 1502 4to, bl. 4v.

11 Teresa Dröfn Freysdóttir Njarðvík, „Ölvis rímur sterka: Handrit, miðlun og þróun“, doktorsritgerð við Háskóla Íslands, 2025, 233–234.

rímum sterka, virðist sömuleiðis eiga uppruna sinn í skrifaraneti Magnúsar í Vigur.¹² Hið sama virðist eiga við prósagerð *Hjálmþérs sögu og Ölvis*.¹³ Í þó nokkrum tilvikum eru elstu prósagerðir sagna að finna í handritum sem hann skrifaði eða lét skrifa fyrir sig svo að það virðist sem hann hafi gert þetta við fleiri rímur, þ.e. að snúa efni þeirra yfir í prósa.¹⁴ Það er því vel hugsanlegt að *Fertrams saga og Plató* sé enn eitt tilfellið um slíkt.

Sagnaefnið af Fertram og Plató

Sagnaefnið um Fertram og Plató er hér rakið í stuttri endursögn þar sem efnið er með öllu óútgefið. Aðalsöguhetjurnar eru bræðurnir Fertram og Plató, synir Artús Frakklandskonungs, en ævintýri þeirra eru í anda hefðbundinna riddarasagna síðari tíma.¹⁵ Efnið endurspeglar áhuga á fjarlægum löndum, þó nokkurn lærdóm, áhuga á vondum tröllum og hjálpsömum fjallabúum auk þess sem á ákveðnum stöðum má sjá tilvísanir til Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða.¹⁶ Fertram er elsti sonur Artús og heldur til í listilega gerðum kastala sem faðir hans hefur reist fyrir hann. Þar dvelur hann með fylgdarsveinum sínum sem allir eru hertogasyrnir og aðrir prýðismenn. Þeirra á meðal er Áki af Alexandríu en hann kemst næst Fertram í öllum riddaralistum. Fertram var snemma settur til náms í öllum riddaralistum og varð einn besti riddari sem í veröldinni fannst.

Fertram vinnur sér inn vináttu tröllskessunnar Eldgríðar í Dofrafjöllum eftir að hafa átt þar viðureign við jötna í helli hennar og glímt við dóttur hennar Issu. Þegar hann hugðist lífláta Issu bað hún sér gríða og lofaði honum góðum gripum sem móðir hennar Eldgríður myndi útvega honum ef hann gæfi henni líf. Fékk Fertram þannig herklæði þau sem Estróval sterki af

12 Sama rit, 235.

13 Teresa Dröfn Freysdóttir Njarðvík, „Enn setti og samdi sá sem vel kunni og vel vildi“: Um glatað „Inntak *Hjálmþérs sögu og Ölvis*“ og uppruna sögunnar í prósagerð“, *Aldingarður ræktaður handa Aðalheiði Guðmundsdóttur sextugri 7. mars 2025* (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnussen, 2025), 68–69.

14 Höfundur þessarar greinar vinnur nú að verkefni um Magnús Jónsson í Vigur og rímna-afleiddar prósagerðir úr hans förum.

15 Í *Kraka sögu og Bjólmars* má finna mjög svipaða frásagnafleitu, sjá Teresa Dröfn Freysdóttir Njarðvík, *Hetjur fyrri alda: Fjórar gleymdar fornsögur* (Reykjavík: Hið almenna bókmenntafélag, 2023), 95–122.

16 Til dæmis í tilsvári Platós við tröllkonuna Eldgríði þegar hann nefnir hana „svarta Fjanda fælu“.

Kappacia hafði átt,¹⁷ sverð sem Atýlla konungur af Líberdoníum¹⁸ hafði átt og svo loks hestinn Bussifal sem áður hafði átt Ermenrekur Morlandskonungur. Fertram þakkaði henni fyrir gripana og hélt svo aftur í kastala sinn. Upp frá þessu er Eldgríður vinveitt Fertram og verður eins konar hjálpsamur fjallabúi sem kemur honum seinna til bjargar í nauðum hans.

Fertram hittir síðar alblóðugan riddara sem biður hann um að aðstoða sig og berjast á móti þremur berserkjabræðrum sem hafa leikið hann grátt. Fertram fylgir honum, fáliðaður og herklæðalaus, til að ráðast gegn berserkjunum en gengur þá í gildru þeirra. Hafði þá riddarinn blóðugi platað hann til að fylgja sér og ná berserkirnir með svikum og prettum að yfirbuga Fertram og taka hann til fanga. Áður hafði einn berserkjanna beðið keisara-dótturinnar Florida af Assíríam sér til eiginkonu en fengið þau svör að hún myndi aðeins játaast honum ef hann gæti fellt Fertram úr söðli sínum því að hún hugði það aldrei myndi eftir ganga. Snúa nú berserkirnir til Assíríam með Fertram í fjötrum því til sönnunar að Fertram hafi úr söðli fallið og krefjast þess að fá hönd Florida keisaradóttur og systur hennar Rosidu sömuleiðis. Þær sjá sér ekki annað fært en að játa þessu en um leið biðja þær um ársfrest til að bjóða til veislunnar tignarmönnum og til að safna veislu-föngum við hæfi. Á meðan vilja þær í laumi freista þess að finna einhver ráð til að losna undan þessum berserkjum og um leið til þess að frelsa Fertram.

Berserkirnir halda heim til Indíalands með Fertram með sér og fá móður sinni, tröllskessunni Hólmgríði, hann til varðveislu. Hún, eins og Eldgríður, gat brugðið sér í drekaham og var hið mesta galdrakvendi. Áki, félagi Fertrams, fer og safnar miklu liði ásamt frænda sínum Maximanus sterka frá Rússíalandi. Við lið þeirra bætist svo Plató, yngri bróðir Fertrams, ásamt miklum her. Með dyggri aðstoð skessunnar Eldgríðar, dverga og góðra gripa nær Plató að sigrast á berserkjunum, frelsa bróður sinn Fertram og þeir kvænast svo Florida og Rosidu og farsæll endir sögu þeirra er í höfn.

Um *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató á 17. öld*

Tvö nafngreind skáld eru sögð hafa ort *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató á 17. öld*, annars vegar Jón Eggertsson (1643–1689) og hins vegar Jón Guðmundsson lærði (1574–1658). Á öldunum sem liðið hafa frá því að þessir nafnar

17 Estróval mikil af Blálandi kemur fyrir í *Sörla sögu sterka*.

18 Staðarheitið Líberdoníum kemur einnig við sögu í *Sálus sögu* og *Nikanors*.

voru uppi hefur margt skolest til. Hvort *Fertrams rímur og Plató* í Lbs 695 4to séu ortar af Jóni Eggertssyni eða nafna hans Jóni Guðmundssyni lærða, hvort sá fyrirnefndi orti þær með réttu og að þeim síðarnefnda hafi svo verið eignaðar rímurnar, eða öfugt? Enda aðeins einn rímnaflokkur varðveittur frá 17. öld um Fertram og Plató. Þetta rekur Einar Gunnar Pétursson stuttlega í verkinu Eddurit Jóns lærða:

Hér verður ekki reynt að elta ólar við allt það sem hefur verið eignað Jóni lærða, ef það virðist ekki fá stuðning af öruggum heimildum. Hálfðan Einarsson eignaði honum *rímur af Fertram og Plató* og *Kötludraum* [...] *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* eru til sem mögulegt er að gætu verið eftir Jón lærða, en eru fremur taldar vera eftir Jón Eggertsson [...] Ef til vill gæti samanburður rímnanna við rit, sem með vissu eru eftir þessa menn, leitt til traustari niðurstöðu um höfund en hægt er að segja til um á þessu stigi málsins.¹⁹

Hér með verður reynt á einmitt þetta í eftirfarandi rannsókn; hvort samanburður rímnanna við rit sem þeim eru eignuð með vissu geti leitt til niðurstöðu um höfund *Fertrams rímna og Plató* á 17. öld.

Fyrst ber að nefna að elstu heimildir virðast gefa til kynna að þeir hafi hvor um sig ort rímur af sama efni og hafi því verið tveir rímnaflokkar af Fertram og Plató en ekki einn sem óvíst er hvor þeirra nafna orti. Á þetta bendir Finnur Sigmundsson líka í *Rímnatali* sínu. Hann eignar Jóni Eggertssyni *Rímur af Fertram og Plató*²⁰ en segir auk þess að Jóni lærða hafi sömuleiðis verið eignaðar *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* og af vígum Spánverja en að „hvorugar séu kunnar nú.“²¹ Hann eignar Jóni Eggertssyni *Fertrams rímur og Plató* sem varðveittar eru nú í Lbs 695 4to. Rímurnar þar eru tíu talsins og segir Finnur í færslunni við *Fertrams rímur og Plató*: „Talið er að Jón Guðmundsson lærði hafi ort rímur af Fertram og Plató. Þessar gætu e.t.v. verið eftir hann en eru þó fremur eignaðar Jóni Eggertssyni, sem víst er að kveðið hefir rímur af sögunni.“²²

19 Einar Gunnar Pétursson, *Eddurit Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða: Samantekt um skilning á Eddu og Að fornu í þeirri gömlu norrænu kölluðust rúnir bæði ristingar og skrifelsi*, Þættir úr fræðasögu 17. aldar, I. bindi, Rit 46 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1998), 100.

20 *Rímnatal*, II. bindi, 77.

21 Sama rit, 81.

22 *Rímnatal*, I. bindi, 130.

Bæði Jón Eggertsson og Jón Guðmundsson lærði fengust við rímnakveðskap og eftir þá liggja varðveittar rímur, þótt þeir hafi einna helst verið þekktir fyrir önnur skrif. Jón Eggertsson virðist einkum hafa ort rímur í æsku sinni, eins og *Sedras rímur* og *Blómsturvalla rímur* vitna um. *Blómsturvalla rímur* eru einungis varðveittar í eiginhandarriti hans en í yfirskrift rímnanna stendur: „Hier birst rýmur af Akasonum Og kallast Blomsturvalla rýmur, Giordar og samhnyttar anno 1659 og ä sama äre Endadar“.²³ *Sedras rímur* orti Jón Eggertsson ásamt vini sínum Eiríki Hallssyni, fyrstu þrjár rímurnar orti Jón en Eiríkur þær tvær sem á eftir koma. *Sedras rímur* virðast vera ortar um 1656 samkvæmt því er Jón Eggertsson nefnir sjálfur í handriti sínu. *Sedras rímur* eru líkast til ortar eftir 1653 því að í heimildum er Eiríkur Hallsson sagður prestur en hann tók fyrst við embætti það ár.²⁴ Seinna meir gerðist Jón ötull handritasafnari fyrir Svía og skrifar upp talsvert af handritum eins og kunnugt er en virðist ekki hafa fengið neitt meir við rímnakveðskap á efri árum.

Jón Guðmundsson lærði aftur á móti virðist ekki hafa ort rímur fyrr en á sínum efri árum. *Ármanns rímur* er hann sagður hafa ort 63 ára gamall, þá í útleð á Austurlandi eftir að hafa hlotið dóm fyrir galdramál og fleira sem líkast til er alkunna nú. Jóni Guðmundssyni lærða er einnig eignuð *Tíma ríma*.²⁵ Í þeim heimildum þar sem hann er einnig sagður hafa ort rímur af Fertram og Plató er ekkert nefnt hvenær Jón gæti hafa ort þær, en ekki er ólíklegt að hann hafi ort þær um svipað leyti og hann orti *Ármanns rímur*. Í *Ármanns rímum* nefnir hann sjálfur í mansöng að hann yrki þær til að róa hugann og hafa eitthvað að gera í útleðinni²⁶ svo að vel má vera að það hafi líka átt við um *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató*. Líklegast er því að báðar *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* frá 17. öld séu ortar á bilinu 1637 til 1659 meðan prósagerðin *Fertrams saga* og *Plató* virðist vera fyrst skráð 1670.

Fyrstur til að eigna þeim nöfnum, Jóni Eggertssyni og Jóni Guðmundssyni lærða, *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* er Hálfðan Einarsson (1732–1785) í bókmenntasögu sinni *Sciagraphia Historiæ Literiæ Islandicæ Autorum et*

23 Regina Jucknies, *Der Horizont eines Schreibers: Jón Eggertsson (1643 – 89) und seine Handschriften, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Germanistik und Skandinavistik*, 59. bindi (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2009), 186, nmgr. 431.

24 Sama rit, 188.

25 Einar Gunnar Pétursson, „Kellingarím eða Tímaríma Jóns lærða“, *Ólafskross reistur Ólafi Halldórssyni sextugum* (Reykjavík, 1980), 16.

26 Viðar Hreinsson, *Jón lærði og náttúrur náttúrunnar* (Reykjavík, Lesstofan, 2016), 478.

Scriptorum tum Editorum tum Ineditorum Indicem Exhibens Cujus Delineandæ Periculum sem kom út á prenti árið 1777.²⁷ Í hluta bókmenntasögunnar um skáld eftir siðbreytinguna, Pöetas qui post tempora Reformationis varia carmina argumenti inprimis Historici et profani concinnarunt, skrifar hann við færslu sína um Jón Guðmundsson lærða að hann hafi ort *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* og *Ármanns rímur* og *Þorsteins gála*: „Historiam prætera Fertrami et Platonis, Armanna et Thosteini Gaala metro reddidit.“²⁸ Á sömu opnu, á næstu síðu er svo færsla við Jón Eggertsson þar sem Hálfðan telur hann hafa ort *Bragða-Mágus rímur*, *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* og *Blómsturvallarímur*: „Historiam Magi Callidi, Fertrami et Blomsturvallensium in ligatem orationem numerose misit [...]“.²⁹

Áður hafði þó Páll Vídalín (1667–1727), sem var samtíðarmaður Jóns Eggertssonar og samstarfsmaður Árna Magnússonar, eignað Jóni Eggertssyni *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* en Páll segir ekkert um rímur Jóns lærða. Páll nefnir *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* eftir Jón Eggertsson í skálða- og rithöfundatali sínu, *Recensus poetarum et scriptorum Islandorum hujus et superioris seculi*. Páll vann að skálða- og rithöfundatalinu á síðustu árum ævi sinnar og var því ekki með öllu lokið þegar hann lést frá verkinu árið 1727. Þar segir hann um kveðskap Jóns Eggertssonar: „Medann hann lifde var hann sæmelegt skald, giórde Rymur af Fertram og Plato med snotru ordfære enn stundum nyum talshattum og hálkenningum, annars nogu fagurt qvedid og skaldlega.“³⁰ Af þessu má ráða að Páll Vídalín hafi lesið *Fertrams rímur* Jóns Eggertssonar og þekkt þær. Þá mætti einnig hafa í huga að þetta skrifar Páll innan við hálfri öld eftir að Jón Eggertsson lést svo að þetta verður að teljast nokkuð áreiðanlegt. Páll nefnir þó hvergi rímur eftir Jón Guðmundsson lærða, hvorki *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* né *Ármanns rímur*, en getur aðeins um galdramál hans og kvæðið *Fjandafælu*. Annan kveðskap Jóns lærða nefnir hann ekki einu orði en af því sem hann þó skrifar um Jón lærða má ráða að Páll hafi ekki metið Jón lærða mikils:

27 Sérlegar þakkir fær Hjalti Snær Ægisson fyrir aðstoð með latínu í færslum *Sciagraphia* um þá nafna.

28 Hálfðan Einarsson, *Sciagraphia Historiæ Literiæ Islandicæ Autorum et Scriptorum tum Editorum tum Ineditorum Indicem Exhibens Cujus Delineandæ Periculum* (Kaupmannahöfn: Sander og Schröder, 1777), 82.

29 Sama rit, 83.

30 Páll Vídalín, *Recensus poetarum et scriptorum Islandorum hujus et superioris seculi*, útg. Jón Samsonarson (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1985), 77.

Jon Gudmundsson Mälare, edur Lærde nafnkunnigur galdramadur, hvorn Are Magnusson J Ógre liet fleingia firer Jdkun þeirrar listar, þa hann hafde skommu ädur äsamt Þorleifi Þordarsyne utrekid Snæfialladrauginn sem var hinn skadvænaste övættur, enn eckj var það orsak til hegning<ar>innar, heldur Jmisleg og bligdunarlaus hiätuar Jdkun, af þessare ovyrding for hann i Snæfellssýslu, hvar hann utsade an bligdunar sinne skadlegu hiatru og upreiste sosem fiolkingisskola, firer hvort skammarverk hann var bannfærdur af tilstille S^r Gudmundar Einarssonar profasts ä Stadastad, þa giorde hann nochra Jferböt, nochru sydar var hann þö fluttur utj Kaupinnhafn af Fridrich Frÿs 1618. feck þar forsvarsmenn og komst klaklaust hingad aftur, deide sydast i Austfiórdum afgangall, latande eftir sig 2 syne sem badir urdu prestar, skald var hann i medallage, er siest af hannz Fiandafælu, sem er ogudleg: og opinberar audveldlega særingamannsens hiätuarfulla hugskot [...]³¹

Páll virðist ekkert of hrifinn af Jóni Guðmundssyni lærða almennt og nefnir að hann hafi verið skáld í meðallagi. Páll hefur því vitað að Jón lærði orti eitthvað en sér ekki ástæðu til að nefna nein kvæði hans á nafn utan *Fjandafælu* – en honum er sem sagt kunnugt um að meira hafi hann þó ort.

Um *Fertrams rímur og Plató* eftir Jón Eggertsson skrifar Hannes Þorsteinsson (1860–1935) sömuleiðis í verki sínu *Æfir lærðra manna*, en þar segir hann Fertrams rímur hans verða „10 að tölu ordugar“³² og vísar þar í skrána Steph 55, en þar í má finna „Registur yfir Rímur“, á bls. 128–145, samantekið af Magnúsi Stephensen (1762–1833) seint á 18. öld.³³

Fræðimenn seinni tíma hafa sumir efast um að *Fertrams rímur og Plató* megi með sannni eigna Jóni Eggertssyni, þannig telur Bjarni Einarsson að óvíst sé hvort Jón Eggertsson hafi ort þær. Regina Jucknies, sem hefur rannsakað feril Jóns Eggertssonar og þá einna helst handrit hans, virðist ekki sannfærð um að Jón Eggertsson hafi ort rímurnar: „Die Verfasserschaft weiterer Rímur wurde Jón Eggertsson zugeschrieben: die

31 Sama rit, 84–85.

32 Hannes Þorsteinsson, *Æfir lærðra manna*, 31. bindi, bls. 31. Óprentað: Skjalaskrá Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands: <https://skjalaskrar.skjalasafn.is/r/OTg5NDI3>, sótt af vef 24.3.2025.

33 Kristian Kålund, *Katalog over de Oldnorsk-Islandske håndskrifter i det store Kongelige bibliotek og i Universitetsbiblioteket (udenfor den Arnsmagnæanske samling) samt den Arnsmagnæanske samlings tilvækst 1894–99*, II. bindi (Kaupmannahöfn: Gyldendalske boghandel, 1900), 584.

Bragða-Mágus rímur sowie die Fertrams rímur og Plató. Diese stammen jedoch wohl nicht aus Jóns Feder.³⁴ Frekari rökstuðning er þó ekki að finna, Jucknies vísar aðeins í áður nefnd skrif Bjarna og Bjarni nefnir aðeins að það sé efamál: „Óvíst er um sumt af því sem honum er eignað, t.d. rímur af Bragða-Mágusi og Fertrams rímur sem taldar eru í Sciagraphiu Hálfðans Einarssonar, en efalaust er um Blómsturvalla rímur eða af Ákasonum sem Hálfðan nefnir.“³⁵

En það virðist þó vera nokkuð víst að Jón Eggertsson hafi ort *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* og varla ástæða til að draga það í efa, með tilliti til alls sem hér var talið upp og þá sér í lagi skrifa Páls Vídalín um *Fertrams rímur og Plató* eftir Jón Eggertsson. Páll hefur greinilega lesið þær sjálfur fyrst hann lýsir orðfæri þeirra eins og hann gerir. Að sömu niðurstöðu kemst Finnur Sigmundsson í *Rímnatali* sínu þótt hann vísi þar ekki til Páls Vídalín, Magnúsar Stephensen eða Hannesar Þorsteinssonar þegar hann eignar Jóni Eggertssyni rímnaflokkinn.

En hvað sem þessu öllu líður þá er rímnabrotið sem fannst í sálma-bókinni snjáðu ekki skylt rímunum í Lbs 695 4to þar sem *Fertrams rímur og Plató* Jóns Eggertssonar eru varðveittar. Rímnabrotið hefur engar vísur sameiginlegar með rímunum í Lbs 695 4to. Orðfæri þeirra er allt annað – vísur rímnanna í Lbs 695 4to eru mun dýrari og orðfærið nokkur tyrfið meðan vísurnar á EG fragm. 1 eru mjög ljósar og auðskildar. Þar dugir að benda á síðustu þrjár vísur V. rímu í Lbs 695 4to og svo upphafsvísu VI. rímu til að útiloka að brotið gæti verið af sama rímnaflokki:

Plato Reid það gedíaft greitt
greppu það hann halda
Þetta tied af vilia er veitt
vinskap með og lýka breitt

Skilia fýðann bædi brätt
til borgar Plato Rýður
nogu strýðann hlioda hätt
eg hendi ö frýðann mæls við gätt

34 Jucknies, *Der Horizont eines schreibers*, 188.

35 Bjarni Einarsson, *Munnnælasögur 17. Aldar*, Íslensk rit síðari alda 6 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fræðafélag, 1955), xxxix–xl.

Nordri stridur skorde skeid
 Skierdur orða birde
 Herdist burdur härs um leid
 hirdift birdur firdur neid

Mimirs vinar vara straum
 eg verd að hræra
 miðdnum härs fo meige tæra³⁶

Ekkert í vísunum úr Lbs 695 4to er sameiginlegt því sem á EG fragm. 1 er að finna. Vísurnar eru allt öðruvísi, bragarhátturinn er annar, stílbragðið er annað og staðsetning innan atburðarásar er frábrugðin. Niðurstaðan hlýtur því að vera sú að á þessu rímnabroti sé að finna texta úr öðrum *Fertrams rímunum* og *Plató* sem ortar hafa verið fyrir 18. öld. Aðeins eitt nafngreint skáld annað er sagt hafa ort *Rímur af Fertram og Plató*, Jón Guðmundsson lærði, en þær rímur eru ekki varðveittar. Um fleiri rímur af þessu sagnafni er ekkert vitað og ef útiloka má með nokkurri vissu rímur þeirra Sigurðar Breiðfjörðs og Jóns Eggertssonar – liggur þá ekki beinast við að telja þetta brot af annars óvarðveittum *Fertrams rímunum* og *Plató* eftir Jón lærða?

Einkenni rímnabrotsins

Rímnabrotið samanstendur af 16 vísunum aftan af V. rímu og svo einni upphafsvísu mansöngs fyrir VI. rímu. Neðarlega á verso-hlið blaðsins er titillinn „VI. Rýma“ ásamt flúri og svo skreyttur upphafsstafur í fyrsta orði fyrstu braglínú „Odins.“ Niðurlag síðustu vísu V. rímu getur sömuleiðis um að þar ljúki V. rímu: „fer ä Enda fýmmta Ryma.“ Skáldamálið er ljóst og stillinn einfaldur og léttur. Bragarháttur V. rímu er braghenda skárímuð þar sem hver vísa er þrjár braglínur, og seinni braglínurnar tvær ríma saman meðan fyrsta braglínan myndar eins konar sérhljóðahálfrím við þær.

Stafsetning er ekki með öllu regluleg og stundum óljóst hvort eða hvenær skrifari notar *ij*, *j* eða *ī* – fyrir /i/, *ä* fyrir a kemur fyrir stöku sinnum þótt orðið eigi að hafa óbreytt /a/, misjafnt er hvort /ö/ sé táknað með *ö*, *ó* eða *ø* – bara svo fáein dæmi séu nefnd. Hluti blaðsins, sér í lagi

36 *Fertrams rímur og Plató*, Lbs 695 4to, bl. 102v.

við neðri jaðar, er orðinn máður svo að illgreinanlegt er hvað þar stendur. Stöku blettir eru líka máðir á blaðinu innan textans. Blaðið er brotið og við brotlínuna eru sömuleiðis ógreinanlegir stafir en oftast má þá fylla inn í afmáða eða ógreinilega stafi út frá samhengi.

Þar sem brotið samanstendur af einungis 17 vísum alls, eða 51 braglínu og 286 orðum, er það of lítið til að hægt væri að gera á þeim marktæka stílmælingu, þótt það mætti vissulega reyna til gamans. Þá er einnig lítið um sérstök einkenni á svo stuttu broti sem auðvelda myndi samanburð við annað efni. Um brotið er því fátt annað að segja en að það virðist vera af *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató* frá 17. öld, ódýrt kveðið og sparsamt á tyrfið skáldamál.

Samanburður við *Ármanns rímur*

Að Jón Guðmundsson lærði hafi ort *Ármanns rímur* ríkir almenn sátt meðal fræðimanna. Þess er getið í *Sciagraphiu* Hálfðans Einarssonar,³⁷ í Bókmenntasögu Jóns Grunnvíkings³⁸ og *Rímnatali* Finns Sigmundssonar.³⁹ Jón Helgason bendir á það í útgáfu sinni á *Ármanns rímum* árið 1948 að í mansöng rímnanna megi einnig sjá merki þess að Jón lærði hafi vissulega ort þær⁴⁰ svo að enginn vafi leikur á því *Ármanns rímur* séu réttilega eignaðar Jóni lærða.

Ármanns rímur eru átta að tölu og varðveittar í alls fjórum handritum. Rímurnar eru ortar að talið er árið 1637 og er það fengið frá skáldinu sjálfu úr mansöngvum rímnanna eins og Jón Helgason rekur ítarlega: „[...] höfundur kveðst þar hafa þrjá um sextugt, og þær hljóta þá að vera kveðnar

37 Hálfðan Einarsson, *Sciagraphia*, 82.

38 Jón Ólafsson, *Safn til íslenskrar bókmenntasögu*, útg. Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir og Þórunn Sigurðardóttir, Rit 99 (Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2018), 117–118.

39 *Rímnatal*, I. bindi, 130; II. bindi, 77.

40 Jón Helgason, *Ármanns rímur eftir Jón Guðmundsson lærða*, Íslensk rit síðari alda 1 (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska fræðafélag, 1948), bls. vi. Um *Ármanns rímur* og prósatexta sem gerðir voru eftir rímunum hefur Madita Knöpfle nýlega skrifað grein þar sem þetta er einnig rakið. Sjá Knöpfle, „Conceptions of Authorship: The Case of *Ármanns rímur* and their Reworkings in Early Modern Iceland“, *In Search of the Culprit: Aspects of Medieval Authorship*, ritstj. Lukas Rösli og Stefanie Gropper, Andere Ästhetik – Studien 1 (Berlin, DeGruyter, 2021), 239–264. Ítarlegri umfjöllum um mansöngva *Ármanns rímna* er að finna hjá Viðari Hreinssyni, *Jón lærði og náttúrur náttúrunnar*, 478–488.

1637. Í annan stað kveður hann hafa gengið yfir 22 töstug (þ.e. hörð eða grimm) ár (I 3); það kemur heim við að eftir víg Spánverja 1615 hófust hrakningar Jóns.⁴¹

Efni þeirra virðist frumsamið af Jóni lærða sjálfum þótt vangaveltur séu um hvort þær kunni að vera byggðar á efni úr munnlegri geymd.⁴² Orðfæri rímnanna er ljóst og einfalt, skáldamál notað sparlega og eru rímurnar yfirleitt mjög auðskildar. Um þetta segir Jón Helgason:

Það er einkennilegt um Ármanns rímur að dýrar vísur eru þar nálega engar (sjá þó V 1–3, svo og V 66 ef „víma“ er rétt). Höfundur bendir hvað eftir annað á þetta (II 3, III 1, V 3, 4, 7, VII 2, 65) og skýrir það eða afsakar með því, að sér sé fyrir mestu að frásögnin sé vel skiljanleg; hann gerir beinlínis ráð fyrir að edduborið orðaval, sem dýrleikanum hljóti að vera samfara, geri efnið torskilið.⁴³

Í niðurlagsvísu hveðrar rímu *Ármanns rímna* er því lýst að rímunni sé að ljúka og í rímum II, IV og VII er tala rímunnar aukinheldur nefnd. Þetta sama stílbragð er á rímnabrotinu, auk þess sem orðfæri niðurlagsvísna í *Ármanns rímum* er fremur líkt orðfærinu í niðurlagsvísu brotsins:

Frosta lögurinn fraus í skál
um fimbulvetrar tíma,
hefi því sízt á hróðri brjál,
hér með endast ríma.⁴⁴

Eldast tekur minn Fjölnis fengur,
forn og lúinn er kvæða strengur.
Önnur ríma Ármanns hér
endast nú, það heyri þér.⁴⁵

41 Jón Helgason, *Ármanns rímur*, xix og síðar segir hann enn fremur að rímurnar séu ortar seinni hluta árs 1637, sjá xxi.

42 Jón Helgason, *Ármanns rímur*, xxii.

43 Sama rit, xxi–xxii.

44 Sama rit, vísa I 64, 11.

45 Sama rit, vísa II 67, 22.

Mjög hafa förlað mæðar lát
um mæðu tíma,
verð eg að festa ferju bát,
þar falli ríma.⁴⁶

Á morgun skaltu mæta þessum peiga.«
Rödd er bæði rám og treg,
ríman fjórða fór sinn veg.⁴⁷

Fram á grímu frílega vel
fljóðið situr að drekka,
óðar víma úti tel,
endann rímu so eg fel.⁴⁸

Mín er förluð mæðar mennt,
mjög so líka hljóða grein,
strengurinn óðar stökk í tvennt,
þar strauk í burtu ríman ein.⁴⁹

Bragarhátt vandan betri skáldin binda og líma,
sjöunda endast Ármanns ríma,
við áttundu eg verð að glíma.⁵⁰

Allur förlast orða máttur
óðar vers að færa,
hér skal úti Ármanns þáttur,
enginn vill hann læra.⁵¹

Vitaskuld er þetta nokkuð þekkt stílbragð innan rímnahefðarinnar almennt. En hér er það athugunarvert að Jón lærði notar þetta stílbragð í hverri rímu *Ármanns rímna* og það sama er að finna á *Fertrams rímum* og

46 Sama rit, vísa III 83, 37.

47 *Ármanns rímur*, vísa IV 69, 46.

48 Sama rit, vísa V 66, 58.

49 Sama rit, vísa VI 62, 69.

50 Sama rit, vísa VII 65, 78.

51 Sama rit, vísa VIII 60, 89.

Plató í EG fragm. 1. Þá eru sömuleiðis líkindi með orðfæri, ljósu skáldamáli og stíl þeirra á milli, sem og efni þeirra upp að vissu marki.

Stílmæling

Brot *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í EG fragm. 1 er tiltölulega smátt; þessar 17 vísur sem á brotinu eru mynda alls 286 orð eða 1661 stafgildi. Þó má engu að síður láta reyna á stílmælingu til að athuga hvort hún geti gefið vísbendingu um skyldleika *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* á EG fragm. 1 og Lbs 695 4to við aðrar þekktar rímur frá Jóni Eggertssyni og Jóni Guðmundssyni lærða.

Í stílmælingunni hér er EG fragm. 1 brotið í heild sinni nýtt og svo sambærilegt brot af V. rímu ásamt upphafsvísu VI. rímu eftir *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató* í handritinu Lbs 695 4to. Til samanburðar eru sambærileg brot af V. rímu ásamt upphafsvísu VI. rímu *Ármanns rímna* Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða teknar með í mælinguna og sömuleiðis sambærilegt brot V. rímu og upphafsvísa VI. rímu eftir *Blómsturvalla rímum* Jóns Eggertssonar. Stílmælingin er gerð með forritinu Lexos sem er notendavænt stílmælingarforrit aðgengilegt á netinu.

Stílmælingu með Lexos mætti nefna orðamengjafræðilega stílrannsókn (en. *lexomic analysis*).⁵² Aðferðin byggist á hefðbundnum tölvustuddum stílfraðirannsóknnum en felur um leið í sér nýja nálgun á stílfraðirannsóknir og textafræði. Textafjarlægð er mæld með samanburði allra textaeinkenna, þ.e. orðnotkunar, dreifingar og annarra einkenna.⁵³ Aðferðin var þróuð með engilsaxneska texta í huga en nýtist þó einkar vel á norræna og íslenska texta um leið og þá sérstaklega til að bera saman texta eða textaeiningar.⁵⁴ Orðmengjafræðileg stílrannsókn hefur verið notuð til að meta skyldleika texta en sömuleiðis til að meta textaeiningar eða textabúta (en. *text segments/word clusters*) með tilliti til formúlunotkunar innan texta eða ólíkra heimilda

52 „Lexomics“, Kleinman, S., LeBlanc, M. D., Drout, M., & Zhang, C., Lexos v3.1.1, (2017), <https://wheatoncollege.edu/academics/special-projects-initiatives/lexomics/>, sótt af vef 27.3.2025.

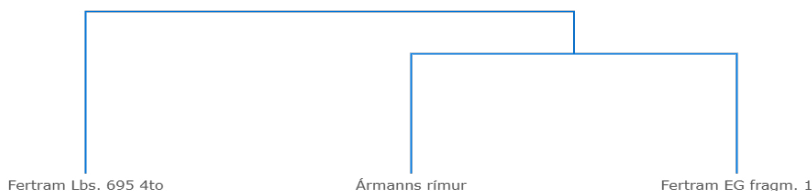
53 Kosinus-fjarlægð er mæld milli algengustu orða, dreifingu þeirra, stöðu og tíðni innan textaeininganna.

54 Rosetta M. Berger og Michael M. C. Drout, „The Relationship between *Víga-Glúms saga* and *Reykðela saga*: Evidence from New Lexomic Methods“, *Viking and medieval Scandinavia* 11 (2015): 1–32.

að baki sama textans í mismunandi textaeiningum.⁵⁵ Aðferðina má vel nota á smærri textaeiningar⁵⁶ eins og við á um brot *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í EG fragm. 1. Þá hefur reynst farsælast að allir textabútar sem til rannsóknar eru séu af svipaðri stærð. Því var ákveðið að taka einungis búta úr *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató* eftir Lbs 695 4to, *Ármanns rímum* og *Blómsturvalla rímum* sem eru af svipaðri stærð og rímnabrotið.

Til að bera saman texta eru þeir keyrðir í gegnum forrit sem m.a. telur fjölda orða og hve oft þau koma fyrir og raðar saman orðamengjum í kladda eftir textafjarlægð, frá 0–1. Niðurstöðurnar birtast á sjónrænan hátt í svokölluðu trjámengi (en. *dendrogram*) – sem er nánast eins og órói.⁵⁷ Textar eða textaeiningar kallast lauf (en. *leaves*). Ef líkindi eru á milli texta eða textaeininga eru lafin tengd saman í kladda (en. *clade*). Fjarlægð milli laufanna stjórnar hæð kladdanna. Lægstu kladdarnir innihalda því lauf með minnstu fjarlægðina milli sín, þ.e. mestu textalíkindin. Séu lafin alveg eins fellur kladdinn saman niður á núlllínu þar sem fjarlægð er þá 0. Einstað lauf nefnast einlaufungar (en. *simplicifolious*). Hæstu kladdarnir innihalda þá lauf með mestu textafjarlægðina á milli sín, þ.e. minnstu textalíkindin. Sé ekkert sameiginlegt með laufunum myndast enginn kladdi og úr verður eyða í trjámenginu.

Fyrst var textafjarlægð milli *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í EG fragm. 1 og Lbs 695 4to mæld með samanburði við *Ármanns rímur*. Sú mæling skilaði eftirfarandi niðurstöðu:



55 Michael M. C. Drout et al., „Of dendrogrammar: Lexomic Methods for Analyzing Relationships between Old English Poems“, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110.3 (2011): 301–336.

56 Dæmi eru um að nokkrar ljóðlínur hafi verið notaðar í orðmengjafræðilegri stílrannsókn, sjá t.d. Michael M. C. Drout og Leah Smith, „A Pebble Smoothed by Tradition: Lines 607–61 of *Beowulf* as a Formulaic Set-piece“, *Oral Tradition* 31.1 (2018): 191–228.

57 Michael M. C. Drout, einn upphafsmanna orðmengjafræðilegra stílrannsókna, hefur útbúið skjal með leiðbeiningum hvernig lesa skuli trjámengi. Skjalið er birt á heimasíðu verkefnisins Lexomics á vegum Wheaton College, Michael M. C. Drout og Leah Smith, „How to read a dendrogram“, <https://wheatoncollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/How-to-Read-a-Dendrogram-Web-Ready.pdf>, sótt af vef 31.3.2025.

Í þessari mælingu raðast *Ármanns rímur* og *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* eftir EG fragm. 1 saman í einn kladda meðan sambærilegt brot *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í Lbs 695 4to myndar einlaufung. Textafjarlægð milli *Ármanns rímna* og EG fragm. 1 er minni, þ.e. skyldleiki textanna þar á millum er meiri. Það er því ekki aðeins huglægt mat greinarhöfundar að orðfæri rímnabrotsins í EG fragm. 1 sé ólíkt orðfærinu í Lbs 695 4to; munur þar á millum er mælanlegur. Þetta eitt og sér dugir að sjálfsgöðu ekki til þess að tefla Jóni lærða fram sem höfundi *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í EG fragm. 1 en mælingin styður við þá tilgátu og sýnir þar að auki á sjónrænan hátt að líkindi brotsins við *Ármanns rímur* eru meiri en við aðrar varðveittar *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató*.

Ef sambærilegu broti af *Blómsturvalla rímum* eftir Jón Eggertsson sem varðveittar eru í eiginhandarriti hans, Holm papp. 28 4to,⁵⁸ er bætt við mælinguna fæst enn skýrari mynd af skyldleika þessara texta:



Þegar *Blómsturvalla rímum* er bætt inn í raðast þær saman í kladda með *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató* í Lbs 695 4to sem áður einangruðust sem einlaufungur. *Blómsturvalla rímur* Jóns Eggertssonar sýna því skyldleika við þær *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* sem honum hafa verið eignaðar. Sú niðurstaða, ofan á það sem hér var áður rakið, bendir skýrt til þess að Jóni Eggertssyni séu réttilega eignaðar þær *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató*. Óþarfi er að draga það í efa. Stílmælingin sýnir líka fram á það að *Ármanns rímur* Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða sýna skyldleika við brot *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* í EG fragm. 1.

Niðurstaða

Það er úr litlu að möða þegar kemur að því að ákvarða efni rímnabrotsins EG fragm. 1 nema þá helst að þar er greinilega áður óþekktur rímnaflokkur af Fertram og Plató. Tveir rímnaflokkar af því efni eru varðveittir í dag í

58 Jón Eggertsson, *Blómsturvallarímur*, útg. Grímur M. Helgason og Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson, Rit Rímnafélagsins 11 (Reykjavík: Rímnafélagið, 1976).

heild sinni, annars vegar rímur Sigurðar Breiðfjörðs og hins vegar rímur Jóns Eggertssonar. Það er ljóst að þær *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* sem eru varðveittar í Lbs 695 4to eru vissulega eftir Jón Eggertsson, líkt og fræðimenn hafa raunar áður bent á, og ástæðulaust að draga það nokkuð í efa eins og hefur verið gert í seinni tíð. En rímur þeirra Sigurðar Breiðfjörðs og Jóns Eggertssonar af *Fertram* og *Plató* er ekki hægt að tengja við brotið í EG fragm. 1. Í umfjöllun um íslenska bókmenntasögu frá 18. öld og fram á 20. öld er aðeins eitt annað skáld til viðbótar sagt hafa ort *Rímur af Fertram og Plató* – Jón Guðmundsson lærði. Þær rímur hafa þó ekki varðveist.

Það er langt í frá óhugsandi að brot *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* sem finnst á EG fragm. 1 sé einmitt brot af þessum rímum Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða. Stíll, orðfæri og auðlesið skáldamál er ekki ósvipað rímum hans sem varðveittar eru eins og *Ármanns rímur* sýna glögg. Stílmæling styður þá tilgátu aukinheldur. Ef til vill þykir sumum hæpið að fullyrða með nokkurri vissu að þessar *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* séu með sanni eftir Jón Guðmundsson lærða og það má vel vera að svo sé. Engu að síður er ekkert annað skáld orðað við *Fertrams rímur* og *Plató* sem gæti komið til greina. Niðurstaðan hlýtur því að vera sú að það séu allar líkur á því að hér sé komið í leitirnar brot af glötuðum *Fertrams rímum* og *Plató* eftir Jón Guðmundsson lærða – þótt það fáiist seint eða aldrei staðfest.

Útgáfa *Fertrams rímna* og *Plató* eftir brotinu EG fragm. 1

... prijfar lidinu.

Sendi grammur| feggi 12 ad sijldar velldi

brædrum| heimm þar bjöd(a) skijldi

beint ef fertram| þegnum fijldi|

Bud lungs nädi bródur böd femm hei|rdu⁵⁹

frijdri þackar frænings jördu|

fljött ad høllu vikia gijördu|

Lijet þa sijdan leijda i høll og lijð| þeim filgdi

fjirpu Ørfumm fæti valde|

fiöle prijddur öttars gialldi|

Hijlmirs meinge hræðflä greip i| høllu jnne
brædur af afind beinnt med| fanni
brags ölikir hverium Manni|

Vöru bláir beinnt femm h[el] þeir| brædur leidir
här Eckert ad hofud| prijdir
holldum þöktu varla blijder|

Beinnt ur höfn⁶⁰ baru fkijegg fo| bringu nadi
ad þeim þokti ecki prijdi|
Ødlings mætum borgar ljdi|

hvorijum jötun hrædi l[e]gre| höldar frijdu
firir göma neglur| nadu
næri vöda allir tiädu|

firdä ä mijlli fertram fat med fi|otra gilla
hörfdi Øll ä skifir ski|alda
skijöldunngs fveit og trod[u] faldä|

þad fkal greina þ[ooo]lft| þö þörna lundumm
tij[oooo] Tröll|a|| höndumm
Tiggia sonn og þungumm bönd|um

Ecki mælti ødlings nidur örd fra| munni
Eýuind biriar ort med fanni
jll|ur hial i ftijllirs Ranni|

Kaudinn fagdi kominn er hijer nu ka|ppinn mefti
Eijnatt sijnu afle treifti|
ofann Reid eg hann med hreifte|

þvi umm kiöfid þann nu köft ad þr|ællinn tiadi
ydar dætur ei þad þbidi|
ofs ad gipta meður prijdi|

Ellä meigid j[arn]f i fundi ockur m|ætä
munn ydur þad midur veita|
mælti grimir dräkons Reita|

Allýr köngar jtra blau övina| pridir
 vijft miög eru vid ofs hræ|ddir
 vel þö fýnu hreifti giæddir|

Mýnu giefýd mali fvar ad m|ælti þrjotur
 fig vill hvýla sudra batur
 futtungs hvarf mier hor|na gratur

Mælfkann dofnar m|in[n]id þritur mals um giema
 fer ä Enda fýmmta Ryma
 foldinn Eignift hafnar brý|ma|

VI Rijma|

Odinns varmur horn|a [h]armur hvarf fra| ftarfe
 gildur þar fe|m greýða fkyllidi|
 grimum||

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ÁGRIP

Tvennar rímur af Fertram og Plató frá 17. öld: Rímur Jóns Eggertssonar og brot af glataðri rímu Jóns Guðmundssonar lærða?

Efnisorð: rímur, bókmenntir 17. aldar, handritabrot, stilmælingar

Á vordögum árið 2024 leitaði Eypór Guðmundsson bókasafnari til mín með handritsbrot sem hann hafði fundið innan í bókbandi sálmaabókar sem prentuð var á Hólum. Hann vildi vita hvort ég gæti aðstoðað hann við að bera kennsl á texta brotsins, sem og áætla aldur þess. Brotið reyndist vera úr handriti frá 18. öld og texti þess bundið mál sem kom svo í ljós að mundi vera *Fertrams rímur og Plató*. Hins vegar var málum blandið að ákvarða hvaða *Fertrams rímur og Plató* væru á brotinu þar sem fleiri en einn rímnaflokkur hefur verið ortur um söguefnið.

Einn rímnaflokk, þ.e. *Fertrams rímur og Plató* ortan af Sigurði Breiðfjörð um árið 1830 var hægt að útiloka vegna aldurs handritsbrotsins. Eftir stóð þá sá möguleiki að brotið bæri *Fertrams rímur og Plató* sem ortar voru á 17. öld. En tvö rímna-skáld hafa verið orðuð við þær rímur í sumum heimildum meðan aðrar heimildir gera ráð fyrir að skáldin tvö hafi ort hvort sinn rímnaflokkinn af sama sagnaefni. Skáldin eru Jón Eggertsson og Jón Guðmundsson lærði. Samanburður brotsins við varðveitta gerð *Fertrams rímna og Plató* í handritinu Lbs 695 4to, sem eignaðar hafa verið Jóni Eggertssyni, sýnir þó glögg að handritsbrotið geymir ekki brot af þeim rímnaflokki. Það bendir sterklega til þess að handritsbrotið gæti verið brot af *Fertrams rímunum og Plató* eftir Jón Guðmundsson lærða og væri þá eina brot þeirra sem varðveist hefur. Orðmengjafræðileg stílfræðirannsókn virðist benda til þess að þetta nýfundna rímnaabrot sé vissulega skylt öðrum rímnaflokki, *Ármanns rímunum*, sem vitað er að Jón lærði orti.

SUMMARY

Two rímur cycles of Fertram and Plato from the 17th century: rímur by Jón Eggertsson and a fragment of a lost rímur cycle by Jón Guðmundsson the learned?

Keywords: rímur, 17th century literature, fragment, stylometry

During the spring of last year, I was approached by a private owner, Eyþór Guðmundsson, who had discovered a manuscript fragment inside a book of psalms printed at Hólar. He wanted to see if I could identify the text on the fragment and the age of the fragment as well. The fragment proved to be from a manuscript dating to the 18th century and contained a rímur text of unknown source, which turned out to be a version of *Fertrams rímur og Plató*. Discerning which *Fertrams rímur og Plató* exactly proved to be more complex, as there are more than one such rímur preserved.

One *Fertrams rímur og Plató*, composed around 1830 by Sigurður Breiðfjörð could be excluded based on the age of the manuscript fragment itself. Leaving the possibility of the fragment being related to another *Fertrams rímur og Plató* composed in the 17th century. However, two named poets have been said to be the composer of those *Fertrams rímur and Plató*, while other sources seem to indicate that both poets composed rímur on the same material each. These named poets are Jón Eggertsson and Jón Guðmundsson lærði. A comparison with the preserved *Fertrams rímur og Plató* in the manuscript Lbs 695 4to, said to be the work of Jón Eggertsson, showed clearly that the manuscript fragment does not contain a portion of those same rímur. This suggested strongly the possibility of the said fragment being the sole surviving bits of *Fertrams rímur og Plató* composed by Jón Guðmundsson lærði. Stylometric analysis, using the lexomic method, seems to suggest that the newly discovered manuscript fragment is indeed related to another set of rímur composed by Jón lærði, *Ármanns rímur*.

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HANDAN ÞOKUNNAR

Um efnisþætti og innra samhengi Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar

Annað af tveimur meginverkum Eiríks Laxdals (1743–1816) er Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar sem hann skrifaði á ofanverðri 18. öld.¹ Eiríkur skiptir sögu sinni niður í fjórar einingar sem hann kallar ýmist vökulestra eða kvöldvökulestra, auk þess sem hann skiptir efninu niður í þætti.² Sögulega séð má setja verk hans í samhengi við upplýsinguna og þær áherslubreytingar sem urðu á miðlun þekkingar á síðari hluta 17. aldar og fram um 1800. Það væri því ekki úr vegi að tengja hana, menningarsögulega séð, við hið fræga sagnasafn Hannesar Finnssonar biskups (1739–1796), *Qvöld-vøkurnar 1794*, enda ljóst að báðum þessum verkum var ætlað að stytta fólki stundirnar á kvöldvökunni og leysa af hólmi eldra lesefni. Hugmyndafræðilega séð tengjast bæði verkin í gegnum umræður sem áttu sér stað meðal upplýsingarmanna í Kaupmannahöfn þar sem þeir Hannes og Eiríkur stunduðu nám.³

Í hinu mikla og margslungna verki Eiríks segir af söguhetjunni Ólafi og flakki hans á milli mannheima, álfheima og annars konar (yfir)náttúrulegra heima í óbyggðum Íslands. Á ferðalagi sínu umgengst Ólafur fjölda

- 1 Eiginhandarrit Eiríks er skrifað á eins konar skjalapappír þar sem á er stimplað ártalið 1788. Einar Ól. Sveinsson telur að Eiríkur gæti hafa byrjað á verki sínu fyrir þann tíma og að varðveitt handrit sé þá hreinskrift (*Um íslenzkar þjóðsögur* (Reykjavík: Hid íslenska bokmentafélag, 1940), 107, sbr. Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson, *Jón Thoroddsen og skáldsögur hans* (Reykjavík: Helgafell, 1943), 186–187). Þau María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir og Þorsteinn Antonsson telja hins vegar að sagan sé skrifuð eftir 1788, þ.e.a.s. eftir að stimplað var á pappírinn og þá líklega „á síðasta áratug aldarinnar eða síðar,“ sbr. Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, „Höfundurinn og sagan,“ *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar: Álfasagan mikla*, útg. Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1987), 404.
- 2 Um byggingu sögunnar, sjá Jón Karl Helgason, „Should she tell a story ...“: In Quest of Eiríkur Laxdal's Poetics,“ *Gripla* 34 (2023): 352–368.
- 3 Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson, *Jón Thoroddsen og skáldsögur hans*, 183; Lena Rohrbach, „Subversive Inscriptions: The Narrative Power of Paratext in Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar,“ *Gripla* 35 (2024): 339.

fólks, bæði mennska menn og álfa, en samskipti hans við álfana eru þó misgæfuleg og eiga það til að draga dilk á eftir sér. Söguheimur Ólafs er í senn sérstæður og hefðbundinn og í raun er um að ræða ímyndaðan heim sem er þó að sama skapi kunnuglegur, því að allar helstu efniseiningarnar eiga sér hliðstæðu í innlendra sagnahefð, bæði þjóðsögum og bókmenntum fyrri alda. Innan hins breiða söguramma sem snýr að ferðalögum Ólafs kemur höfundur að mörgum sagnaeiningum þannig að til verða þættir innan þátta, þræðir innan þráða og jafnvel útúrdúrar innan útúrdúra. Allt er þetta efni svo ofið saman í flókið mynstur og (að mestu) röklega heild. Í heildar-samhengi sögunnar má því finna ótal áhugaverðar aukapersónur sem fara þó jafnframt – sumar hverjar – með burðarhlutverk tiltekinna efnisþátta.

Í þessari grein langar mig til að taka fyrir afmarkaðan efnisþátt úr sögu Ólafs, ekki þó samkvæmt þáttaskiptingu hans sjálfs, heldur kafla 11–19 undir öðrum kvöldvökulestri. Í skýringum sínum við söguna nefna útgefendur hennar, þau Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, sambærilegan kafla (12–19) Sveinsþátt⁴ en e.t.v. mætti líka tala um afdalaþátt með víðari skírskotun í söguefnið. Í eftirfarandi umfjöllun verður leitast við að gera grein fyrir afdalaþættinum sem heild innan stærri heildar, og hvernig hann afmarkast af tilteknum sögnum sem teygja þó engu að síður anga sína út fyrir þáttinn og inn í heildina, og jafnvel út fyrir verkið sjálft. Spurt verður um eðli þess efnis sem liggur að baki þættinum, hversu einkennandi þátturinn er fyrir bókmenntasköpun Eiríks og hvaða hlutverki þátturinn gegnir við sköpun aðalsöguhetjunnar, Ólafs.⁵

4 Þátturinn er auðkenndur sem „Sveinsþáttur (Kjartanssynir og Guðrúnar)“, sjá: Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, „Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar, efnisyfirlit,“ *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar: Álfasagan mikla*, útg. Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1987), 432. Um þáttaskiptingu Eiríks, sjá Rohrbach, „Subversive Inscriptions: The Narrative Power of Paratext in Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar,“ 343.

5 María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir rekur helstu frásagnarliði þeirra sagna sem hér um ræðir í *Tveggja heima sýn: Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar og Þjóðsögurnar* (Reykjavík: Bókmenntafræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 1996), 168–171. Samanburður hennar við annað sagnaefni miðast einkum við þjóðsögur, sbr. kaflann „Þjóðsögur í Ólafssögu“ á bls. 143–233. Samanburður hennar við fornaldar- og riddarasögur lýtur að almennri byggingu heildarsögunnar, fléttuformi, kurteisi í samskiptum söguhetja og minnum á borð við kolbitsminnið, bls. 239–241. Sé um að ræða skörun við rannsókn Mariu Önnu er vísað til umræðu hennar neðanmáls.

Af ferð Ólafs inn í afdali

Eins og fyrr segir verður litið á kafla 11–19 sem merkingarbæra söguheild og í eftirfarandi ágrípi er vísað í *Sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar: Álfasöguna miklu* (útg. 1987). Í þættinum segir af því þegar Ólafur lendir í þoku á ferðum sínum um hálendið, villist af leið og kemur inn í grösugan og alblómgaðan haga sem hefur á sér yfirbragð annars heims. Áheyrendur með góða söguþekkingu hafa áreiðanlega gert sér grein fyrir því sem í vændum var, því að þokan er kunnuglegt minni úr eldri sögum þar sem hún skilur á milli heima en að auki þurfti Ólafur að riða yfir „flár, fen og foræði“ til að komast í dalinn góða.⁶ Ólafur virðist þó ekki einungis hafa riðið yfir skil á milli heima, heldur einnig árstíða því að áður en hann villtist af leið var jörð einungis nýþiðnuð en í dalnum góða ríkir sumar:

Um síðir kemur hann í alblómgaðan, lystilegan grashaga með fágætum, ilmandi jurtum undir einni brekku. Í þessu engi var lítill bekkur með kristalstæru vatni. Ólafur varð glaður við þessa sjón því að hann var mæddur orðinn og hestar hans, drekkur hann af læknum og þóttist fá sína bestu endurnæring. [...] Að morgni komanda stendur hann upp og er þá komið albjart veður.⁷

Dalurinn minnir á paradísarlýsingar þar sem ilmandi blóm vaxa árið um kring. Í Eiríks sögu víðförla, ferðasögu sem er varðveitt í handriti frá 14. öld, þurfa menn að komast yfir á mikla áður en þeir koma til þess staðar sem nefndur er Ódáinsakur (sbr. einnig jörð lifandi manna) og virðist vera eins konar forgarður paradísar. Staður þessi er því jarðneskur en virðist þó að sama skapi liggja á milli tveggja heima, jarðarinnar og paradísar, á meðan paradísinn sjálf er ekki aðgengileg öðrum en dauðum mönnum. Í sögunni segir: „[...] ódru megin arinnar sá þeir land fagrt með miklum bloma ok

6 Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar: Álfasagan mikla*, útg. Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1987), 116. Galdrapoka fellur undir D902.1 í alþjóðlegum minnaskrá. Einar Ól. Sveinsson telur að þokan, eins og hún birtist í útilegumannasögum, beri svip af töfraþoku í keltenskum sögum (sbr. e. *druidic mist*). Hann tengir minnið kelteskri sagnahefð, rétt eins og minnið um bardagann eilífa (e. *recurrent fight*) sem fjallað verður um hér á eftir. Sjá, Einar Ól. Sveinsson, „Celtic elements in Icelandic tradition,“ *Béaloideas* 25 (1957): 21.

7 Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar*, 116.

gnott hunangs ok kendu þadan sætan ilm. þangat var biart at lita [...]“.⁸ Áður en Eiríkur víðförli kemst til staðarins góða veður hann reyk og „[...] þa sa þeir fagrt land grausin huit sem purpuri við sætum ilm ok myklum bloma ok flutv hunangs lækir um alla uegu landzins. Þetta land uar langt ok slett. Sol skin var þar sua at alldri var þar myrkt ok alldri bar skugga a [...]“.⁹ Í landi þessu vitraðist Eiríki ungur drengur sem reyndist svo vera verndarengill hans og segir hann honum deili á staðnum og fyrirkomulagi heimsins.

Þar sem Ólafur er staddur í dalnum góða hittir hann fyrir tólf ára dreng; ekki þó engil, heldur grátbólginn og aðframkominn ungling sem bíður þess að vera bjargað. Drengurinn, sem heitir Sveinn, segir honum sögu sína og þá fyrst frá foreldrum sínum, og reynist það vera sjálfstæð sögn sem gerðist mörgum árum áður. Foreldrar hans höfðu verið systkini sem voru á sínum tíma dæmd til dauða fyrir sífjaspell. Með undraverðum hætti tókst þeim að flýja stuttu fyrir aftöku sína og settust þau þá að í dalverpi sem þau fundu handan hættulegrar ár. Í útlegðinni eignuðust þau þrjá syni, þá Nikulás, Vigfús og Svein. Á dánarbeði sínum lagði faðir þeirra bræðra mikið kapp á að eftir dauða foreldranna beggia skyldu eldri bræðurnir tveir vera góðir við Svein litla og að saman skyldu þeir leita hjálpar hjá Hólabiskupi. Eftir dauða foreldranna urðu eldri bræðurnir tveir, sem höfðu alla tíð verið vondir við Svein, þó enn verri en áður. Bræðurnir urðu einmana og svangir og varla færir um að draga fram lífið. Dag nokkurn tekur elsti bróðirinn, Nikulás, þó boga föður síns og örvar og heldur til veiða. Sér hann þá hvar tólf menn standa hjá stórum steini. Þegar þeir verða hans varir og koma auga á bogann reyna þeir að ná Nikulási og segjast eiga bogann en hafa týnt honum fyrir löngu. Nikulás hendir frá sér boganum og flýr af hólmi og daginn eftir er komið að Vigfúsi að afla fanga. Sér hann hina sömu tólf menn og eru þeir þá bláir og blóðugir eftir slagsmál. Vigfús forðar sér, líkt og bróðir hans áður. Næst er það Sveinn sem leggur af stað, ekki þó til að afla matar fyrir þá bræður heldur vegna þess að bræður hans ráku hann burt með harðri hendi. Þegar Sveinn kemur að steininum voru bræðurnir tólf enn að berjast. Einn þeirra segir Sveini þá sögu þeirra í stuttu máli, en þeir höfðu orðið fyrir álögum sem kváðu á um að þeir skyldu aldrei getað dáið nema þeir væru skotnir með boganum

8 *Eiríks saga víðfjörla*, útg. Helle Jensen (København: Reitzel, 1983), 62.

9 *Eiríks saga víðfjörla*, 74.

góða. Boginn hafði þó horfið og eftir það höfðu bræðurnir lagst út; þeir væru hins vegar orðnir gamlir og þreyttir á að lifa í útlegð. Maðurinn biður Svein um að skjóta þá með boganum og segir að þegar hann hafi lokið við að dysja þá megi hann eiga allar eigur þeirra. Þegar Sveinn hafði lokið við að dysja bræðurna hafðist hann við undir steininum og þegar Ólafur fann hann þar grátbólginna hafði hann verið þar matarlaus í átta daga.

Ólafur og Sveinn finna nú steinhús nokkuð sem útilegumennirnir höfðu búið í, ríkulegar vistir og gripi góða. Ólafur gefur Sveini að borða og lætur hann hvíla sig í rúmi þar í húsinu. Honum finnst Sveinn að sumu leyti einfaldur og lítið þekkja til umheimsins. Eftir stutta dvöl í húsinu sækja þeir Ólafur og Sveinn bræður Sveins sem hýrðust enn í kotinu og fara með þá í húsið. Þaðan fara þeir svo með öll verðmæti, sem og hestastóð útilegumannanna, til byggða og hitta þar fyrir Hólabiskup. Biskup tekur bræðurna að sér, enda minnst hann þess að hafa lofað föður þeirra því þegar sá hinn síðarnefndi bjargaði honum frá villum á hálendinu. Biskupi finnst, eins og Ólafi, bræðurnir vera heimskir um veraldleg málefni en þó furðulega vel að sér í guðsorðinu enda veitir hann þeim afdráttarlaust skírn. Ólafur segir biskupi að útilegumennirnir hafi arfleitt Svein að eigum þeirra og fer svo leiðar sinnar. Sveinn er settur til náms í Hólaskóla og gerist eftir það góður klerkur.¹⁰

Efniviður afdalapáttarins

Afdalapátturinn felur í sér ýmis einkenni eldri sagna, ekki síst þjóðsagna. Paradísarlýsingin á sér til að mynda ýmsar hliðstæður, ekki einungis úr trúarlegum ferðabókmenntum á borð við Eiríks sögu víðförla og heilagra-mannasögum á borð við Mattheus sögu postula heldur einnig yngri bókmenntum sem gætu þá jafnvel hafa brúað bilið yfir í sögu Eiríks.¹¹ Engin

10 Efni páttarins er rakið í J. Spoelstra, *De vogelvrijen in de ijslandse letterkunde* (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & zoon n.v., 1938), 136–137.

11 Álíka lýsingu er að finna í *Mattheus sögu postula*, 19–23. Sjá einnig Sverrir Tómasson, „Ferðir þessa heims og annars: Paradís – Ódáinsakur – Vinland í íslenskum ferðalýsingum miðalda,“ *Gripla* 12 (2001): 23–40. Lýsingar af landinu góða eru oftast en ekki staðlaðar og falla undir minni á borð við E481.2 (*Land of dead across water*) og E481.4 (*Beautiful land of dead*), sbr. Inger M. Boberg, *Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature* (Hafnía: Munksgaard, 1966), 99. Áþekka lýsingu er einnig að finna í samantekt Jóns Eggertssonar (1643–1689) sem hann eignar Jóni lærða Guðmundssyni (1574–1658) og kallast „Ein litil frásögn Jón[s] Gvendssonar málara um huldupláts og heimuglega dali á Íslandi“. Í þættinum

Þessara sagna hefur þó jafn afgerandi líkindi við Sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar og Eiríks saga víðförla og hvergi annars staðar kemst söguhetjan í kynni við ungan dreng á ferðum sínum um dalinn, annars vegar Svein og hins vegar engil.

Önnur áberandi einkenni má rekja til fornaldarsagna. Þannig ber frá-sögnin af Sveini og bræðrum hans keim af dalafíflapætti Gautreks sögu, fornaldarsögu frá 14. öld, en þar er umgjörðin svipuð þar sem Gauti konungur villist, kemur að afskekktum bæ í dalverpi þar sem heimilis-fólk býr við skort og er að auki fávíst um veraldleg málefni. Til að draga úr samkeppni sín á milli um mat kemur heimilisfólkið sér saman um að þeir sem séu gamlir og til óþurftar skuli fórna sér og ganga fyrir stapa.¹² Í þættinum um Svein og bræður hans eru það eldri bræðurnir tveir sem hrekja þann yngsta á brott því að þeir töldu hann til þyngsla – og létta þeir þannig á búrekstrinum. Bræðurnir bera þar að auki einkenni Bakkabraðra eða Bakkaflóna, þ.e.a.s. þriggja heimskra bræðra sem haga sér á skjön við siðmenntað samfélag og þegar þeir komast í návígi við siðmenntað fólk afhjúpa þeir fávísku sína. Að öðru leyti líkist frásögn þeirra hefðbundinni framvindu ævintýra þar sem þrír bræður leggja af stað í nokkurs konar hættuför, sá elsti fyrst og sá yngsti síðast, en einungis þeim yngsta tekst að leysa úr þeim þroskaþrautum sem bíða þeirra og verður í framhaldinu gæfumaður.

Innan og utan ramma ævintýrisins og þó einkum þroskasögu Sveins er skotið inn tveimur útilegumannasögum af foreldrum Sveins og bræðrunum tólf. Báðar bera þær sterk einkenni dæmigerðra útilegumannasagna sem endurspegla að mörgu leyti hræðslu fólks við hið óþekkt.¹³ Á 18. öld var

segir frá manni sem villtist í þöku og kemur inn í grösugan dal með „fögnum hliðum og lystugum grösum“ (Bjarni Einarsson, *Munnmælasögur 17. aldar* (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1955), 26). Í dalnum er bær með smiðjuhúsi þar sem í voru margs konar smíðatól. Í frásögninni er getið um fleiri góða dali en enginn þeirra líkist þeim dal sem Eiríkur segir frá. Sjá Bjarni Einarsson, *Munnmælasögur 17. aldar*, 26–36.

12 C. C. Rafn, útg., *Fornaldar sögur Norðrlanda I–II* (Kaupmannahöfn, 1829–1830), III 5–8. Um æternisstapa, sjá Birgitta Odén, „Ättestupan – myt eller verklighet,“ *Scandia* 62 (1996): 221–234.

13 María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir telur að líkindi séu einkum við tvær prentaðar sögur í safni Jóns Árnasonar, *Visitazíuferð Skálholtsbiskups* (Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, útg. Árni Böðvarsson og Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Þjóðsaga, 1954–1961), II 246–247) og *Söguna af Hóla-Þorsteini* (Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, II 260–262). Sjá María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 165. Þá kemur minnið um sífjaspell systkina einnig fyrir í þjóðsögunum, jafnvel þar sem systkinin leggjast á fjöll

hálandið enn þá að mestu leyti okannað og fólk sagði þá sögur af hættunni sem fylgdi því að fara inn á óbyggð svæði, t.d. um útлага sem settust að á hálandinu og stálu sér sauðfé til matar. Í flestum sögnum eru útilegumenn sagðir hættulegir, en til eru sagnir þar sem þeir koma fyrir sem vel stæðir bændur sem búa í fjarlægum, grösugum dölum og bjóða ferðalöngum fæði og jafnvel gistingu. Í slíkum sögnum nálgast útilegumennirnir það að vera yfirnáttúrulegir enda líkjast frásagnirnar að sumu leyti sögum um huldufólk. Samkvæmt þjóðsögnum getur fólk átt von á því að hitta útilegumenn, huldufólk og tröll við það eitt að yfirgefa siðmenninguna og halda á vit hins óþekkta á hálandinu. Með þessu móti er útilegumannasagan síðari þar sem þeir Ólafur og Sveinn koma í grösugan dal í óbyggðunum og finna þar reisulegt bú og þriflegan búpening.

Útilegumennirnir sjálfir, bræðurnir tólf, eru í senn ógnvaldar, þar sem þeir hræða lífið úr þeim Nikulási og Vigfúsi, og ógæfumenn sem þrá ekkert heitar en sína hinstu hvílu. Þótt bræðurnir, sem eiga smiðju, verkfæri og tól af öllu tagi og sofa saman í skála, hver í sínu rúmi, séu ekki dæmigerðir útilegumenn að öllu leyti er augljóst að Eiríkur hefur mótað þá inn í hefðbundna umgjörð þjóðsögu.¹⁴ Að sumu leyti minna þeir þó sérstaklega á efnisþátt innan lengri gerðar Huldar sögu sem er talin skrifuð á sömu öld. Í sögunni er getið um tólf útilegumenn sem dvelja saman í skála þar sem þeir geyma auðæfi sín og gnægt matar. Allir eru þeir sérlega bardagafærir enda gengur líf þeirra út á að ræna og drepa. Af þessum tólf útilegumönnum eru sjö bræður og ber þeim ekki að öllu leyti saman við útilegumennina tólf í Sögu Ólaf Þórhallasonar, sem eru allir bræður.¹⁵

Rætur bræðranna tólf ná greinilega út fyrir ramma Huldar sögu og annarra þekktra útilegumannasagna því að þeir segjast hafa orðið fyrir álögum gamallar konu, ömmu sinnar, sem bannaði þeim að deyja nema þeir myndu falla fyrir boganum góða. Sé þátturinn lesinn án tengingar við söguna í víðara samhengi gæti tilvera bræðranna tólf vakið upp spurningar. Til að verða nokkurs vísari um sögu þeirra þurfum við þó einungis að færa

(Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og afintýri*, IV 446–450) en líkindi við sögu Eiríks eru þó óveruleg.

14 Eins og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir hefur bent á notar Eiríkur þjóðsagnaefni á meðvitaðan hátt og á eigin forsendum: „Skyldleikinn [við þjóðsögur] er á yfirborðinu, í raun er munurinn mikill. Efnisþættir og helstu frásagnarliðir og minni eru hin sömu“ (María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 261).

15 *Sagan af Huld drottningu hinni ríku* (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðja Þjóðviljans, 1909), 325–329.

okkur aftar í söguna, yfir í „Þáttinn af Kjartani og Guðrúnu bóndadóttur“ sem tilheyrir einnig öðrum kvöldvökulestri og fjallar um ástir Guðrúnar Gunnlaugsdóttur og Kjartans sem elskuðust og náðu saman eftir ýmsar raunir og eignuðust saman tólf syni (k. 28–38).¹⁶ Í þættinum segir frá því hvernig Vefja, móðir Kjartans, kemur til þeirra hjóna dag einn og ásakar Kjartan um að hafa vanrækt sig í fátækt á meðan hann sjálfur lifi góðu lífi. Eftir það leggur hún á syni þeirra tólf og segir: „[...] skulu þessir þínir tólf synir, sem hér standa, leggjast á fjöll og gjöra hin mestu spellvirki, svo vel meðal míns fólks sem yðar. Og það skal standa langan tíma því þeir skulu ekki deyja mega fyrr en þeir eru skotnir með þessum boga sem ég á held [...]“.¹⁷ Álögin kveða þannig ekki einungis á um dauða bræðranna, sem er þá háður vissum skilyrðum, heldur einnig hvernig þeir skuli haga lífi sínu þangað til og er þeim beinlínis ætlað að vinna öðru fólki mein enda gerast þeir hinir mestu illvirkjar sem bæði ræna og drepa.

Hugmyndin um að fyrirbjóða annarri manneskju dauða þar til ákveðin skilyrði hafa verið uppfyllt er áhugaverð og sver sig í ætt við hugmyndir um álög, einkum þau sem einkenna sérstaklega íslenskar sögur og keltneskar.¹⁸ Þau minna til að mynda á þau álög sem Freyja leggur á konungana Héðin og Högna og frá segir í Héðins sögu og Högna (sbr. Sörlapætti Flateyjarbókar) en þar kemur fram að þeir Héðinn og Högni skuli berjast og aldrei falla nema að kristinn maður komi og gangi í bardagann og muni hann þá ná að fella þá með vopnum. Eins og Ívar ljómi, sá kristni maður sem að lokum kom og felldi heiðingjana, þá Héðin og Högna, og aflétti þannig álögum gyðjunnar og hinum svokölluðu Hjaðningavígum, er það hinn guðhræddi piltur Sveinn sem tekst að rifta hinum römmu álögum Vefju og bjarga bræðrunum tólf frá eilífum átökum.

Sú frásögn Héðins sögu og Högna sem snýr að bardaganum eilífa er vanalega nefnd Hildarsögnin þar sem bitbein konunganna tveggja var

16 Í skýringum útgefenda eru kaflar 26–39 teknir saman undir fyrirsögninni „Af Kjartani og Guðrúnu“, sjá Þorsteinn Antonsson og María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, „Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar, efnisyfirlit“, 434–435. Sbr. einnig „Selmatseljan og ljúflingurinn“, í María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 167–171.

17 Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar*, 162. María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir hefur bent á skyldleika við þjóðsöguna Álfapilturinn og selmatseljan (*Tveggja heima sýn*, 167, sbr. Jón Árnason, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og afintýri*, I 66–67).

18 Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, „Enchantment and Anger in Medieval Icelandic Literature and Later Folklore,“ *Fictional Practice. Magic, Narration, and the Power of Imagination*, ritstj. Bernd-Christian Otto og Dirk Johannsen (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 68–90.

Hildur, dóttir Högna, sem sjálf kom að Hjaðningavígunum með því að stofna til þeirra eða viðhalda þeim með því að vekja upp hina dauðu, eins og frá segir í annars mismunandi tilbrigðum sögunnar. Hildarsögnin naut mikilla vinsælda á Norðurlöndum um margra alda skeið og á Íslandi skýtur hún upp kollinum í heimildum frá elstu tíð og fram á 15. eða 16. öld.¹⁹ Minnið um bardagann eilífa kemur þó fyrir í fleiri sögum en Hildarsögninni einni saman og vegna fjölbreytileika minnisins hér á landi taldi Einar Ól. Sveinsson að íslensk sagnahefð hafi hér vafalaust orðið fyrir áhrifum keltneskra sagna.²⁰ Minnið er m.a. að finna í Ketils sögu hængs, Orms þætti Stórolfssonar, Sögunni af kóngabörnum og Tryggva karlssyni, Þorsteins þætti bæjarmagns, Þorsteins þætti uxafóts og fleiri óljósari dæmum.²¹ Í Þorsteins þætti uxafóts dreymir Þorstein að hann taki þátt í átökum þar sem við eigast tvö tólf manna lið og líkt og í Sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar nær söguhetjan að fyrirkoma liði sem áður hafði verið ósigrandi. Þótt Þorsteinn sé ekki kristinn á þeim tíma sem hann rýfur bardagann eilífa, eins og Ívar ljómi, þá tekur hann kristna trú skömmu eftir drauminn rétt eins og Sveinn sem var skírður skömmu eftir átök

19 Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, „Saga motifs on Gotland picture stones: The case of Hildr Högnadóttir,“ *Gotland's Picture Stones: Bearers of an Enigmatic Legacy*, Gotländsk arkiv 84 (2012): 59–71.

20 Einar Ól. Sveinsson taldi að vegna fjölbreytileika sagnanna hafi keltneskar sögur komið inn í varðveisluna og að ekki megi rekja allt til Hildarsagnarinnar. Hann bendir á sambærilegt minni úr waleska sagnasafninu Mabinogion, sbr. „Celtic elements in Icelandic tradition,“ 17.

21 Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Verzeichnis isländischer Märchenvarianten* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1929), xxxix–xl; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, „Celtic elements in Icelandic tradition,“ 17–18. Ketils saga hængs, Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar og Þorsteins saga bæjarmagns fela ekki í sér áberandi líkindi við frásögn Eiríks. Einu snertifletirnir eru í raun þeir að í Ketils sögu hængs þarf söguhetjan að nota sérstaka ör (örvar) til að fella andstæðinginn (Rafn, *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*, II 121–122) og í Þorsteins sögu bæjarmagns þarf Þorsteinn að fara yfir hættulega á til að komast í návígi við risakonunginn Geirröð sem hann drepur (Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns í Guðni Jónsson og Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, útg., *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* (Reykjavík: Bókautgáfan Forní, 1944), III 404–405). Skyld er einnig frásögnin af Skuldarbardaga í Hrólfs sögu kraka þar sem hermenn úr liði Skuldar eru felldir en rísa þó jafnharðan upp aftur. Ekki verður betur séð en að þeir falli að lokum, nema *fáeinir niðingar*, og virðist það ekki bundið skilyrðum (*Hrólfs saga kraka*, útg. D. Slay (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1960), 124). Skylda frásögn og í Ketils sögu hængs er að finna í Örvar-Odds sögu þegar Örvar-Oddur fellir tröllkonu með hinum sömu örvum (*Örvar-Odds saga*, útg. R. C. Boer (Halle a. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1892), 23).

sín við útlagana tólf eftir komu sína til biskups.²² Í Sögunni af kóngabörnum, ævintýralegrri sögu frá því um 1700, er það kona sem er völd að bardaganum eilífa með því að breyta sér í kött og lífga hina föllnu hermenn við með lifgulli.²³ Innan sögunnar eru svo dæmi um tvöföld álög þar sem Tryggvi, ein af aðalsöguhetjum sögunnar, leggur á köttinn að hann skuli ekki geta skilið við lífið fyrr en hann kemst í kjöltu galdra-kóns og að sá skuli sitja fastur í stól sínum þangað til Tryggvi kemur og gengur frá honum.²⁴ Að lokum er getið um tólf hellisbúa í þjóðsögu úr safni Jóns Árnasonar, Ófælni drengurinn, sem fella óvini sína á hverjum degi. Morguninn eftir vakna þó allir óvinir þeirra aftur til lífsins, einungis sterkari en áður. Sú sem er völd að þessu er bláklædd álfkona sem fer um vígvöllinn að nóttu til og lífgar þá föllnu við með því að bera á þá smyrsl.²⁵ Allt eru þetta þó yfirborðskennd líkindi við söguna um bræðurna tólf í Sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar og varla er hægt að tengja hana við einhverja ákveðna fyrirmynd. Þjóðsögur á borð við þær sem Jón Árnason safnaði eru þar að auki yngri en saga Eiríks en ljóst er að margar þeirra eru bæði hefðbundnar og gamlar, enda sýna þær þjóðsögur sem Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) viðaði að sér í kringum 1700 að sams konar grunnþemu voru enn í umferð á 19. öld.²⁶

Auk þess að fela í sér líkindi við bardagann eilífa, minnir sagan um bræðurna tólf á fórnarlömb áлага í miðaldabókmenntum þar sem álög geta nálgast hugmyndir um dáiðslu þegar álagavaldurinn nær völdum yfir vilja

22 Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts, sjá *Harðar saga*, útg. Þórhallur Vilmundarson og Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2009), 352–354.

23 Margrét J. Gísladóttir, „Verði þér allt til sigurs og lukku“: Sagan af kóngabörnum í ljósi handrita og hefðar (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, Hugvísindasvið), 90. Sambærilegt minni kemur fyrir í Orms þætti Stórolfssonar þar sem móðir Brúsa, andstaðings Orms, er sögð vera svört ketta (Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar, sjá *Harðar saga*, 407). Margaret Schlauch benti á líkindi kattarins við kerlingu af keltneskum uppruna en aðferð hennar við að lífga við menn í bardaga er áþekk og í Sögunni af kóngabörnum, sbr. Margaret Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1934), 138–139; J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands II* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860), 446–448. Sjá einnig Einar Ól. Sveinsson, „Celtic elements in Icelandic tradition,“ 18; Bo Almqvist, „Gaelic/Norse folklore contacts: Some reflections on their scope and character,“ *Ireland and Europe in the early Middle Ages: learning and literature*, ritstj. Próinséas Ní Chatháin og Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), 171.

24 Um Sögu af kóngabörnum (Sigurðar sögu og Signýjar / Sögu af Tryggva karlssyni, Sigurði og Signýju), sjá Margrét J. Gísladóttir, „Verði þér allt til sigurs og lukku,“ sbr. einnig Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland*, 138–139.

25 Jón Árnason, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, I 259–265.

26 Sjá Bjarni Einarsson, *Munnmælasögur 17. aldar*.

fórnlambins. Í Ála flekks sögu, frumsaminni riddarasögu frá 14. öld, er Ála breytt í varg og kveða álögin á um að í því gervi skuli hann hvorki eira fé né mönnum og í raun eyða búpeningi ríkisins. Þolendur álaga eru þannig rændir eigin vilja og verða sem leikbrúður í höndum álagavaldanna sem þeir vinna svo illvirkin fyrir. Í flestum tilvikum er álagapolinn því einungis hluti af stærra áformi álagavaldsins sem virðist vera fær um að yfirfæra eigin reiði á álagapolann og vinna illvirki sín í gegnum hann. Flestir álagapolar eru þó leystir undan álögunum fyrr en síðar og sjaldgæft er að sjá fónarlömb álaga svo yfirbuguð af eigin illvirkjum sem bræðurna tólf sem óska sér þess heitast að mega losna undan álögunum og deyta.

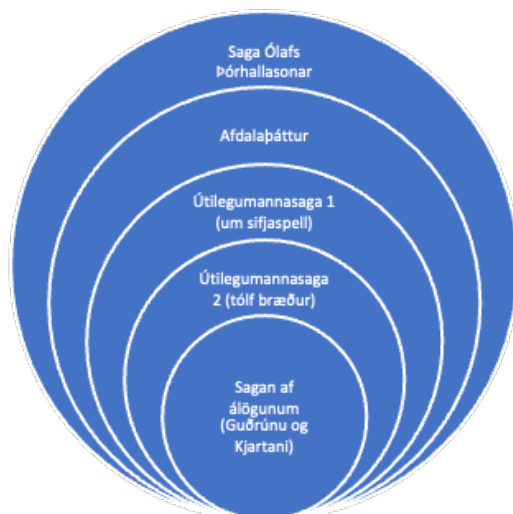
Líkt og aðrar persónur þáttarins er álagavaldurinn Vefja áhugaverð. Þegar Guðrún, móðir bræðranna, var ung og óreynd stúlka hafði hún umsjón með seli föður síns. Þar birtist henni Vefja óvænt og tekur að sér að vefa fyrir hana. Hún tekur með sér ullina og kemur svo með tilbúinn vefnað á umsömdum tíma. Hún ber sterk einkenni spunavætta, eins og t.d. Gilitruttar, sem koma úr óbyggðunum inn í bæina þar sem þær aðstoða lítt kunnandi stúlkur eða ungar konur með vefnað eða spuna. Eins og spuna-vættir íslenskra þjóðsagna býr hún í helli neðanjarðar. Hún er greinilega af öðrum heimi, jafnvel álfkona, auk þess sem hún sver sig í ætt við Freyju eins og henni er lýst í Sörlapætti.²⁷

Nýmæli Eiríks

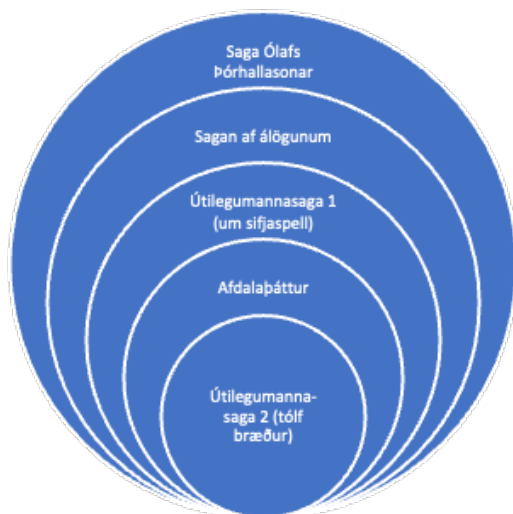
Eins og fyrr segir, þá er afdalapátturinn ekki nema einn af fjölmörgum þáttum Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar en í þrengra samhengi er hann þó eining sem nær yfir tvær heildstæðar fléttur, þ.e. útilegumannaþættina tvo þar sem sá síðari vísar í baksögu sem á þó enn eftir að segja frá. Tengingu þessara söguþátta má skýra með eftirfarandi mynd þar sem hver efnis-

27 Vefja ber að sumu leyti einkenni hinna sterku kvenpersóna sögunnar, sbr. t.d. Lena Rohrbach, „Weibliche Stimmen – männliche Sicht: Rekalibrierungen von Gender und Genre in der Ólafs saga Þórhallasonar,“ *Þáttasýrpa. Studien zu Literatur, Kultur und Sprache in Nordeuropa. Festschrift for Stefanie Gropper*, ritstj. Anna Katharina Heiniger, Rebecca Merkelbach og Alexander Wilson (Tübingen: Francke, 2022), 262–263. Um kvenhetjur í Sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar, sjá enn fremur María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 123–132; Örn Ólafsson, „Upplýsing í gegnum þjóðsögur: Um Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar eftir Eirík Laxdal,“ *Timarit Máls og menningar* 60/2 (1999), 99. Um spunavættir, sjá Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, „Übernatürliche Spinnerinnen in isländischen Volkserzählungen,“ *Florilegium nordmannicum: Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, ritstj. Alessia Bauer (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2024), 3–25.

Þáttur er hluti af öðrum efnisþætti sem er sjálfur hluti af enn öðrum efnisþætti og að lokum efnisheildinni:



Þessi mynd, sem byggist á hinu innra samhengi sögunnar, er þó ekki ein-kennandi fyrir eðlilega framvindu efnisþáttanna. Þar sem flakkað er fram og aftur í tíma og rúmi og þar sem bræðurnir tólf eru eðlilega lagðir í álög áður en þeir leggjast út ætti rökrétt uppbygging þáttarins að líta svona út:



Með þessu móti varpa flétturnar tvær ljósi hvor á aðra og þótt afdalaþátturinn sé miðlægur í þessu samhengi verða flétturnar, hvor um sig, einungis merkingarbærar með tengingu í rétttri tímaröð. Útilegumannasagan síðari, um syni þeirra Kjartans og Guðrúnar, tengist þó ekki einungis sögunni af álögum Vefju þar sem hún á uppruna sinn því að síðar í sögunni, þegar réttað er yfir Ólafi, segir verjandi hans, Einar, að Ólafur hafi ýmislegt gott gert, til dæmis með því að drepa syni þeirra Kjartans og Guðrúnar. Eins og lesendur sögunnar muna þó væntanlega eftir var það Sveinn sem vann það þarfa verk þótt Ólafur hafi svo í framhaldinu aðstoðað Svein.²⁸ Í þessu tilviki dregur Eiríkur söguna um bræðurna tólf fram til að sýna fram á fáránleika réttarhaldanna, þar sem Ólafur er m.a. sýknaður á fólkskum forsendum.

Ýmsir fræðimenn hafa bent á að byggingaraðferð Eiríks, hið margfalda form, sé nýnæmi í íslenskum bókmenntum á síðari hluta 18. aldar og eitt af því sem markar honum sérstöðu í íslenskri bókmenntasögu, auk þess sem meðferð hans á efninu hefur þótt afar sérstæð.²⁹ Þótt efnismeðferð Eiríks sé vissulega einstök, eins og nánar verður rætt um hér á eftir, verður ekki betur séð en að formið sjálft eigi sér að einhverju leyti hliðstæður í öðrum samtímalegum bókmenntum. Fornaldarsögur og riddarasögur, sem einkenndust þegar á miðöldum af flókinni fléttu, þróuðust með ýmsum hætti og einkum yfir í sögur sem nefndar hafa verið fornaldarsögur síðari tíma og riddarasögur síðari tíma – eða einfaldlega kappasögur síðari tíma – enda einkennast þær yfirleitt af heilmikilli stilblöndun. Sumar þessara sagna þróuðust svo með þeim hætti að sífellt fleiri efnisþáttum var bætt inn í þær og í einhverjum tilvikum urðu til afar flóknar og samsettar sögur sem einkennast þá af sambærilega margföldu formi og saga Eiríks.³⁰ Til

28 Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar*, 168, 170.

29 Um nýmæli í skáldsögum Eiríks, sjá m.a. Jón Karl Helgason, „Should she tell a story ...“, 348–349; Rohrbach, „Subversive Inscriptions: The Narrative Power of Paratext in Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar“, 336, 360. Sbr. einnig Sveinn Yngvi Egilsson, „Leiðin til nútímans“, *Íslenskar bókmenntir: Saga og samhengi* 2 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2021), 451–452, 482, Margrét Eggertsdóttir, „From Reformation to Enlightenment“, *A History of Icelandic Literature*, ritstj. Daisy Neijmann (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 226. Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson taldi söguna vera á mörkum þess að geta talist skáldsaga en að vissulega mætti tengja hana upphafi íslenskrar skáldsagnagerðar, sbr. *Jón Thoroddsen og skáldsögur hans*, 217, 556. Þorsteinn Antonsson hefur talað um söguna sem „móðernískt skáldverk“, sbr. „Úr sögu Ólafs Þórhallasonar“, *Lesbók Morgunblaðsins* 24/12, 1986: 38.

30 Sbr. t.d. umræðu um sögur sem Matthew Driscoll nefnir frumskáldsögur (e. *proto-novels*). Hann telur að slíkar sögur sverji sig í ætt við lygisögur en séu þeim þó frábrugðnar að sumu leyti. Matthew Driscoll, *The Unwashed Children of Eve: The Production, Dissemination and*

þessara sagna heyra til að mynda Huldar saga, lengri gerð, og Eiríks saga frækna sem báðar mætti kalla kappasögur síðari tíma.³¹ Á meðan Huldar saga er nokkuð örugglega samin á 18. öld, a.m.k. í þeirri mynd sem hún er varðveitt í í dag, er erfiðara að segja til um aldur Eiríks sögu frækna þar sem elstu varðveittu uppskriftir hennar eru frá 19. öld.³² Höfundar þessara beggja sagna skapa úr hinni hefðbundnu fornaldarsagnahefð þar sem nýjum þáttum og þráðum er bætt við svo að úr verður tiltölulega flókinn söguþráður. Sögurnar eru þó ekki með öllu sambærilegar og gaman væri að taka til samanburðar fleiri kappasögur síðari tíma en flestar þeirra liggja þó enn óútgefnar í handritum.

Þótt lengri gerð Huldar sögu og Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar séu hvor um sig margþátta og jafnvel svo að lesendur eiga auðvelt með að tapa þræðinum er á þeim reginmunur hvað varðar efnistöð. Á meðan hinir fjölmörgu þættir Huldar sögu sverja sig í ætt við miðaldahefðina og segja frá allt að því stöðluðum átökum og orrustum söguhetja við víkinga og yfirnáttúrulega andstæðinga notar Eiríkur efnisþætti á borð við afdalabáttinn umrædda til að móta Ólaf sem söguhetju og þar af leiðandi þroskast söguhetjan innan samhengisins.³³ Þetta er merkilegt því að á heildina séð er Ólafur sýndur í neikvæðu ljósi og þá ekki síst í samskiptum hans við konur. Í afdalabættinum á Ólafur hins vegar engin samskipti við konur en samskipti hans við bræðurna þrjá draga fram jákvæðar hliðar hans og hjálpssemi í garð annarra. Með þessu móti má segja að Eiríkur noti þáttaformið í þeim tilgangi að varpa nýju ljósi á aðalsöguhetjuna og dýpka hana. Þetta verður ekki séð að gert sé með sambærilegum hætti í Huldar sögu þar sem söguhetjur eldast og þroskast með hefðbundnari hætti í gegnum afrek sín.

Afdalabátturinn varpar þó ekki einungis ljósi á persónusköpun Eiríks heldur sýnir hann vel hvernig höfundurinn snýr upp á hefðina, ekki

Reception of Popular Literature in Post-Reformation Iceland (Middlesex: Hisarlik Press, 1997), 329.

31 Lengri gerðin er prentuð í *Sagan af Huld drottningu hinmi ríku*. Um Eiríks sögu frækna, sjá Elfa Jónsdóttir, „Of gott er þér að fara fyrir sverði mínu“: Eiríks saga frækna í bókmenntasögulegu samhengi (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, Hugvísindasvið, 2024).

32 Huldar saga er varðveitt í þremur gerðum í handritum frá 18. og 19. öld. Ljóst er að efnið hefur notið vinsælda á síðari hluta 18. aldar, þegar Jón Espólin (1769–1836), samtíðarmaður Eiríks Laxdals, samdi sína gerð, sbr. *Sagan af Huld hinmi miklu og fjölkunnugu trölldrottningu* (Akureyri: Prentsmiðja Odds Björnssonar, 1911). Sjá einnig: Veturliði Óskarsson, „Íslensk bók í þýsku bókasafni,“ *Ritmennt* 4 (1999), 12.

33 Um almennan þroska Ólafs innan söguheildarinnar og speglun hans við líf höfundar, sjá María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 254–255.

einungis með því að setja hefðbundið efni í nýtt samhengi heldur einnig með því að bæta við það tengingum úr öðrum áttum. Sem dæmi um þetta má nefna að þegar Sveinn vaknar í paradísardalnum góða morguninn eftir að Ólafur fann hann heldur hann að hann sé virkilega kominn til hinnar einu og sönnu paradísar á hina „[...] lystilegu blómsturvelli sælunnar og ódauðleikans [...]“.³⁴ Við það tækifæri lætur Eiríkur hann fara með hástemmda og allt að því leikræna einræðu sem er í hrópandi ósamræmi við sambærilegar senur eldri bókmennta. Annað dæmi er að þegar þeir Ólafur og Sveinn fara að sækja bræður Sveins koma þeir að þar sem bræðurnir biðja bænir sínar fullir iðrunar eftir framkomu sína við Svein og syngja þeir lengi vel með bænnum sínum. Ólafur hlýðir á hinn einlæga söng bræðranna en gerir svo vart við sig, bregður á leik og segist sendur af guði sem hafi bænheyrt þá og vitnar í viðeigandi tilvísun í hina heilögu ritningu. Bræðurnir verða barnslega fegnir við fréttirnar og efast ekki um að Ólafur sé raunverulegur sendiboði guðs.³⁵ Þessi tvö dæmi eru afar ólík þeim frásagnarmáta sem við eigum að venjast í Huldar sögu, Eiríks sögu frækna og öðrum kappasögum síðari tíma þar sem meðferð hefðbundinna minna sver sig í ætt við eldri sögur. Hér, aftur á móti, tekst Eiríki að sýna hefðina í nýju ljósi með því að búa til nýstárlegar tengingar þannig að til verða senur sem einkennast af óvæntum stílbrögðum, húmor og jafnvel ádeilu.

Niðurlag

Í þessari grein var fengist við einungis einn af mörgum þáttum Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar og var hann notaður sem dæmi til að útskýra einkenni í byggingu sögunnar. Að auki var leitast við að greina efni þáttarins og sýna fram á þá baklægu hefð sem Eiríkur gæti mögulega hafa sótt í. Þótt einungis sé um að ræða einn þátt innan þess heildarsamhengis sem sagan er kom í ljós að hefðbundið sagnaefni er fjölbreytt og á uppruna sinn í mismunandi tegundum bókmennta og munnmæla, einkum:

34 Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar*, 117.

35 Ólafur segir: „Grátið ekki lengur, kæru sveinar, því ég er sendur til yðar af þeim hvern þið ákallað hafið! Hann hefur heyrt yðar bænir; vill nú þar fyrir hjálpa yður. Standið því upp og kastið burtu allri áhyggju [...]“ (Eiríkur Laxdal, *Saga Ólafs Þórhallasonar*, 126). Sbr. t.d. dæmi úr Biblíunni: „Fyrir því segi ég yður: Hvers sem þér biðjið í bæn yðar, þá trúið, að þér hafið öðlast það, og yður mun það veitast [...]“ (Mark. 11.24) og „Varpið allri áhyggju yðar á hann, því að hann ber umhyggju fyrir yður [...]“ (Fyrri Pétursbréf, 5.7). (*Biblían*, 1981).

| | |
|---|--|
| Tegund: | Efnisþættir eða minni: |
| Ferðalýsingar/heilagramanna-sögur eða afleiddir þættir í yngri textum | paradísarlýsing |
| Fornaldarsögur | þoka, afdalaþáttur (sbr. þáttur um dalafífl), álagabáttur, bardaginn eilífi, töfravopn |
| Ævintýri | saga um þrjá bræður, álög, spunavættir |
| Sagnir | þoka, útilegumannasögur, Bakkabræður, spuna-vættir, ástir mannskra og álfa (sagan um Kjartan og Guðrúnu) |
| Sögulegur fróðleikur (sagn-fræðileg tenging) | saga um sífjaspell, réttarhöld og flóttu, tenging við biskup og kristinn alþýðulærdóm |

Ljóst er að afdalaþátturinn felur í sér einkenni allra þessara tegunda: ferðalýsinga og/eða heilagramannasagna (eða afleiddra þátta í yngri textum), fornaldarsagna og þjóðsagna (sagna og ævintýra) auk þess sem áhrifa gætir frá sögulegum fróðleik. Þar sem við vitum í rauninni lítið um það hvert Eiríkur sótti sér innblástur jafnt sem beinar fyrirmyndir ber ekki að lesa töfluna sem svo að hann hafi beinlínis notfært sér allt þetta efni, a.m.k. ekki með meðvitundum hætti enda hefur áður verið á það bent að erfitt sé að tengja sögu hans við önnur verk.³⁶ Það er hins vegar ljóst að sköpun hans varð ekki til í tómarúmi og þetta er þá einfaldlega það efni sem gæti hafa, eftir einhverjum leiðum, litað frásögn hans burtséð frá því hvaða rit hann hefur þekkt. Þetta eru hliðstæður í einum skilningi og óljósari snertifletir í öðrum. Eiríkur dvaldist þar að auki erlendis og gæti vissulega hafa orðið fyrir áhrifum erlendra sagna, sem og erlendra bókmennta í íslenskri þýðingu. Greining á slíku efni fellur þó utan þessarar rannsóknar sem miðast einungis við afmarkaðan efnisþátt og hefðbundið íslenskt söguefni.

Það er athyglisvert að sjá hvernig Eiríkur nálgast hið hefðbundna sagnaefni, hvernig hann raðar því upp í röklega heild þar sem eitt leiðir af öðru jafnvel þótt sagt sé frá því í aðgreindum þáttum þar sem flakkað er á milli tíma. En Eiríkur gerir samt meira en að raða saman sagnaþáttum, einingum og minnum því að honum tekst að skapa úr þessu efni tvær örlagasögur, í fyrsta lagi sögu foreldra Sveins og sona þeirra þriggja og

36 Sbr.: „Eins og að framan hefur verið greint þá verður efni og efnisúrvinnslu *Ólafssögu* tæplega fundinn staður innan bókmenntahéðarinnar, hvorki innlendar né erlendar. Eiríkur fer ótroðnar slóðir, og að því er virðist af persónulegum ástæðum, þegar hann sækir efnivið sinn beint í þjóðsagnaarfinn og gerir af skáldsögu [...]“ (María Anna Þorsteinsdóttir, *Tveggja heima sýn*, 240–241).

í öðru lagi sögu þeirra Guðrúnar og Kjartans og sona þeirra tólf. Þessar miklu örlagasögur mætast svo á hálendinu þangað sem Ólafur villist, og hafa þær þá tekið í sig yfirnáttúruleg einkenni. Ólafur verður þó ekki einungis vitni að atburðunum sem slíkum heldur einnig þátttakandi sem segja má að sætti hið náttúrulega og hið yfirnáttúrulega, auk þess sem hann stuðlar að farsælum endi hjá Sveini og bræðrum hans. Tilgangur Eiríks hefur því ekki einungis verið sá að spinna fram sagnaefni fyrir kvöldvökuna heldur einnig að sýna söguhetjuna Ólaf í jákvæðu ljósi og móta hann þannig inn í heildarsamhengið. Með þessu móti tekst honum að skapa aðalsöguhetjuna út frá hefðbundnum minnum úr íslenskri sagnahefð og í raun má segja að ferðalög Ólafs á milli heima og vætta sé að sumu leyti ferðalag hans í gegnum íslenskan sagnaarf. Ólafur er þegar upp er staðið persónugervingur þeirrar sagnahefðar sem líf hans hverfist um.

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ÁGRIP

Handan þokunnar: Um efnisþætti og innra samhengi Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar

Efnisorð: upplýsing, frásagnarlist, bókmenntagreinar, þjóðsögur, sagnaminni

Í Ólafs sögu Þórhallasonar eftir Eirík Laxdal kynnumst við söguheimi sem er í senn sérstæður og hefðbundinn og í raun er um að ræða imyndaðan heim sem er þó að sama skapi kunnuglegur því að allar helstu efniseiningarnar eiga sér hliðstæðu í innlendra sagnahefð, bæði þjóðsögum og bókmenntum fyrri alda. Söguheiminn notar Eiríkur sem umgjörð fyrir ferðalög söguhetju sinnar, Ólafs Þórhallasonar, sem umgengst í ferðum sínum fjölda fólks, bæði mennska menn og álfa. Innan hins breiða söguramma sem snýr að ferðalögum Ólafs kemur höfundur að mörgum sagnaeiningum þannig að til verða þættir innan þátta, þræðir innan þræða og jafnvel útúrdúrar innan útúrdúra.

Í þessari grein er tekinn fyrir einn þáttur úr sögu Ólafs en uppistöður hans eru kaflar 11–19 undir öðrum kvöldvökulestri. Í þættinum segir frá Sveini og bræðrum hans sem hafa búið á hálendinu frá því að foreldrar þeirra lögðust út vegna sakamáls. Við sögu koma einnig tólf bræður, útilegumenn, sem urðu fyrir álögum og kemur það í hlut Sveins að leysa þá úr ánaud. Auk þess sem leitast er við að sýna fram á hvert Eiríkur sótti sér hugmyndir fyrir tiltekinn þátt og hvernig hann vann úr þeim verður spurt að hve miklu leyti aðferð hans hefur þótt nýnæmi á ritunartíma sögunnar og hvað standi þá upp úr í þeim efnum.

SUMMARY

Beyond the Fog: On Thematic Elements and Internal Coherence of the Saga of Ólafur Þórhallason

Keywords: Enlightenment, narrative techniques, literary genre, folktales, motifs

In Eiríkur Laxdal's *Ólaf's saga Þórhallasonar*, we are introduced to a narrative world that is both unique and traditional. This imagined realm is simultaneously familiar, as its primary elements are drawn from local storytelling traditions, including folklore and literature from earlier centuries. Eiríkur uses this narrative world as a framework for the travels of his protagonist, Ólafur Þórhallason, who encounters numerous individuals, both humans and elves, during his journeys. Within the broad narrative structure focusing on Ólafur's travels, the author creates many structural elements, so that stories emerge within stories, and threads within threads.

This article focuses on one particular episode from *Ólaf's saga Þórhallasonar*, specifically chapters 11–19, which are included in a chapter called the second evening reading (a reading during the *kvöldvaka*). This episode recounts the story of Sveinn and his brothers, who have lived in the Icelandic Highlands since their parents went into exile due to a criminal case. The narrative also involves twelve brothers, outlaws who are under a curse, and it falls to Sveinn to free them from their misfortune. In addition to examining from where Eiríkur drew his ideas for this episode and how he developed them, the article will explore the extent to which his method was considered innovative at the time when he composed his saga and what stands out in this regard.

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BRAGI ÞORGRÍMUR ÓLAFSSON

„HUGSAÐU TIL MÍN, BRÓÐIR MINN,
EF ÞÚ SÉRÐ MERKILEG HANDRIT, EÐA
GAMLAR BÆKUR VEL UM GENGNAR“

Yfirlit yfir handritasöfnun Jóns Sigurðssonar 1840–1879

Inngangur

Í ævisögu sinni um Árna Magnússon (1663–1730) er kom út árið 2012 benti Már Jónsson, prófessor í sagnfræði (f. 1959), á mikilvægi þess að þekkja söfnunar- og varðveislusögu íslenskra miðaldahandrita. Sú saga væri nauðsynleg til að þekkja tilurð handritanna og sögulegt samhengi þeirra í aldanna rás. Hún væri þó oft mörgum hulin: „Students and scholars in their hundreds now pore over these texts, extracting their meaning and investigating their relations to one another, most of the time oblivious to the circumstances that led to their being preserved at all for posterity. This should not be so.“¹ Í kjölfarið nefndi Már nokkur sérkenni á íslenskum handritaarfi sem rekja mætti til söfnunaráherslna Árna og varðveislusögu handrita hans og bætti svo við: „If this extraordinary collection of manuscripts is to be explained the life of the collector has to be investigated. Manuscripts and documents did not just arrive at his door.“² Már fylgdi jafnframt ábendingu E.C. Werlauffs (1781–1871) frá 1836 um rannsóknir á handritasöfnun:

Ved en Samling af haandskrevne Monumenter, som den Arne-Magnæanske, den eneste og fortrinligste i sit Slags, bliver det altid interessant, at kjende dens første Oprindelse, bemærke dens suces-

1 Már Jónsson, *Arnas Magnæus philologus (1663–1730)*. The Viking Collection. Studies in Northern Civilization (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2012), 10–11. Allar beinar tilvitnanir hafa verið færðar til nútímahorfs.

2 Már Jónsson, *Arnas Magnæus philologus*, 21.

sive Forøgelse, og undersøge de heldige eller uheldige Omstændigheder, gennem hvilke den naaede sit nærværende Standpunkt.³

Orð þeirra Más og Werlauffs eru ágæt áminning um nauðsyn þess að rannsaka sögu handritasöfnunar og einstakra handritasafnara ekki síður en texta þeirra handrita sem þeir söfnuðu: af hverju þeir réðust í söfnun handrita, hverju söfnuðu þeir og hverju ekki, hvaða hindranir voru í vegi þeirra, hvaða söfnunaraðferðum var beitt og svo framvegis. Slíkar upplýsingar gefa sögu einstakra handrita aukna dýpt. Í hvað er t.d. verið að vísa í handritaskrá Landsbókasafns þar sem segir að ritgerðasafn frá átjándu öld í ÍB 31 4to sé „geysiskaddað af brunanum 1847“?⁴ Hvaða áhrif höfðu bágar samgöngur innanlands á handritasöfnun á Íslandi um miðja nítjándu öld? Af hverju vildi Benedikt Vigfússon á Hólum (1797–1868) frekar senda bóka- og handritasafn sitt „í Víti“ en til Landsbókasafns árið 1859?⁵ Af hverju safnaði Jón Sigurðsson forseti (1811–1879) rímum um miðja nítjándu öld sem voru þá „farnar að verða viðbjóður mörgum greindum Íslendingum,“ eins og Ásgeir Einarsson (1809–1885) ritaði til Jóns í janúar árið 1855?⁶ Atriði á borð við þessi eru hluti af söfnunarsögu íslenskra handrita sem nauðsynlegt er að halda til haga eins og Már benti á. Í þessari grein verður fjallað um söfnun eins ötulasta handritasafnara nítjándu aldar, Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta, og greint frá söfnunarstefnu hans, aðferðum, umfangi, tengslaneti og hindrunum er honum mættu.

Umfang og fyrri rannsóknir

Jón er talinn vera mikilvirkasti handritasafnari Íslendinga á eftir Árna Magnússyni.⁷ Hann viðaði að sér alls 1.402 handritum á um fjörutíu ára tímabili og stóð einnig að handritasöfnun á vegum Kaupmannahafnardeildar

3 E.C. Werlauff, „Biographiske efterretninger om Arne Magnussen; ved Jon Olafsen fra Grønnavik. Med inledning, anmærkinger og tillæg af E.C. Werlauff,“ *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Oldkyndighed* 3 (1836): 83.

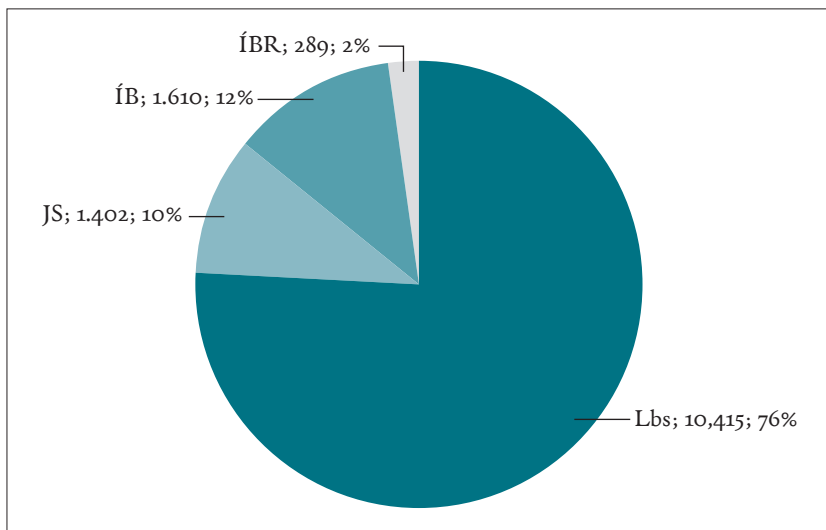
4 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins* II. bindi (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1927–1932), 739.

5 *Úr fórum Jóns Árnasonar*. Sendibréf I. Finnur Sigmundsson bjó til prentunar (Reykjavík: Hlaðbúð, 1950–1951), 104.

6 Þí. E.10.1, Ásgeir Einarsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 4. janúar 1855.

7 Einar Laxness, *Jón Sigurðsson forseti 1811–1879. Yfirlit um ævi og starf í máli og myndum* (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1979), 150.

Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags sem telur alls 1.610 handrit. Samanlagt eru þessi söfn drjúgur hluti af íslenskum handritaarfi síðari alda, eða um 22% af skráðum handritum í handritasafni Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns.⁸



Skýringarmynd 1. Samsetning handritasafns Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns.

Heimildir: Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins I–III*; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns. I. aukabindi*; Lárus H. Blöndal, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns. II. aukabindi*; Grímur M. Helgason og Lárus H. Blöndal, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns. III. aukabindi*; Grímur M. Helgason og Ögmundur Helgason, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns. IV. aukabindi*.
Athugasemd: Hér er miðað við fjölda skráðra handrita í prentuðum handritaskrár Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns er komu út 1918–1996. Nokkur fjöldi handrita hefur bæst við safnið síðan þá.

8 Hér er miðað við skrá Páls Eggerts Ólasonar yfir handritasafn Landsbókasafns, þar á meðal safn Jóns: Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins I–III* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1918–1937) og skrá Jakobs Benediktssonar yfir skinnblöð í Landsbókasafni: Jakob Benediktsson, „Skrá um skinnblöð í Landsbókasafni Íslands,“ Lárus H. Blöndal, *Handritasafn Landsbókasafns. II. aukabindi* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1959), [eigið tal]. Talning handrita er þó ekki einhlit eins og Jón Helgason prófessor benti á í *Handritaspjalli* sínu: Jón Helgason, *Handritaspjall* (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1958), 7–8. Þannig taldi Lúðvík Kristjánsson handrit Jóns vera 1.342 talsins (Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar* (Hafnarfjörður: Skuggsjá, 1961), 337) og í *Minningarriti* Landsbókasafns eru þau talin vera 1.293 (Jón Jacobson, *Landsbókasafn Íslands 1818–1918. Minningarrit* (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1919–1920), 134).

Handritasafn Jóns hefur nýst við rannsóknir á sviði íslenskra bókmennta og sagnfræði í um 150 ár, eða allt frá því að það var formlega afhent Landsbókasafni árið 1881.⁹ Söfnunin sjálf hefur þó aðeins verið skoðuð að litlu leyti og staðið í skugga af stjórnmalastörfum Jóns eins og gefur að skilja. Nokkuð hefur þó verið fjallað um fræðastörf hans, aðallega heimilda- og fornritaútgáfur.¹⁰ Í ítarlegasta verkinu sem skrifað hefur verið um Jón, fimm binda ævisögu Páls Eggerts Ólasonar (1883–1949) sem kom út á árunum 1929–1933, er greint frá handritasöfnuninni að nokkru leyti en sú umfjöllun miðast helst við texta sem Jón safnaði og ætlaði hugsanlega að gefa út.¹¹ Páll benti á að safninu yrði lýst nánar í handritaskrá Landsbókasafns sem kom út um svipað leyti — og hann tók sjálfur saman.¹² Í þeim hluta skrárinnar sem nær yfir safn Jóns er ítarleg lýsing á handritunum en engin úttekt á söfnuninni sem slíki (eins og nærri má geta í riti af því tagi).¹³ Þá má nefna að ekki eru til útgefnar sérskrár yfir handritasafn Jóns því að efnis- og nafnalyklar handritaskráa Landsbókasafns ná sameiginlega yfir öll 8.600 handrit aðalbindanna þriggja sem komu út á árunum 1918–1937. Af þessum sökum hefur verið nokkrum erfiðleikum bundið að draga upp afmarkaða heildarmynd af safni Jóns.¹⁴

Tæpum þrjátíu árum eftir að ævisaga Páls Eggerts kom út fjallaði Lúðvík Kristjánsson fræðimaður (1911–2000) stuttlega um söfnunina í

9 *Stjórnartíðindi* 1881 B, 81.

10 Jón Þorkelsson, „Um vísindalega starfsemi Jóns Sigurðssonar,“ *Tímarit Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* 3 (1882): 1–30; Finnur Jónsson, „Vísindastörf Jóns Sigurðssonar,“ *Skírnir* 85 (1911): 153–184; Björn M. Ólsen, „Jón Sigurðsson og Bókmenntafelagið,“ *Skírnir* 85 (1911): 234–259; Jón Þ. Þór, „Sagnfræðingurinn Jón Sigurðsson,“ *Ársrit Sögufélags Ísfirðinga* 51 (2011): 101–114; Sverrir Jakobsson, „Um fræðastörf Jóns Sigurðssonar,“ *Andvari* 136:1 (2011): 47–62; Einar Laxness, „Sagnfræðingurinn Jón Sigurðsson,“ *Íslenska söguþingið* 28.–31. maí 1997. Ritstjórar Guðmundur J. Guðmundsson og Eiríkur K. Björnsson. Ráðstefnurit I (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands og Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands, 1998), 19–27.

11 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* I. bindi. Viðbúnaður (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska þjóðvinafélag, 1929), 352–353. Umfjöllun Páls um handritasafn Jóns er á bls. 312–317 í V. bindi, 351–355 í I. bindi og 412–415 í III. bindi.

12 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* V. bindi (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska þjóðvinafélag, 1933), 315 og 317.

13 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins* II, 451–713.

14 Aðalbindi handritaskráanna komu út í þremur bindum á árunum 1918–1937 og eru efnis- og nafnalyklar í lok þriðja bindis. Aukabindin, sem eru fjögur talsins og komu út á árunum 1947–1996, eru með sér efnis- og nafnalykla.

bók sinni *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar* (1961). Þar greindi hann einkum frá samskiptum Jóns og auðkýfingsins George Powells (1842–1882) og kaupunum á handrita- og bókasafni Jóns í því samhengi (sjá kaflann „Afdrif og skráning“ hér á eftir).¹⁵ Grímur M. Helgason (1927–1989) fjallaði um samskipti Jóns og Jóns Borgfirðings (1826–1912) vegna handritakaupa í grein í *Árbók Landsbókasafns Íslands* árið 1978.¹⁶ Þar studdist hann við bréfaskipti þeirra sem Finnur Sigmundsson landsbókavörður (1894–1982) gaf út árið 1946 í ritsafninu *Menn og minjar*.¹⁷ Guðjón Friðriksson (f. 1945) skrifaði tveggja binda ævisögu Jóns sem kom út á árunum 2002–2003, en þar er afar lítið fjallað um handritasöfnunina, enda megináhersla verksins á aðra þætti í lífi Jóns.¹⁸ Að sama skapi hefur lítillaga verið fjallað um handritasöfnun Bókmenntafélagsins, einkum í afmælisritum þess.¹⁹ Höfundur þessarar greinar skrifaði svo doktorsritgerð um söfnun Jóns og Bókmenntafélagsins árið 2022 og er greinin byggð að mestu á henni.²⁰

Upphaf og hvatar

Elstu heimildir um handrita- og bókasöfnun Jóns eru frá haustinu 1840. Þá var hann 29 ára að aldri, búinn að vera við nám og störf í Kaupmannahöfn frá 1833 og farinn að taka að sér æ viðameiri fræðaverkefni fyrir hin ýmsu fræðafélög þar í borg. Í bréfi sem hann ritaði til Gísla Hjálmarssonar (1807–1867), læknanema og góðvinar síns, 8. september 1840 kemur söfnunaráhugi hans skýrt fram:

15 Lúdvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 203–341.

16 Grímur M. Helgason, „Af skrifuðum skræðum er allt gott.“ Þáttur af skiptum Jóns Sigurðssonar og Jóns Borgfirðings, *Árbók Landsbókasafns Íslands*. Nýr flokkur 4 (1978), 53–65. Grímur flutti jafnframt útvarpserindi um handritasöfnun Jóns í Ríkisútvarpinu 24. nóvember 1976 í þáttaröð hans *Haldið til haga*. Handrit Gríms að erindinu er að finna í Lbs 40 NF.

17 *Úr blöðum Jóns Borgfirðings*. Finnur Sigmundsson bjó til prentunar. *Menn og minjar*. Íslenzkur fróðleikur og skemmtun 1 (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1946), 94–139.

18 Guðjón Friðriksson, *Jón Sigurðsson I* (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 2002), 536.

19 Jón Sigurðsson, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. Stofnan félagsins og athafnir um fyrstu fimmtíu árin 1816–1866* (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1867), 32–33 og 53–54; Páll Eggert Ólason og Björn M. Ólsen, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag 1816–1916. Minningarrit aldarafmælisins 15. ágúst 1916* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1916), 16–17 og 28–34. Sigurður Línal, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. Söguágrip* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2016), 59–61; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson III*, 351–354.

20 Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, *Í útlendra höndum. Jón Sigurðsson og handritasöfnun á Íslandi 1840–1880*. Doktorsritgerð í sagnfræði við Háskóla Íslands (2022).

Ég óska raunar að eiga allar íslenskar bækur og Íslandi viðkomandi, eins og þú veist, en ég skal þó tiltaka: Alþingisbækurnar, Gretlu, Búasögu etc. Hóla útgáfuna, Gustavs sögu og Bertholds, Vísnaðabókina gömlu, Túllins kvæði, rímur allskonar, guðsorðabækur, en einkum þær eldri, frá dögum Guðbrandar biskups og þaðanaf, t.d. Guðbrandsbiblíu, Grallara, o.s.frv. Allskonar handrit, þó ekki sé nema bréfasöfn, ef það er eftir nokkurn merkismann. Nákvæmar get ég ekki sagt þér, en ætíð er betra meira en minna, ef það fæst. Þá er: Annálar Björns á Skarðsá, fjórði partur Finns kirkjusögu, útlendar ferðabækur ef til væri.²¹

Þessar metnaðarfullu fyrirætlanir Jóns þarf að skoða í ljósi þeirrar söfnunarbylgju sem var mjög áberandi meðal evrópskra fræðimanna í upphafi nítjándu aldar. Þeir voru mótaðir af þjóðernisrómantik þess tíma þar sem lögð var áhersla á söfnun hvers konar menningarverðmæta og munnlegra heimilda er lutu að sögu og þjóðlegum háttum einstakra þjóða og þjóðarbrotu. Ráðist var í söfnun og skráningu þjóðsagna og staðhátta- lýsinga, lýsinga á þjóðháttum, tungumálum, fornmunum, handritum, bókum og svo mætti lengi telja víða um álfuna.²² Hvers kyns söfnun var jafnframt í tísku og heldri borgarar á meginlandi Evrópu leituðust við að eignast og sýna fágæta gripi í húsakynnum sínum sem var arfur frá „Kunstkammerhefð“ sextándu og sautjándu aldar.²³ Persónuleg söfn sumra þeirra urðu síðar hluti af þjóðsöfnum eða voru jafnvel byggð á þeim og opnuð almenningi.²⁴ Jón Sigurðsson benti lesendum *Nýrra félagsrita* á þessa safnabylgju sem reið yfir umheiminn árið 1844: „Engin þjóð er nú til í veröldinni, sem siðuð vill heita, að hún leggi ekki stund á að eiga góð bókasöfn, og hinar best menntuðu þjóðir verja ænum peningum úr

21 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar: 1811–1911, 17. júní. Bréf Jóns Sigurðssonar. Úrval.* Jón Jensson og Þorleifur H. Bjarnason sáu um útgáfuna (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1911), 19.

22 Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History*. Third edition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 127–134.

23 Sjá t.d. Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment. Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

24 Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe, 200–201*. Hér má t.d. nefna British Library sem myndað var úr söfnum Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), Sir Roberts Cotton (1571–1631), Georgs III. (1760–1820) og Roberts (1661–1724) og Edwards Harley (1689–1741).

almennum sjóði til að auka og prýða söfn þessi sem mest, og kaupa til þeirra það sem ekki fæst með öðru móti.“²⁵

Íslensk handrit höfðu þá lengi verið eftirsótt meðal erlendra aðila, allt frá sextándu öld með ásókn Dana og Svía og langt fram á æviár Jóns. Áhuginn einskorðaðist ekki við handrit því að klæði, bækur, vefnaður og forngripir fylgdu í kjölfarið. Sá áhugi færðist í aukana eftir því sem leið á nítjándu öld með bættum siglingum til landsins.²⁶

Landsmenn urðu varir við þennan síaukna áhuga á íslenskum menningarminjum, þar á meðal Jón eins og kemur fram í bréfi sem hann skrifaði til Sveinbjarnar Egilssonar (1791–1852) í júní 1837.²⁷ Í bréfinu ritaði Jón:

ég óskaði [að] einhver vildi gangast fyrir að safna gersemum íslenskum, bæði fornaldarleifum og gömlum bréfum og skræðum, eins og allra handa nýrri Excerpter til Íslands sögu og annars fleira, svo allt þvílíkt ekki kæmist í útlendra hendur, eða menn gætu ekkert vitað um Ísland nema hér [í Kaupmannahöfn].²⁸

Jón hafði því augljósar áhyggjur af því að íslenskir menningarmunir væru að hverfa „í útlendra hendur“ sem kom enn frekar fram í umfjöllun hans og Magnúsar Hákonarsonar (1812–1875) í *Skírni* 1837 um Íslandsleiðangur franska læknisins Pauls Gaimard (1793–1858) 1835 og 1836.²⁹ Gaimard og leiðangursmenn hans viðugu að sér miklu magni náttúru- og menningarminja á ferðum sínum um landið og töldu þeir Jón og Magnús að „óskandi væri að Íslendingar vissu sjálfir hvað þeir láta af hendi, og hefðu hönd í með hinum útlendu, því ekki er hægara að sækja fáséða gripi til útlanda ef safn þeirra yrði stofnað í landinu sjálfu.“³⁰ Engin stofnun var þá á Íslandi sem varðveitti slíka muni: Landsskjalasafnið

25 Jón Sigurðsson, „Registr yfir Íslands stiftisbókasafn. Viðeyar klaustri. Prentað á kostnað stiftisbókasafnsins 1842. 8,“ [Ritdómur] *Ný félagsrit* 4 (1844): 131.

26 Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, *Í útlendra höndum*, 37–55, 128–132.

27 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 5–10. Sjá einnig hugmyndir Finns Magnússonar um nauðsyn þess að stofna skjalasafn á Íslandi í byrjun nítjándu aldar. Aðalgeir Kristjánsson, „Tillögur Finns Magnússonar um stofnun handrita- og skjalasafns á Íslandi,“ *Gripla* 4 (1980): 172–185.

28 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 9.

29 Sjá nánar: Árni Snævarr, *Maðurinn sem Ísland elskaði. Paul Gaimard og Íslandsferðir hans 1835–1836*. (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 2019).

30 „Viðbætir við fréttirnar,“ *Skírnir* 11 (1837): 123–124.

(síðar Þjóðskjalasafn) var ekki stofnað fyrr en 1882, Forngripasafnið (síðar Þjóðminjasafn) 1863 og handritasafn var ekki formlega sett á fót innan Landsbókasafns fyrr en 1846. Helstu opinberu varðveislustaðir handrita og skjala voru þá í Reykjavík (skjalasöfn stiftamtsins, landsyfirréttar og landfógeta) og Laugarnesi (í safni Valgerðar Jónsdóttur (1771–1856) og Steingríms Jónssonar biskups (1769–1845)), en á síðarnefnda staðnum hafði Jón unnið sem biskupsskrifari og kynnst safninu vel áður en hann hélt til náms í Kaupmannahöfn.

Jón og fleiri fræðimenn töldu jafnframt að handrit og skjöl væru skjótt að verða eyðileggingu að bráð enda varðveisluaðstæður í íslenskum híbýlum oft laklegar. Sveinbjörn Guðmundsson (1818–1885), þá prestur í Landeyjum, ritar t.d. til Jóns Árnasonar þjóðsagnasafnara og bókavarðar (1819–1888) löngu síðar (1867) að leit að gömlum bókum og handritum bæri yfirleitt lítinn árangur: „það er ekki um auðugan garð að gresja í þessum rakabælum sem allt rotnar í jafnvel á stuttum tíma.“³¹ Þá taldi Jón það óheppilegt að opinber skjöl og gögn væri helst að finna á skjalasöfnum í Kaupmannahöfn svo að lítið mætti finna um sögu Íslands nema í dönskum skjala- og handritasöfnum. Erfitt væri því að draga upp heillega mynd af sögu landsins og ástandi þess í sögulegu ljósi.³² Sjálfur skrifaði hann í *Ný félagsrit* árið 1841 að segja mætti „að saga landsins fari út úr landinu, því nú sem stendur er þegar orðið ótækt að semja hana eða laga hana heima þar, af því allt það sem mest riður á er í skjalasöfnum í Kaupmannahöfn.“³³

Um svipað leyti hóf Jón sjálfur viðamikla söfnun handrita, skjala og bóka eins og kom fram í fyrrnefndu bréfi hans til Gísla Hjálmarssonar. Honum var þó áfram umhugað um að opinber stofnun eða félag myndi sjá um söfnun og varðveislu handrita og skjala heima á Íslandi eins og kemur t.d. fram í ritgerð hans um Alþingi í *Nýjum félagsritum* árið 1841:

Hversu mikil nauðsyn væri ekki, að safna á einn stað á Íslandi skjölum þeim sem heyra til sögu landsins? [O]g hversu þryðilegt fyrirtæki væri það af þeim, er elska Ísland og vilja framför þess,

31 NKS 3010 4to. Sveinbjörn Guðmundsson til Jóns Árnasonar 18. nóvember 1867.

32 Sjá t.d. Guðrún Nordal, „Það þarf annað en hjalið tómt til að hrinda Íslandi á fætur aftur.“ Um viðbúnað Jóns Sigurðssonar, *Jón Sigurðsson. Hugsjónir og stefnumál. Tveggja alda minning 1811 17. júní 2011*. Ritstjóri Jón Sigurðsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2011), 71–80.

33 Jón Sigurðsson, „Um Alþing á Íslandi,“ *Ný félagsrit* 1 (1841): 96.

að styrkja slíkt fyrirtæki með fégjöfum eða skjölum, sem annars kunna að tortímast. Ég er sannfærður um, að stúdentar sem hér eru í Kaupmannahöfn yrðu fúsir á að styrkja til að safna og afskrifa það sem hér er, fyrir sanngjarnlega þóknun.³⁴

Þessi hugleiðing Jóns varð að veruleika að nokkru leyti fimm árum síðar með kaupum yfirvalda á handritasafni Valgerðar Jónsdóttur en með þeim kaupum var handritasafn sett á fót innan Landsbókasafns. Mörkuðu þau kaup „formlegt upphaf þeirrar menningarstefnu að varðveitt væru íslensk handrita- eða skjalasöfn á íslenskt grund á ábyrgð stjórnvalda“ að mati Ögmundar Helgasonar (1944–2006), forstöðumanns handritasafns Landsbókasafns.³⁵

Jón hélt þó áfram að falast eftir íslenskum handritum til sín í Kaupmannahöfn og komst á þá skoðun að í raun væri hagkvæmast að varðveita þau þar sem þau kæmu að sem mestum notum, þ.e. í blómlegu fræðasamfélagi Kaupmannahafnar frekar en á Íslandi þar sem slíkt samfélag var á bernskuskeiði (sjá nánar í kaflanum „Hindranir og tækifæri“ hér að aftan).³⁶ Hann vann jafnframt að handritasöfnun á vegum Fornfræðafélagsins í Kaupmannahöfn sem skjalavörður þess á fimmta og sjötta áratug aldarinnar en félagið sendi *Boðsbréf til Íslendinga um fornritaskýrslur og fornsögur* vorið 1846.³⁷ Söfnun félagsins bar töluverðan árangur og bárust því skýrslur, uppskriftir og gömul handrit og skinnblöð eins og sjá má af greinargerðum sem Jón tók saman og birtar voru í tímariti félagsins, *Antiquarisk tidsskrift*, á árunum 1846–1851.³⁸ Áhersla Jóns á að fá

34 Sama rit, 129.

35 Ögmundur Helgason, „Landsbókasafn og íslensk fræði“, *Mímir* 44 (1996): 42.

36 Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, *Í útlendra höndum*.

37 Sjá um starfsemi félagsins: Böðvar Kvaran, *Auðlegð Íslendinga. Brot úr sögu íslenzkrar bókaútgáfu og prentunar frá öndverðu fram á þessa öld* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1995), 300–306 og 394–396; Aðalgeir Kristjánsson, *Nú heilsar þér á Hafnarlóð. Ævir og órlög í höfuðborg Íslands 1800 – 1850* (Reykjavík: Nýja bókafélagið, 1999), 140–149; Finnur Jónsson, „Hið konúnglega norræna fornfræðafélag 28.1.1825–1925“, *Ársrit Hins íslenska fræðafélags* 9 (1927–1928): 1–16. Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson I*, 217–231 og 302–328.

38 „Det historisk-archæologiske archiv“, *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift* 2 (1846–1848): 38–47 og 154–172. „Det historisk-archæologiske archiv“, *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift* 3 (1849–1851): 13–27 og 218–266. Sjá um söfnun félagsins: Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, „Alþýðleg fornfræði og Jón Sigurðsson forseti“, *Góssið hans Árna. Minningar heimsins í íslenskum handritum*. Ritstjóri Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum

íslensk handrit til Kaupmannahafnar átti þó eftir að verða umdeild eins og vikið verður að hér á eftir.

Söfnunarstefna og sérstaða

Söfnunarstefna Jóns var einföld. Í fyrirnefndu bréfi til Gísla Hjálmarssonar í september 1840 óskaði hann eftir því að eignast *allar* íslenskar bækur og bækur sem lúta að Íslandi og í bréfi til Jens bróður síns (1813–1872) 5. júlí 1848 kemur fram að hann óski eftir að fá „allt hvað prentað er, hver fjandinn sem það er,“ og tilgreinir þar ekki aðeins blöð, tímarit og bækur heldur einnig grafskriftir, boðsbréf og fleira smáprent, sem oft var erfitt að útvega, og segir tilganginn með því vera að „halda þessu saman, svo það tapist ekki.“³⁹ Hann lét minna uppi um söfnunarstefnu sína hvað handrit varðaði nema að hann vildi „allskonar handrit“ sem fyrir segir.⁴⁰ Jóni virðist því ekki hafa nægt að fá uppskriftir af handritum sem hann þurfti á að halda við fræðastörf, eins og tíðkaðist meðal fræðimanna á þessum tíma, heldur vildi hann einfaldlega eignast þau sem flest. Viðfeðma söfnunarstefnu á borð við þessa mátti finna meðal annarra safnara á meginlandinu um svipað leyti. Sir Thomas Philips (1792–1872) (er átti Skarðsbók postulasagna, SÁM 1, um tíma), vildi t.d. eignast eintak af öllum prentuðum bókum heimsins og sóttist eftir handritum í svo miklum mæli að hann taldi sig vera „perfect vello-maniac.“⁴¹ Sjálfur lýsti

fræðum, 2014), 80–95; sama, „Dæmigerð þulusending í Árnasafni,“ *Handritasýrpa. Rit til heiðurs Sigurgeiri Steingrímssyni sjötugum 2. október 2013*. Ritstjóri Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2014), 159–181; *Þjóðsögur Guðmundar Sigurðssonar frá Gagnishólum*. Kristján Eiríksson og Sjöfn Kristjánsdóttir sáu um útgáfuna. Ritroð Sögufélags Árnesinga II (Selfoss: Sögufélag Árnesinga, 2013); Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, „(Ó)Traustar heimildir. Um söfnun og útgáfu þjóðkvæða,“ *Skáldskaparmál* 4 (1997): 210–226; sama: „DFS 67,“ *Opuscula* IX (2003), 233–266; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson I*, 318–328. Þau handrit sem borist höfðu félaginu voru afhent Árnasafni árin 1883 og 1886 (og síðar Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í Reykjavík) en hluti fór til Konungsbókhlóðu og síðar til Dönsku þjóðfræðastofnunarinnar (Dansk Folkemindesamling). Handrit úr fórum Fornfræðafélagsins eru nú í: AM 395–406 fol., AM 927–931 4to, AM 933–938 4to, AM 940 4to, AM 942–953 4to, AM 955–973 4to, AM 237–251 8vo og AM 276–277 8vo. Í Dansk Folkemindesamling er þau að finna í DFS 65–68 og DFS 116–118.

39 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 142.

40 Sama rit, 19.

41 Nicholas A. Basbanes, *A Gentle Madness. Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), 120–121.

Jón bóka- og handritasafni sínu í bréfi til efri deildar Alþingis í ágúst 1877 þegar umræða fór þar fram um möguleg kaup á safni hans:

ég hef safnað um mörg ár öllu því, sem ég hef getað, og Ísland snertir, bæði prentuðu og óprentuðu. Sömuleiðis hef ég ritað með minni hendi margt hvað, sem bæði inniheldur merkileg rit um Ísland og á íslensku, og annað, sem helst er grundvöllur fyrir sögu Íslands og bókmennta þess í öllum greinum fyr og síðar. Svo ég taki nokkuð til dæmis, þá hef ég mikið safn yfir allar íslenskar bækur og þær sem Ísland snerta, titla slíkra bóka í tímaröð, og margar af bókunum sjálfar; einnig rithöfundatal, sem að miklu leyti er fullgjört; svo eru þar og prentaðar bækur, sem þar til heyra, og exemplör af mörgum prentuðum bókum frá öllum tímum. Þá tel ég og safn af jarðabókunum og afskriftir þeirra, og mörgum öðrum íslenskum skrám og skjölum. Enn fremur flestar íslenskar bækur, og á öðrum málum, sem skýra um Ísland frá þeim fyrstu til seinustu tíma, bæði eptir innlenda og útlenda rithöfunda, mörg með uppdráttum, sem þar til heyra. Enn fremur ýmsar aðrar bækur, sem heyra til bókmenntum annara landa.⁴²

Jón var að öðru leyti fáorður um handritasafn sitt og söfnunarstefnu en í bréfum hans má sjá að hann sóttist eftir bæði gömlum og nýjum embættis-skjölum og handritum sögulegs- og bókmenntalegs efnis.⁴³ Hann sýndi enda sögu og bókmenntum síðari alda mikinn áhuga og barðist gegn því viðhorfi að þær væru „lítt merkilegar eða varla þeim gaumur gefandi“ í samanburði við miðaldabókmenntirnar eins og fram kom í máli hans á fimmtíu ára afmælisfundi Bókmenntafélagsins árið 1866.⁴⁴ Hann minnti lesendur *Nýrra félagsrita* jafnframt á að margt verðmætt væri að finna í munnlegri geymd þótt það hefði ekki verið ritað á skinn, einkum munnmæli og þjóðsögur.⁴⁵ Þá sagði hann sagnaritara sextánda og sautjándu aldar,

42 *Alþingistiðindi* 1877 I, 203–204.

43 Sjá t.d. Lbs 2410 b 4to. Jón Sigurðsson til Páls Pálssonar stúdents 16. júlí 1866, 23. ágúst 1866 og 17. september 1868.

44 Jón Sigurðsson, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag*: 7.

45 Jón Sigurðsson, „Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart vorwiegend nach mündlicher Überlieferung gesammelt und verdeutscht von Konrad Maurer (Leipzig, 1860),“ [Ritdómur] *Ný félagsrit* 20 (1860): 191. Sjá einnig: Terry Gunnell, „Daisies rise to become

s.s. Jón Egilsson (1548– um 1636), Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá (1574–1655) og Jón Gissurarson (1589/1590–1648), hafa þurft að reiða sig nokkuð á munnlegar heimildir við ritstörf sín og taldi það ekki endilega ókost „því fyrir þessa sök hafa þeir ritað margar frásagnir, sem myndast hafa meðal alþýðu, og lýsa á stundum ágætlega tímunum og hugsunarhætti manna, þó þær sé enganveginn ætíð áreiðanlegar í sögulegum skilningi.“⁴⁶ Jón safnaði því fjölbreyttu efni er laut að sögu Íslands og bókmenntum að fornu og nýju, auglýsti t.d. sérstaklega eftir handritum með kveðskap Hallgríms Péturssonar (1614–1674) í *Þjóðólfi* árið 1855 og falaðist eftir rímum sem Ásgeir Einarsson í Kollafjarðarnesi furðaði sig á eins og kom fram í inngangi.⁴⁷

Hin metnaðarfulla söfnun Jóns sem hófst um 1840 er áhugaverð miðað við stöðu hans á þeim tíma. Um það leyti er hann hóf söfnun sína flutti hann úr Klausturstræti í leiguherbergi við Svertugötu (Svartegade) ásamt frænda sínum, Páli Mathiesen (1811–1880).⁴⁸ Þar hafði Jón augljóslega litið pláss fyrir allt það efni sem hann hugðist safna; bækur, skjöl og handrit. Lífsstefna hans og staða var enn fremur óljós um þær mundir og grundvöllur fyrir viðamikla söfnun var ótraustur. Hann var skráður til náms við Kaupmannahafnarháskóla fram til 1842 en virðist hafa hætt að sækja fyrirlestra við skólann árið 1839.⁴⁹ Hann tók því ekki próf frá háskólanum og reiddi sig á fræðileg verkefni um þessar mundir – og í raun alla sína starfsævi meðfram þingmennsku sem hófst 1845. Efnahagsleg og samfélagsleg staða Jóns var því ólík mörgum öðrum handrita- og bókasöfnurum sem hann hafði kynnst á þessum tíma. Þeir höfðu oft úr miklum fjármunum að spila, höfðu stundum erft handrita- eða bókasöfn sín, komu úr efnamiklum fjölskyldum, bjuggu yfir góðu húsrými og höfðu lokið lærdómsprófum eða hlotið tign innan embættismannakerfisins. Hér má sérstaklega nefna bóka- og handritasafn Steingríms Jónssonar biskups og Valgerðar Jónsdóttur, sem Jón kynntist í dvöl sinni á biskupssetrinu í Laugarnesi

oaks. The politics of early folktale collection on Northern Europe,” *Folklore* 121:1 (2010), 12–37.

46 Jón Sigurðsson, [formáli] Jón Egilsson, „Biskupa-annálar“, *Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenzkra bókmenta að fornu og nýju* I (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmentafélag, 1856), 16.

47 Þí. E.10.1, Ásgeir Einarsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 4. janúar 1855; Jón Sigurðsson, „Hallgrímur Pétursson“, *Þjóðólfur* 8. desember 1855, 24. Um rímnaáhuga Jóns, sjá: Páll Eggert Ólason, Jón Sigurðsson III, 413–414.

48 Guðjón Friðriksson, *Jón Sigurðsson. Ævisaga* I, 208; *Mimmingarrit aldarafnmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 24.

49 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* I, 163.

1830–1833 sem fyrr segir, og safn Finns Magnússonar prófessors (1781–1847) í Kaupmannahöfn, sem Jón var í nánnum samskiptum við allt fram að andláti Finns, en heimili hans var „alsett bókum frá gólfi til lofts“ eins og Benedikt Gröndal (1826–1907) segir frá í endurminningum sínum.⁵⁰

Aðstæður Jóns voru gjörólíkar. Þegar hann hóf sína söfnun var hann 29 ára gamall, embættislaus, var að hætta námi við háskólann án prófgráðu, vann að skammtímaverkefnum á skjala- og handritasöfnum, bjó að litlum veraldlegum eða félagslegum ættarauð, deildi herbergi með frænda sínum og heima á Íslandi beið Ingibjörg Einarsdóttir (1804–1879) hans í festum. Hann hafði því í raun takmörkuð úrræði til að koma sér upp viðamiklu safni handrita og bóka í upphafi og þurfti að treysta á sendingar frá Íslandi, ólíkt t.d. Jóni Borgfirðingi sem gekk á milli bæja á Íslandi og eignaðist handrit og bækur frá fyrstu hendi.⁵¹ Aðstæður Jóns Sigurðssonar og úrræði til söfnunar efldust þó til muna eftir því sem hann tók að sér fleiri embætti, tengslanet hans stækkaði og húsakostur batnaði.

Tengslanet og söfnunaraðferð

Jón varð æ þekktari meðal landa sinna eftir því sem þjóðmálastörf hans jukust; fyrst með útgáfu *Nýrra félagsrita* (1841), svo er hann tók sæti á Alþingi (frá 1845) og settist í stjórn Bókmenntafélagsins (forseti frá 1851). Fjölmargir leituðu til hans með ýmis erindi bréfleidis í auknum mæli en í bréfasafni hans „eru í einni fylkingu: sýslumenn og dómarmar, prestar, stórbændur og kotungar, vermenn, vinnukonur og maddömur, vinnumenn og námsfólk, landshornalýður og dæmdir menn“ eins og Lúðvík Kristjánsson komst að orði í umfjöllun sinni um bréfasafnið og fullyrti að enginn Íslendingur hafi verið í sambandi við jafn fjölmennan hóp landsmanna eins og Jón á þessum tíma.⁵² Lúðvík bætir við:

50 Benedikt Gröndal, *Dægradvöl. Æfisaga mín* (Reykjavík: Bókaverzlun Ársæls Árnasonar, 1923), 146. Eftir andlát Finns 1847 var safn hans boðið upp og taldi þá 329 handrit og 2.640 prentaðar bækur. *Catalogus librorum quos reliquit Finn Magnussen* (Havniæ: [s.n.], 1857). Þá hafði Finnur þó selt um 400 handrit til Bretlands. Sjá nánar: Jón Helgason, „Íslenzk handrit í British Museum,“ *Ritgerðakorn og ræðustúfar* (Reykjavík: Félag íslenzkra stúdenta í Kaupmannahöfn, 1959), 113.

51 Sjá nánar um söfnun Jóns Borgfirðings: *Úr blöðum Jóns Borgfirðings*.

52 Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 115 og 15.

Langsamlega fæstir leita á vit Jóns til þess að ræða við hann um stjórnmal, tjá honum hug sinn í því efni, veita honum bendingar um baráttuaðferðir, eða upplýsa hann um, hvernig horfi hér eða þar um bænaskrár og undirskriftir. Þeir eru mörgum sinnum fleiri, sem koma til hans með kvabb í ýmiss konar myndum. Reyndar hafa eigi allfáir þann hátt á, að minnast í upphafi bréfs á stjórnmal, skjalla Jón sem föðurlandselskara og óviðjafnanlegan velgjörara þjóðarinnar, en áður en lýkur, kemur æ ofan í æ það sama upp að biðja hann að reka eitthvert erindi, stundum nauða ómerkilegt og jafnvel brosvort, en í annan tíma aðkallandi og mikilvægt.⁵³

Í bréfasafni Jóns má glöggst sjá að handrit voru oft notuð sem gjaldmiðill til að liðka fyrir aðstoð og útréttingar Jóns og Ingibjargar í Kaupmannahöfn.⁵⁴ „Hefði Jón aldrei sinnt neinu snatti eða kvabbi landa sinna, hefði mörg bókin og handritið verið föst í hendi, sem annars lágu laus fyrir“ skrifaði Lúðvík Kristjánsson og bætir við: „Jón Sigurðsson vissi því vel, hverju gegndi að snúast vel við bænum landa sinna, stórum sem smáum, fáfengilegum sem mikilvægum.“⁵⁵ Það má til sanns vegar færa því að Jón bauð margoft greiða á móti handrita- og bókasendingum frá Íslandi eins og fram kemur t.d. í bréfi til Boga Thorarensen (1822–1867) 4. júlí 1865: „Ef þú sendir mér af þínum nægtum og vinargæðum handrit eða bækur, þá þakka ég þér fyrir allt, smátt og stórt, og væri það nokkuð sem ég gæti látið í té aftur á móti, þá væri mér ánægja að vita hvað þér væri geðfellt.“⁵⁶ Árni Thorsteinsson landfógeti (1828–1907) ritaði til Jóns 7. ágúst 1864 þar sem hann óskaði eftir stuðningi Jóns við að koma upp sjúkrahúsi í Reykjavík: „Þú getur mikið ef þú vilt okkur vel,“ skrifaði Árni og bætti við: „ég á hinn bóginn er til með einhverntíma ef ég lifi nokkur ár að gefa bókmenntafélaginu einhverja gamla bók.“⁵⁷ Elínborg Friðriksdóttir Vídalín (1833–1918) biður Jón í bréfi 11. nóvember 1876 að vera syni sínum innan handar í Kaupmannahöfn „því hann er ungur og þekkir ekki heiminn,“ og lét fylgja

53 Sama rit, 115–116.

54 Sama rit, 69–117; Margrét Gunnarsdóttir, *Ingibjörg. Saga Ingibjargar Einarsdóttur, eiginkonu Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta* (Reykjavík: Ugly, 2011), 171–180.

55 Sama rit, 117.

56 *Mimmingarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 384.

57 ÞÍ. E.10.1. Árni Thorsteinsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 7. ágúst 1864.

með kvæðahandrit Páls Vídalíns (1667–1727).⁵⁸ Þá voru ýmsir sem sendu Jóni handrit en fengu bækur í staðinn.⁵⁹ Sumir sendu handrit til Jóns gegn því að fá afskrift af þeim til baka eins og Jón Guðmundsson (1845–1888), kaupmaður í Flatey, sem óskaði eftir því fyrir hönd föður síns, Guðmundar Brynjólfssonar (1812–1878), í júní 1868.⁶⁰

Vinir Jóns og kunningjar söfnuðu jafnframt handritum og bókum fyrir hann á Íslandi og sendu til Kaupmannahafnar, ýmist í hans eigið safn eða Bókmenntafélagsins. Hér má nefna Arnljót Ólafsson, prest á Bægisá (1823–1904),⁶¹ Baldvin M. Stefánsson (1838–1888) prentara,⁶² Boga Thorarensen sýslumann,⁶³ Gísla Hjálmarsson lækni,⁶⁴ Halldór Kr. Friðriksson yfirkennara (1819–1902),⁶⁵ Jón Borgfirðing, bóksala og lögregluþjón,⁶⁶ Jón Guðmundsson ritstjóra *Þjóðólfs*,⁶⁷ Marteinn Jónsson (1832–1920) gullsmið,⁶⁸ Pál Melsteð, sýslumann og sagnaritari (1812–1910),⁶⁹ Sighvat Grímsson Borgfirðing alþýðufræðimann (1840–1930)⁷⁰ og Þorlák Ó. Johnson (1837–1917) kaupmann.⁷¹ Í mörgum tilfellum leituðu þessir einstaklingar einnig til annarra aðila til að safna handritum fyrir Jón. Jón Guðmundsson segist t.d. í bréfi til Jóns 15. nóvember 1854 hafa „sett út mann að leita að skræðum í Öræfum handa þér og víðar...“⁷² og Arnljótur Ólafsson segist í bréfi til hans 3. mars 1849 hafa skrifað „öllum

58 ÞÍ. E.10.3. Elinborg Friðriksdóttir Vídalín til Jóns Sigurðssonar 11. nóvember 1876.

59 Sjá t.d. ÞÍ. E.10.4. Guðmundur Vigfússon til Jóns Sigurðssonar 1. ágúst 1868.

60 ÞÍ. E.10.7. Jón Guðmundsson (kaupmaður) til Jóns Sigurðssonar 10. júní 1868.

61 ÞÍ. E.10.1. Arnljótur Ólafsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 3. mars 1849 og 8. mars 1850.

62 JS 142 a fol. Baldvin M. Stefánsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 27. september 1853.

63 JS 142 a fol. Bogi Thorarensen til Jóns Sigurðssonar 7. apríl 1864.

64 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 231.

65 *Bréf til Jóns Sigurðssonar. Úrval*. III. bindi (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska þjóðvinafélag, 1991), 91–92.

66 Handrit Jóns Borgfirðings fóru til Kaupmannahafnardeildar Bókmenntafélagsins um hendur Jóns Sigurðssonar.

67 *Bréf til Jóns Sigurðssonar. Úrval* II. bindi (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska þjóðvinafélag, 1984), 188.

68 ÞÍ. E.10.10. Marteinn Jónsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 20. október 1859. Marteinn lærði gullsmiði í Kaupmannahöfn og kynntist þar Jóni Sigurðssyni. Hann safnaði bókum og handritum fyrir Jón víða um Austurland en fluttist til Vesturheims árið 1883. Sjá um ævi Marteins: „Hálfa öld í hjónabandi“, *Lögberg* 22. ágúst 1912: 1.

69 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 178.

70 „Bréf frá Sighvati Borgfirðingi til Jóns Sigurðssonar“, *Ársrit Sögufélags Ísfirðinga* 5 (1960): 112–114.

71 Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 26–27.

72 *Bréf til Jóns Sigurðssonar. Úrval* II. bindi, 188.

kvæðamönnum, sem ég þekki í Húnavatnssýslu,“ til að hafa upp á rímum sem hann vantaði.⁷³ Þá segist Jón Borgfirðingur í bréfi til Jóns 27. ágúst 1860 hafa fengið loforð hjá „gömlum kalli“ fyrir hluta af annálum er hann hafði viðað að sér.⁷⁴ Safnarar á vegum Jóns leituðu því víða fanga, m.a. hjá einstaklingum sem söfnuðu sjálfir. Þá voru margir safnarar og skrifarar í samskiptum sín á milli og mynduðu eigið tengslanet.⁷⁵ Úrræði Jóns til að afla sér handrita voru því fjölmörg og tengslanet hans marglaga.⁷⁶

Stundum fór Jón vel að mönnum og falaðist eftir handritum með varfærum hætti eins og fram kemur í bréfi hans til sr. Friðriks Eggerz (1802–1894) 26. september 1849: „Þér eruð mikill fornfræðavinur, og kvað eiga margt fágætt og fróðlegt; ef ég mætti vera svo djarfur að mánga til við yður, þætti mér gaman að heyra hvað þér hefðuð helst af þessháttar t.a.m. handritum eldri og yngri, fornkvæðum, rímum o.s.frv.“⁷⁷ „Hugsaðu til mín, bróðir minn, ef þú sérð merkileg handrit, eða gamlar bækur vel um gengnar“ ritar Jón vingjarnlega til Páls Melsteð 29. september 1850.⁷⁸ Hann var stundum rausnarlegur við tengiliði sína og gaf t.d. Páli stúdent Pálssyni (1806–1877) loðstígvél, bréfsefni með fangamarki Páls og vandað veski sem þakklætisvott fyrir aðstoð hans við að útvega bækur og handrit.⁷⁹ Jón sinnti tengiliðum sínum því vel og lánaði þeim bækur og handrit og sendi þeim jafnvel gjafir. Hann átti það þó til að vera nokkuð ágengur eins og Finnur Jónsson prófessor (1858–1934) nefnir í grein sinni um vísinda-störf Jóns í *Skírni* árið 1911. Þar lýsir Finnur því hvernig faðir hans, Jón Borgfirðingur, hafi hreinlega falið fágætt efni á heimili sínu þegar Jón bar að garði því að hann vissi að erfitt væri að neita Jóni ef hann myndi sjá þar

73 ÞÍ. E.10.1. Arnljótur Ólafsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 3. mars 1849.

74 ÞÍ. E.10.7. Jón Borgfirðingur til Jóns Sigurðssonar 27. ágúst 1860.

75 Sjá t.d. Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon og Davíð Ólafsson, *Minor Knowledge and Microhistory. Manuscript Culture in the Nineteenth Century*. Routledge Studies in Cultural History (New York: Routledge, 2017), 152–173.

76 Sjá til samanburðar um tengslanet Jóns Árnasonar við þjóðsagnasöfnun hans: Romina Werth, „*Vox viva docet.*“ *Um tengslanet milli safnara og heimildarmanna við þjóðsagnasafni Jóns Árnasonar*.“ MA-ritgerð í þjóðfræði við Háskóla Íslands, 2015. Einnig um tengslanet Rasmus Rask: Silvia Hufnagel, „The Library of the Genius. The Manuscript Collection of Rasmus Christian Rask,“ *Tabularia* 16 (2016), 305–327; um tengslanet Willard Fiske: Kristín Bragadóttir, *Willard Fiske. Vinur Íslands og velgjörðarmaður* (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2008), 122–131.

77 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 148.

78 Sama rit, 178.

79 *Skrifarinn á Stapa. Sendibréf 1806–1877*. Íslensk sendibréf I. Finnur Sigmundsson bjó til prentunar (Reykjavík: Bókfellsútgáfan, 1957), 233 og 274–276.

gamlar bækur eða handrit.⁸⁰ Sá orðrómur gekk reyndar víða að Jón skilaði ekki alltaf þeim handritum sem hann fékk lánuð.⁸¹ Páll Melsteð fékk t.d. eitt sinn bréfabók Jóns Halldórssonar í Hítardal að láni hjá sr. Þorsteini Hjálmarsen (1791–1871) fyrir Jón. Þorsteinn óskaði ofsinnis eftir henni til baka, eins og Páll nefndi við Jón, en ekkert varð af skilum og varð hún innlyksa í safni Jóns (JS 216 4to, síðar afhent Þjóðskjalasafni).⁸²

Jón átti það til að ganga býsna langt í að útvega sér handrit og skjöl. Þannig fékk hann eitt sinn lánaða kvæða- og vísnaþók úr fórum Sólveigar Pálsdóttur (1821–1886) yfirsetukonu sem faðir hennar, Páll Jónsson „skáldi“ (1779–1846), prestur í Vestmannaeyjum, hafði skrifað árið 1846. Sem tryggingu fyrir skilum setti Jón möttulspennu úr eigu konu sinnar, Ingibjargar Einarsdóttur. Handritinu var hins vegar aldrei skilað og er nú varðveitt í handritasafni Jóns (JS 249 4to) en möttulspennan varðveittist í fjölskyldu Sólveigar allt þar til henni var komið til Þjóðminjasafns árið 1957.⁸³ Þá taldi Jón að mörgum handritum væri einfaldlega betur fyrir komið hjá sér en á Íslandi þar sem þau væru lítið notuð. Árið 1856 fékk hann t.d. lánaða málðagabókina D12 (Lbs 268 4to) frá Landsbókasafni vegna vinnu sinnar við *Íslenskt fornbréfasafn*.⁸⁴ Þegar Jón Árnason kallaði ítrekað eftir henni til safnsins harðneitaði nafni hans að skila bókinni með nokkrum skætingi, t.d. í bréfi í febrúar 1862: „ekkert skil ég í, hvernig þér látið með D12. Þið hafið ekkert gagn af því, og ég má ekki missa það ... og ég sé ekki heldur hvað á að þýða að ljá hana nema hún verði notuð.“⁸⁵ Tíu árum síðar var Jón enn með handritið í láni og segist þá ekki mega missa það vegna útgáfu fornbréfasafnsins.⁸⁶

Sama ár óskaði Jón eftir því að fá sjálfan Reykholtsmáldaga lánaðan til Kaupmannahafnar vegna vinnu sinnar við *Íslenskt fornbréfasafn*.

80 Finnur Jónsson, „Vísindastörf Jóns Sigurðssonar,“: 179.

81 Þf. E.10.14. Vernharður Þorkelsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 25. október 1856.

82 „Bréfabók Jóns Halldórssonar,“ *Nýtt kirkjublað* 15. mars 1908: 63. *Bréff frá Páli Melsteð til Jóns Sigurðssonar. Viðbætur við útgáfuna 1913* (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska fræðafélag í Kaupmannahöfn, 1924), 78 og 100. Bréfabókin var afhent Þjóðskjalasafni árið 1900. Gísli Baldur Róbertsson, „Týnt blað úr bréfabók séra Jóns Halldórssonar í Hítardal kemur í leitirnar.“ Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands. Heimild mánaðarins, desember 2015. Sótt 5.5.2021.

83 https://skjalasafn.is/heimild/tynt_blad_ur_brefabok_sera_jons_halldorssonar_i_hitardal_kemur_i_leitirnar. Margrét Gunnarsdóttir, *Ingibjörg*, 244.

84 Handritið var síðar afhent Þjóðskjalasafni.

85 *Úr fórum Jóns Árnasonar* I, 363–364.

86 *Úr fórum Jóns Árnasonar* II, 187.

Máldaginn, sem talinn er vera að hluta til frá því um 1185, var þá varðveittur í Reykholti og hugðist Vernharð Þorkelsson (1785–1863), sem þá var þar prestur, senda hann áleiðis til Jóns. Hannes Stephensen (1799–1856) prófastur Borgfirðinga, kom þó í veg fyrir að hann yrði sendur lengra um sinn og skrifaði Vernharði harðort bréf af því tilefni í septemberlok: „Mig furðar ... að þér skylduð láta tilleiðast fyrir einfalda beiðni privatmanns, án nokkurrar heimildar frá neinum yfirmanni yðar, að selja af hendi og voga yfir svo langan veg á sjó og landi svo áriðandi eignarskjölum kirkju yðar, án þess, ef til vill, að hafa nokkra staðfesta afskrípt þeirra í höndum, sem varið gæti hana tjóni af missi originaldocumentanna.“⁸⁷ Helgi Thordersen biskup (1794–1867) fékk afrit af bréfinu og gaf í kjölfarið út umburðarbréf til allra prófesta í landinu 1. desember sama ár:

Með því ég hef orðið þess vísari, að einn af prestum hér á landi hafði í áformi að senda gömul og áriðandi eignarskjöl á bókfelli ... héðan af landi burt og til Kaupmannahafnar, og ég að öðru leyti er ekki ugglas um, að fleiri kunni að taka upp á hinu sama, þá vil ég mælast til þess við yðar velæruverðugheit, að þér alvarlega áminnið prestana í yðar prófastdæmi um, að baka ekki sjálfum sér ábyrgð, en kirkjunum og prestaköllunum tjón með því að leggja eignarskjöl nefndra stiftana, sem þeim er trúað fyrir, í svo mikla hættu, að senda þau héðan af landi, sem getur haft í eftirdragi algeran missi eignanna sjálfra fyrir kirkjurnar og prestaköllin, heldur að þeir annaðhvort í gegnum yður eða þá beinlínis vildu mót kvittun héðan senda mér slík forn skjöl ...⁸⁸

Reykholtsmáldaginn sjálfur komst þó til Jóns að lokum og var hjá honum allt til ársins 1869 þegar honum var skilað til Péturs Péturssonar biskups (1808–1891).⁸⁹ Jón gekk því stundum fast eftir að fá handrit og skjöl til sín, hvort sem það var í eigið safn, safn Bókmenntafélagsins eða til láns vegna fræðastarfa. En hann eignaðist einnig handrit með kaupum á handritasöfnum annarra, t.d. Jóns Árnasonar, Finns Magnússonar og Hallgríms Schevings eins og nánar verður vikið að í kaflanum „Samsetning handritasafns“.

87 *Skrá um skjöl og bækur í Landsskjalasafninu í Reykjavík* II. bindi. *Skjalasöfn klerkdómsins* (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðja Þjóðólfs og Gutenberg, 1905–1906), xxxiii.

88 ÞÍ. Biskupsskjalasafn C III. Bréfabók biskups 1854–1856. Bréf nr. 528.

89 *Skrá um skjöl og bækur í Landsskjalasafninu í Reykjavík* II, xxxiv.

Jón var því í senn forgöngumaður að handritasöfnun Kaupmanna-hafnardeildar Bókmenntafélagsins, forseti þess, stóð að eigin söfnun og hafði umsjón með söfnun Fornfræðafélagsins. Þannig bárust honum handrit úr ýmsum áttum sem honum var stundum í sjálfsvald sett hvernig ætti að ráðstafa. Í bréfi sem Jón skrifar Gísla Hjálmarssyni 19. maí 1854 óskar hann eftir því við Gísla að hann reyni að hafa uppi á kvæðasöfnum sr. Stefáns Ólafssonar í Vallanesi (1619–1688), Bjarna Gissurarsonar í Þingmúla (1621–1712) og annarra af austfirsku skáldum sautjándu aldar: „Komstu eftir því og útvegaðu Bókmenntafélaginu eða mér eitthvað af því, eða hverju sem er af þessháttar.“⁹⁰ Það sama má segja um söfnun Fornfræðafélagsins. Í bréfi sem Jón Þórðarson (1826–1885), prestur á Klausturhólum, ritaði til Jóns 1. mars 1848 segir hann: „Með blaði þessu sendi ég yður nokkur fornkvæði og þulur, sem ég skrifaði í sumar eftir gömlum mönnum, og sendi ég yður þau fremur enn [Fornfræða]félaginu, svo þér getið valið úr þeim ef þið t.a.m. væruð búnir að fá sumt af þeim áður og því hef ég skrifað þau á sundurlaus blöð, eins og ég sá að þér gerðuð í sumar.“⁹¹

Handritasafn Jóns óx því ár frá ári einkum í gegnum greiðaskipti eða sem þóknun fyrir ýmsar útréttingar og með kaupum á smærri handrita-söfnum. Þá naut Jón góðs af öfluggu tengslaneti sem stækkaði eftir því sem afskipti hans af þjóðmálum urðu umfangsmeiri. Meðlimir þess leituðu jafnframt til enn fleiri aðila í leit að handritum fyrir Jón, jafnvel í svo miklum mæli að sumum þótti nóg um eins og síðar verður vikið að.

Hindranir og tækifæri

Þrátt fyrir að Jóni hafi tekist að viðka að sér hundruðum handrita frá Íslandi á æviárum sínum þurfti hann að takast á við nokkrar hindranir í söfnun sinni. Stærst þeirra var sú gagnrýni sem hann hlaut frá þeim sem töldu óheppilegt að senda handrit úr landi, þ.e. í hans eigu í Kaupmannahöfn af ótta við að þau glötuðust eftir hans dag. Þær raddir urðu háværi eftir því sem leið á söfnunina. Árið 1848 leitaði Jón t.d. til Þorvaldar Sívertsen í Hrappsey (1798–1863) og falaðist eftir bókum úr safni hans,

90 *Minningarrit aldarafmælis Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 231–232.

91 AM 960 IX 4to. Jón var síðar biskupsskrifari hjá Steingrími Jónssyni, biskupi í Laugarnesi, og prestur á Auðkúlu. Hann sendi Jóni Árnasyni ýmsar sagnir er birtust í þjóðsagnaútgáfu hans.

en Þorvaldur var annálaður bókasafnari.⁹² Þorvaldur svaraði Jóni í bréfi 25. janúar 1848: „Ég verð nú ... að segja þér frá sérlyndi mínu, sem í mörg ár hefur við mig loðað, að ég hef viljað að sem allra minnst bærist í burt héðan af fornaldarmenjum til að missast Íslandi, en verða eign og undir hendi Dana.“ Þorvaldur segist þó vera reiðubúinn að gera undantekningu gagnvart Jóni „því ég er viss um, að þú hefur engan vilja til þess að smala héðan því gamla handa „vores elskelige“ Dönum, og því vil ég feginn styðja að þessu fyrirtæki þínu.“⁹³ Í kjölfarið sendi Þorvaldur honum fjölmargar fágætar bækur en Jón gerði sér engu að síður grein fyrir því að sífellt fleiri voru að verða andsnúnir sendingu handrita og bóka úr landi.⁹⁴

Jón greip því til þess ráðs að láta Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, sem hann veitti forstöðu frá 1851, hefja söfnun handrita frá Íslandi til Kaupmannahafnar. Með því móti mætti koma þar upp öfluglu handritasafni sem yrði undir stjórn Íslendinga.⁹⁵ Í ræðu hans á aðalfundi félagsins 2. maí 1854 sagði hann að það væri nær „að senda félaginu handrit og skjöl og prentaðar íslenskar bækur, þær sem nokkuð eru sjaldgæfar, heldur en að rífa þær eða brenna, eða láta fúna niður til ónýtis“ og bætti við að með Íslendingum hafi vaknað „sú tilfinning, að hið íslenska bókmenntafélag stæði þessháttar gjöfum næst, eins og líka satt er.“⁹⁶ Tveimur vikum síðar gaf félagið út boðsbréf þar sem starfsemi þess var kynnt fyrir landsmönnum og jafnframt vakin athygli á því að félagið tæki „fegins hendi [á] móti alls konar handritum, fornum og nýjum ... annálum, ættartölubókum, kvæðum, rímum, bréfum, dómabókum, málðögum o.s.v.frv.“⁹⁷ Hann benti jafnframt á að handritin yrðu tryggilega varðveitt í Kaupmannahöfn en þurfti þá að svara gagnrýnisröddum varðandi bruna er kom upp í húsnæði félagsins árið 1847 þar sem handrit og skjöl félagsins skemmdust, m.a. ÍB 31 4to eins og minnst var á í inngangsorðum greinarinnar.⁹⁸ Félaginu bárust fjölmörg handrit og óx safnið ár frá ári. Árið 1869 voru í safni

92 Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Vestlendingar* II.1 (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1955), 248.

93 ÞÍ. E.10.16. Þorvaldur Sigurðsson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 25. janúar 1848.

94 Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Vestlendingar* II.1, 248.

95 Sjá t.d. *Skýrslur og reikningar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* 1863–1864, ix og *Skýrslur og reikningar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* 1864–1865, ix.

96 Sama rit, viii.

97 *Boðsbréf til Íslendinga frá Hinu íslenska bókmenntafélagi* (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1854), 2.

98 Handritasafn félagsins var þá lítið að vöxtum enda hófst formleg söfnun þess ekki fyrr en 1854. Sjá nánar um eldsvoðann: Páll Eggert Ólason og Björn M. Ólsen, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag 1816–1916*, 20–23.

Kaupmannahafnardeildar félagsins alls 771 handrit og árið 1885 voru þau orðin 1.550 talsins.⁹⁹

Stjórn Reykjavíkurdeildar félagsins ákvað að ráðast einnig í handrita-söfnun og birti auglýsingu þess efnis í *Þjóðólfi* í ágúst 1856.¹⁰⁰ Heimtur Reykjavíkurdeildarinnar urðu þó mun minni en Kaupmannahafnardeildarinnar en alls eignaðist Reykjavíkurdeildin 289 handrit. Kappið sem hún lagði á að safna handritum líkt og Kaupmannahafnardeildin má að einhverju leyti rekja til togstreitu þeirra á milli en forsvarsmenn Reykjavíkurdeildarinnar óttuðust m.a. að Danir myndu ná yfirráðum yfir Kaupmannahafnardeildinni og því væri óæskilegt að handrit væru send þangað.¹⁰¹ Jón Sigurðsson var ekki hrifinn af söfnun Reykjavíkurdeildarinnar og í bréfi sem hann ritaði til hennar 17. maí 1858 lagði hann til að handritasafn hennar yrði sent til Kaupmannahafnardeildarinnar.¹⁰² Þeirri tillögu var hafnað.¹⁰³

Þrátt fyrir að Kaupmannahafnardeild Bókmenntafélagsins væri í íslenski umsjón heyrðust enn óánægjuraddir varðandi handritasöfnun hennar. Einar Þórðarson (1818–1888) prentari gagnrýndi Jón t.d. harkalega í bréfi 30. nóvember 1863 fyrir hans eigin söfnun og söfnun Bókmenntafélagsins í Kaupmannahöfn:

Hvað gjörði þér við öll gömlu handritin sem þér hafið fengið frá Íslandi handa yður og bókmenntafélaginu? Hvar lenda þau, þegar þér hættið að hafa afskipti af þessum handritum, því dragið þér þetta út frá Íslandi; ég man eftir, að þegar þér voruð í broddi fylkinga í ræðum og ritum fyrir Íslendinga, að þér sögðuð, það var óhapp og illa gjört fyrir Ísland, þegar þeir Árni Magnússon og fleiri

99 Sigurður L. Jónasson, *Skýrsla um handritasafn Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* I (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1869); Sigurður L. Jónasson og Finnur Jónsson, *Skýrsla um handritasafn Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* II (Kaupmannahöfn: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1885). Síðar bættust fleiri handrit við safnið. Í skrám Landsbókasafns telst það geyma 1.899 bindi: 1.610 úr Kaupmannahafnardeild og 289 úr Reykjavíkurdeild.

100 „Auglýsing frá deild hins íslenska bókmenntafélags í Reykjavík,“ *Þjóðólfi* 14. ágúst 1856: 132.

101 Sjá umræðu um sameiningu deilda Bókmenntafélagsins: Páll Eggert Ólason og Björn M. Ólsen, *Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag*: 96–127 og 197–198. Einnig: Björn M. Ólsen, „Jón Sigurðsson og Bókmenntafélagið,“: 252–257.

102 Lbs 193 NF. Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. Einkaskjalasafn. Askja 23. Bréf frá Jóni Sigurðssyni til Reykjavíkurdeildar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags 17. maí 1858.

103 Lbs 2017/19. Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. Einkaskjalasafn. Viðbót. Box 46. Bréf frá Pétri Péturssyni til Jóns Sigurðssonar 17. júlí 1858. Í bréfasafni Jóns Þorkelssonar, rektors og forseta Reykjavíkurdeildar Bókmenntafélagsins, (Lbs 1405 4to) má glöggst sjá að oft var grunnt á því góða í samskiptum deildanna.

drógu gömlu handritin frá Íslandi til Kaupmannahafnar, og þetta var satt; eruð þér nú orðnir á annarri meiningu [?]¹⁰⁴

Þessar raddir komu víða fram — árið 1865 ritaði Jóhannes Guðmundsson á Gunnsteinsstöðum t.d. í bréfi til Jóns Sigurðssonar: „Það er eitthvað öfugt í því fyrir Íslendingum að þurfa endilega að hafa bókahillur sínar suður í Danmörku, og ... of langt fyrir okkur bændurna, að minnsta kosti, að seilast til þeirra þangað ...“¹⁰⁵ Velta má vöngum yfir því hver þróunin hefði orðið ef Jón hefði eingöngu hvatt landsmenn til að senda handrit sín til Landsbókasafns eða Reykjavíkurdeldar Bókmenntafélagsins í stað þess að falast eftir þeim til Kaupmannahafnar. Aðgengi að þeim til rannsókna í Reykjavík hefði vissulega aukist eins og andstæðingar flutninga handrita úr landi bentu á en að sama skapi var fræðasamfélagið í Kaupmannahöfn mun öflugra líkt og Jón taldi. Í þessum efnum gat hann skilið á milli fræðilegra sjónarmiða og þjóðernislegra, þ.e. hann taldi handritunum best fyrir komið þar sem þau nýttust til rannsókna og útgáfu.¹⁰⁶

Þrátt fyrir gagnrýnisraddir tókst Jóni að koma sér upp stóru handritasafni og stuðla jafnframt að vexti handritasafns Bókmenntafélagsins í Kaupmannahöfn. Þannig voru um 2.000 handrit samanlagt send frá Íslandi til Kaupmannahafnar á síðari hluta nítjándu aldar, ýmist í safn Jóns Sigurðssonar eða Kaupmannahafnardeild Bókmenntafélagsins.¹⁰⁷ Ástæður þess voru sennilega aðurnefndar vinsældir Jóns og greiðvikni en að auki má vera að ýmsir hafi talið handritum sínum betur komið í vörslu Jóns Sigurðssonar eða Bókmenntafélagsins en í safni Landsbókasafns í Reykjavík

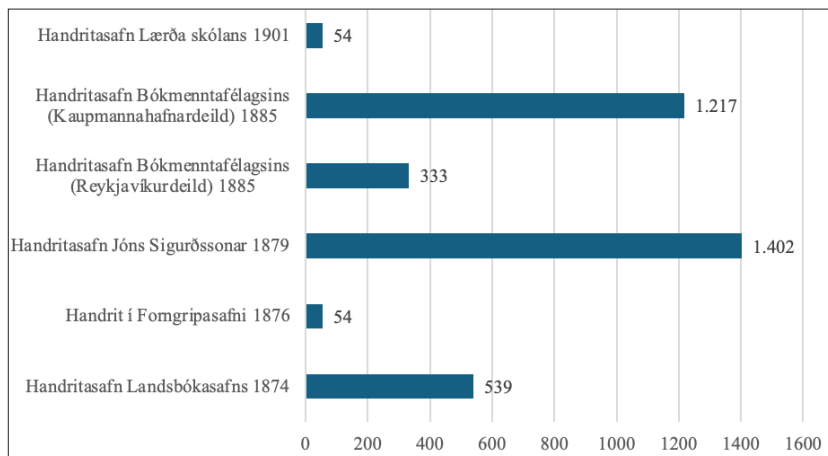
104 ÞÍ. E.10.3. Einar Þórðarson til Jóns Sigurðssonar 30. nóvember 1863. Sjá um gagnrýni á handritasöfnun Árna Magnússonar: Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, *Í útlendra höndum*, 48–51 og 122–125.

105 Lbs 2017/19. Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. Einkaskjalasafn. Viðbót. Box 28. Jóhannes Guðmundsson á Gunnsteinsstöðum í bréfi til Jóns Sigurðssonar 16. ágúst 1865.

106 Sjá nánar um þessa stöðu Jóns sem stjórnmála- og fræðimanns: Clarence E. Glad, „Jón Sigurðsson. A Philologist Captive in the Image of a National Hero,“ *Old Norse-Icelandic Philology and National Identity in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Edited by Gylfi Gunnlaugsson and Clarence E. Glad. National Cultivation of Culture 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 260–323.

107 Hér er átt við þau handrit sem send voru til Jóns í Kaupmannahöfn og í safn Kaupmannahafnardeildar Bókmenntafélagsins. Þá má einnig benda á handritasöfnun Fornfræðafélagsins en óvist er um heildarfjölda þeirra handrita sem barst félaginu þar sem skýrslur um handritaeign þess birtust í tímariti félagsins, *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift*, en ná aðeins yfir tímabilið 1846–1851. Safn Bókmenntafélagsins var keypt til Landsbókasafns árið 1901 en ýmislegt bættist þó við safnið síðar, þannig hefur ÍB 520 4to t.d. að geyma samtíning Jóns Borgfirðings, m.a. frá árinu 1910. Sjá um kaupin: Páll Eggert Ólason og Björn M. Ólsen, Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag 1816–1916, 28–34 og Jón Jacobson, *Landsbókasafn Íslands*, 172–174, 296–297.

sem bjó þá við lakar aðstæður og stjórnun sem Jón Árnason bókavörður kallaði „hreinasta absurdum“ í bréfi til Konrads Maurer (1823–1902) árið 1862.¹⁰⁸ Sumir höfðu jafnframt andúð á þéttbýlinu sem þar var að myndast. Benedikt Vigfússon á Hólum vildi t.d. frekar senda bóka- og handritasafn sitt „í Víti“ en til Reykjavíkur eins og sr. Skúli Gíslason (1825–1888) skrifaði í bréfi til Jóns Árnasonar í mars 1859.¹⁰⁹ Þá benti Eggert Ó. Briem (1811–1894) á að Reykjavík væri talin „nokkurs konar miðpunktur djöfullegrar eigingirni“ eins og hann komst að orði í bréfi til Jóns Borgfirðings árið 1868.¹¹⁰ Margir sendu handrit sín þannig fremur í umsjón Jóns Sigurðssonar í Kaupmannahöfn (í hans eigið safn eða safn Bókmenntafélagsins) frekar en til Landsbókasafnsins í Reykjavík eins og sjá má í skýringarmynd 2. Búseta Jóns



Skýringarmynd 2. Fjöldi handrita í íslenskum söfnum á nítjándu öld.

Heimild: Jón Árnason, *Skrá yfir prentaðar íslenskar bækur og handrit í Stiptisbókasafninu í Reykjavík*; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins II*; Sigurður L. Jónasson, *Skýrsla um handritasafn Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags I*; Sigurður L. Jónasson og Finnur Jónsson, *Skýrsla um handritasafn Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags II*; Lbs 5093 8vo. Handrit Bókasafns Reykjavíkurskóla; Sigurður Guðmundsson, *Skýrsla um Forngrípasafn Íslands í Reykjavík I*; Sigurður Guðmundsson, *Skýrsla um Forngrípasafn Íslands í Reykjavík II*; Sigurður Vigfússon, *Skýrsla um Forngrípasafn Íslands í Reykjavík 1871–1875*.

Athugasemd: Hér er miðað við skráningu Forngrípasafnsins á þeim handritum sem bárust safninu en stundum voru nokkur skinnblöð skráð undir sama aðfanganúmeri. Við skráningu handrita Reykjavíkurdeldar Bókmenntafélagsins í handritasafn Landsbókasafns var sumum þeirra skeytt saman og annað afhent Þjóðskjalasafni og því eru bindin þar færri en í skrá Bókmenntafélagsins frá 1869 og 1885 (289 á móti 333).

108 *Úr forum Jóns Árnasonar I*, 381.

109 Sama rit, 104.

110 ÍB 94 b fol. Eggert Ólafsson Briem til Jóns Borgfirðings 30. júlí 1868.

í Kaupmannahöfn og staða hans sem stjórn mála- og fræðimanns í rótgrónu fræðasamfélagi þar í borg fól því einnig í sér ákveðin tækifæri.

Önnur möguleg hindrun við söfnun Jóns var fólgin í opinberum störfum hans. Hann var launaður erindreki stjórnvalda í Danmörku í fjárkláðamálinu um miðbik nítjándu aldar, einu stærsta deilumáli Íslendinga á þeim tíma.¹¹¹ Þar skipaði hann sér í flokk þeirra sem vildu lækna sauðfé með lyfjum í stað þess að skera niður sem meginþorri landsmanna taldi heppilegri lausn. Sú afstaða kom hreinlega í veg fyrir handritasendingar til Jóns sem má t.d. greina í bréfi frá Jóni Borgfirðingi 27. ágúst 1860. Þar ræðir hann um handrit ónafngreinds manns sem Jón telur ólíklegt að vilji senda handrit sín til Kaupmannahafnar, einfaldlega þar sem hann sé á öndverðum meiði við skoðanir og aðgerðir Jóns í fjárkláðamálinu.¹¹²

Þá má benda á að sífellt fleiri fóru að safna handritum og sérstaklega bókum á svipuðum tíma og Jón. Stundum kom því upp hálfgert kapphlaup milli Jóns og safnara hans og annarra handritasafnara. „Bækur fær þú engar nú, því nú er ég farinn að safna sjálfur“ segir Halldór Kr. Friðriksson t.d. í bréfi til Jóns í september 1866.¹¹³ Brynjólfur Oddsson (1825–1887), bókbindari á Ísafirði, hugðist falast eftir gátusafni Eyjólfss á Kirkjubóli (1841–1909) og senda til Jóns Árnasonar haustið 1859 en greip í tómmt „því eigandi þess kvaðst hafa sent gáturnar til Jóns Sigurðssonar fyrir nýr á vetur,“¹¹⁴ Steinn Steinsen (1838–1883) segir einnig í bréfi til Jóns Árnasonar 27. september 1861 að hann hafi verið að spyrjast fyrir um handrit í Vopnafirði en hafi fengið þau svör „að fyrir einu eða 2 árum hafi maður sem sigldi héðan verið að safna handritum fyrir einhvern í Kaupmannahöfn, líklega Jón Sigurðsson og að hann hafi náð miklu.“¹¹⁵ Hálfu ári síðar ritar Steinn bréf til Jóns á ný þar sem hann segist hafa orðið þess vísari að „útsendarar Jóns Sigurðssonar í Kaupmannahöfn haf[i] náð í það sem til var.“¹¹⁶ Erlendir aðilar höfðu jafnframt enn sem fyrr áhuga á íslenskum handritum, jafnvel úr safni Jóns sjálfs. Bogi Th. Melsteð (1860–1929)

111 Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, „Þjóðhetjan Jón Sigurðsson,“ *Andvari* 122 (1997): 40–62.

112 ÞÍ. E.10.7. Jón Borgfirðingur til Jóns Sigurðssonar 27. ágúst 1860.

113 *Bréf til Jóns Sigurðssonar. Úrval* III, 80.

114 *Úrforum Jóns Árnasonar* I, 136.

115 ÞÍ. 2018/139. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands BA1/1, örk 1. Steinn Steinsen til Jóns Árnasonar 27. september 1861.

116 ÞÍ. 2018/139. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands BA1/1, örk 2. Steinn Steinsen til Jóns Árnasonar 6. janúar 1862.

sagnfræðingur gat þess t.d. í blaðagrein í *Ísafold* í júlí 1885 að ónafngreindir enskir menn hefðu eitt sinn boðið Jóni 1.800 krónur fyrir eiginhandarrit Hallgríms Péturssonar að Passíusálmunum sem Jón eignaðist árið 1856 (JS 337 4to). Ekkert varð þó af þeirri sölu.¹¹⁷

Loks má geta að samgöngur innanlands höfðu áhrif á handritasöfnun á Íslandi á þessum tíma því að oft var ódýrara að senda handrit milli staða á Íslandi með því að sigla með þau til Kaupmannahafnar og þaðan aftur til Íslands heldur en að ferðast með þau innanlands yfir óbrúuð fljót og vegleysur. Þá væri í raun einfaldara að senda handrit beint til Jóns í Kaupmannahöfn. Þetta benti Jón á þegar handrit Guðmundar Einarssonar sýsluskrifara (1823–1865) voru keypt til Reykjavíkurdeildar Bókmenntafélagsins árið 1865 með töluverðum flutningskostnaði. Í blaðagrein í *Norðanfara* í júlí 1867 benti hann á að ef safnið hefði verið flutt til Kaupmannahafnar hefði sá kostnaður verið mun minni.¹¹⁸ Góðar og greiðar samgöngur við Danmörku í samanburði við samgöngur innanlands væri einmitt einn af mörgum kostum þess að varðveita íslensk handrit í Kaupmannahöfn. Í því samhengi má benda á að sr. Árni Helgason taldi þegar árið 1817 að hagkvæmara væri að stýra bókmenntalífi Íslendinga frá Danmörku því að þar væri prentkostnaður lægri en á Íslandi og betri samgöngur, jafnvel betri til Íslands heldur en á milli staða á Íslandi.¹¹⁹

Samsetning handritasafns

Í handritasafni Jóns eru 1.402 handrit sem fyrr segir. Til hægðarauka má skipta safninu í þrjá flokka.

Í fyrsta lagi eru þar einkaskjöl Jóns (241 handritsnúmer) sem hafa að geyma hans eigin fræðaskrif, uppskriftir, bréf og gögn sem varða félags-, stjórn mála- og þingstörf hans. Í raun má því segja að einkaskjalasafn hans sé hluti af handritasafninu.

Í öðru lagi eru í safninu uppskriftir af handritum sem mörg hver voru varðveitt á söfnum í Svíþjóð, á Bretlandseyjum og Íslandi og Jón nýtti við fræðastörf sín. Í safninu eru því 105 handrit er hafa að geyma uppskriftir,

117 Bogi Th. Melsteð, „Um landsbókasafnið,“ *Ísafold* 22. júlí 1885: 121.

118 Jón Sigurðsson, „Um bókmenntafjelagið,“ *Norðanfari* 23. júlí 1867: 57.

119 *Biskupinn í Görðum. Sendibréf 1810–1853*. Íslensk sendibréf II. Finnur Sigmundsson bjó til prentunar (Reykjavík: Bókfellsútgáfan, 1959), 37–40. Sjá einnig: Kristín Bragadóttir, *Bókasafnarinn. Willard Fiske og Íslendssafn hans* (Reykjavík: Ugly, 2019), 138.

flestar frá Páli Pálssyni stúdent og Magnúsi Grímssyni á Íslandi, Sigurði Hansen (1815–1880), Indriða Einarssyni (1851–1939), Benedikt Gröndal og Sigurði Jónssyni (fóstursyni Jóns) (1851–1893) í Kaupmannahöfn og Guðbrandi Vigfússyni (1827–1889) og Jóni A. Hjaltalín (1840–1908) í Bretlandi.¹²⁰ Þannig eignaðist Jón gott safn uppskrifta af handritum sem erfitt var fyrir hann að nálgast og nýttust honum með einum eða öðrum hætti.

Í þriðja lagi má nefna handrit sem Jón eignaðist með öðru móti, þ.e. handrit sem hann fékk send eða handritasöfn sem hann keypti. Alls eru þau 1.056 talsins. Stóran hluta þeirra eignaðist hann úr safni Jóns Árnasonar (228), Finns Magnússonar (57) og Hallgríms Schevings yfirkennara (1781–1861) (40).¹²¹ Safn Jóns Árnasonar hefur að mestu að geyma kvæði, rímur, sögur, sálma og samtíning sem Jón forseti keypti árið 1875.¹²² Handrit úr fótum Finns eru af fjölbreyttum toga en þar á meðal eru minnisbækur hans og fleira af persónulegum gögnum sem Jón keypti á uppboði árið 1857.¹²³ Handrit Hallgríms eru að mestu málfræðilegs eðlis enda vann hann lengi að orða- og málsháttasöfnun samhliða kennslustörfum við Bessastaðaskóla og síðar Lærða skólann.¹²⁴ Jón eignaðist enn fremur handrit í nokkru magni frá Marteini Jónssyni gullsmið (13) og Boga Thorarensen (11). Aðrir nafngreindir gefendur gáfu tíu handrit eða færri, alls 124 talsins. Övíst er um uppruna 583 handrita.

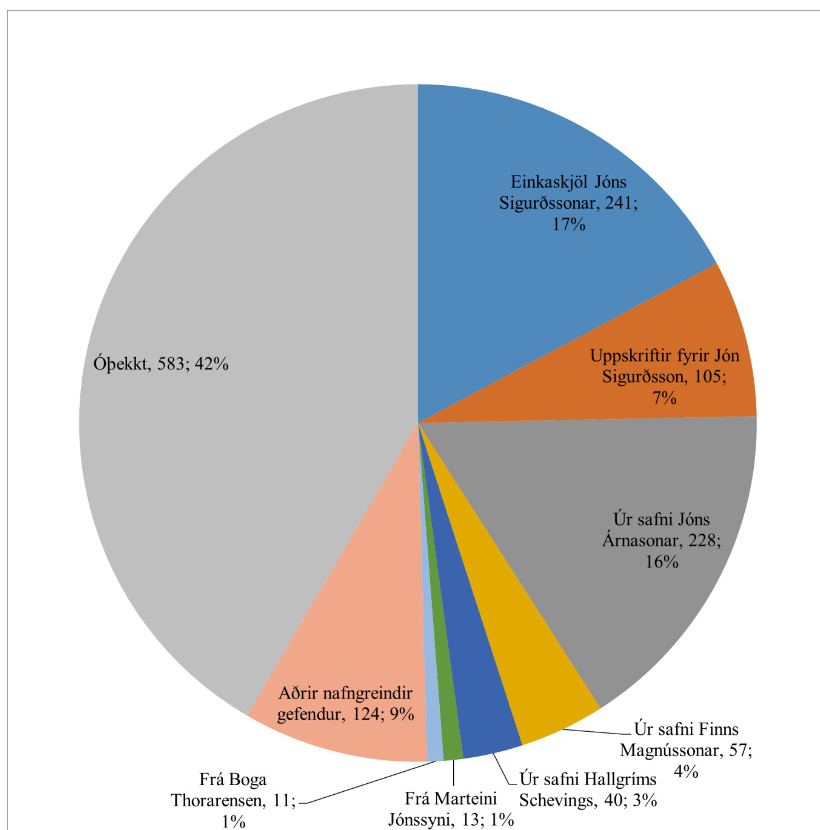
120 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* V, 317. Sjá um vafstur fyrir Jón á söfnum á Bretlandseyjum: Stefán Einarsson, *Saga Eiríks Magnússonar í Cambridge* (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja, 1933), 26, 78 og 118.

121 Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins* II, 451–713 og JS 577 4to, Handritaskrá Jóns Sigurðssonar. Sjá um kaupin á safni Finns: Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* I, 348–349; Jón Jacobson, *Landsbókasafn Íslands*, 72–75. Um kaupin á safni Jóns Árnasonar og Hallgríms Schevings: Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, *Í útlendra höndum*, 88 og 186–191.

122 Safnið er í JS 578–649 4to og JS 377–519 8vo.

123 Minnisbækur Finns eru í JS 163–193 8vo. Önnur handrit úr hans fótum eru dreifð víða um safn Jóns.

124 Safnið er í JS 427–441 4to, JS 81–84 8vo og JS 275–294 8vo. Jón gekk frá kaupunum 1. september 1875. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands. Safn Jóns Sigurðssonar 133 h. Reikningsbók Jóns Sigurðssonar 1. september 1875.



Skýringarmynd 3. Samsetning handritasafns Jóns Sigurðssonar.

Heimild: Páll Eggert Ólason, *Skrá um handritasöfn Landsbókasafnsins II*, 451–713; Jakob Benediktsson, „Skrá um skinnblöð í Landsbókasafni Íslands“, JS 577 4to.

Þessum rúmlega þúsund handritum má með nokkurri einföldun skipta í tvo flokka: Annars vegar embættisskjöl veraldlegra og geistlegra embætta, s.s. bréfa- og dómabækur, mál dagar, vísitásiúbækur og jarðaskjöl og tengd skjöl og handrit á borð við laga- og tilskipanasöfn og lögbækur sem tengdust embættisstörfum. Hins vegar handrit bókmenntalegs- eða sögulegs efnis af fjölbreyttum toga. Á sviði íslenskra bókmennta má nefna Eddurit, fornaldarsögur, Íslendingasögur, riddarasögur, rímur, þulur og kvæðasöfn, sálma og grafskriftir, leikrit og reisubækur, einnig gátur og orða- og málsháttasöfn. Fjöldmörg handrit er að finna á sviði sagnfræði og

persónusögu: annála, fræðimanna- og rithöfundatöl, ættartölur og ævisögur, og einnig handrit varðandi lýsingu Íslands: héraðs-, náttúru- og dýralýsingar og loks handrit af ýmsu tagi: lækningabækur, garðyrkjukver, ritgerðir um verslunarmál, samtíning um bókaútgáfu, bóka- og handrita-skrár og svo mætti lengi telja enda vildi Jón eignast „allskonar handrit“ sem fyrr segir.

Langflest handritin í safni Jóns eru frá sautjándu öld og yngri, mörg eru rituð á æviárum hans og sum jafnvel stuttu fyrir andlát hans, t.d. JS 486 4to sem er uppskrift frá því um 1875 á bæklingi Odds Hjaltalíns læknis (1782–1840) um endurlífgun sem kom út árið 1820. Það elsta er meðal elstu handrita eða handritsbrotta sem varðveitt eru á Íslandi, skinnblað úr erlendra tíðabók frá því um 1100 (JS 10 fragm.).

Afdrif og skráning

Jón safnaði handritum alveg fram á síðustu æviár. Árið 1877 eignaðist hann t.d. *Rímur af Sigurgarði og Valbrandi* eftir Guðmund Bergþórsson (1657–1705) frá því um 1820 sem þá voru í eigu Hólmfriðar Þorvaldsdóttur (1812–1876) (JS 251 8vo). Ári síðar falaðist hann jafnframt eftir að fá handrit með kveðskap Páls Vídalíns lánuð frá Oxford „því ég vildi gjarnan safna ljóðmælum hans,“ eins og hann nefndi í bréfi til Eiríks Magnússonar 14. maí 1878.¹²⁵ Þá var Jón þó farinn að reskjast og lést einu og hálfu ári síðar. Safn hans var þá orðið að verðmætu safni fágætra bóka og handrita. Það nýttist Jóni fjárhagslega því að um 1866 gerði hann samkomulag við auðkýfinginn George Powell um ritun sex binda Íslandssögu og fékk háar fjárhæðir greiddar í því skyni, um 12.600 danska ríkisdali – „Þetta skiptir sköpum í fjármálum Jóns Sigurðssonar og gjörbreytir hag hans“ skrifar Guðjón Friðriksson í ævisögu Jóns.¹²⁶ Sem tryggingu veðsetti Jón handrita- og bókasafn sitt fyrir upphæðinni í Englandi. Ekkert varð þó af ritun Íslandssögunnar. Þegar frá leið urðu annir hans við þing- og fræðastörf og hrakandi heilsa til þess að hann komst aldrei í að vinna verkið. Á ódagsettum miða hefur Jón punktað niður mögulega lausn á málinu:

125 *Bréf Jóns Sigurðssonar. Nýtt safn* (Reykjavík: Bókadeild Menningarsjóðs, 1933), 241.

126 Guðjón Friðriksson, *Jón Sigurðsson* II. bindi, 350. Sjá um samskipti Jóns og Powells: Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 205–341.

Handrit mín og bækur verða afhentar til Íslands (sem gjöf frá J.S. og G.P.) alternative: Ég reyni að fullgjöra Íslandssögu og fæ þar fyrir hina ákveðnu borgun, sem ég hefi með tekið. Eða ég borga aftur það, sem E.M. [Eiríkur Magnússon] finnst sanngjarnt með til tekinni summu á ári, t.d. 600 krónur. Það sem verður ritað af sögunni og búið til prentunar sér G.P. [George Powell] um kostnað fyrir, hvort sem hann vill heldur láta prenta það á íslensku einungis eða með útleggingu, en handritið sjálft er talið borgað með því, sem ég hef meðtekið. Fyrir milligöngu sína fær E.M. £100, þegar ég hef meðtekið andvirði bókanna og handritanna hjá stjórninni.¹²⁷

Þarna virðist Jón hugleiða hvernig væri hægt að koma í veg fyrir að safn hans myndi glatast. Einn möguleikinn væri að Jón og Powell myndu í sameiningu gefa safnið til Íslands, annar að Jón myndi reyna að klára umsamda Íslandssögu eða sá þriðji að borga til baka það sem hann fékk frá Powell. Tryggvi Gunnarsson og Eiríkur Magnússon (1833–1913), nánir Jóns, reyndu einnig að finna lausn á málinu, en helst datt þeim í hug að gera Powell til góða á einhvern hátt með e.k. vegsemd, heiðursfélagaðild að Bókmenntafélaginu, minnisvarða eða öðru gegn því að sleppa skuldinni.¹²⁸ Eftir miklar vangaveltur ræddi Eiríkur þetta mál við Powell í desember 1877 þar sem kom fram að hann myndi ekki innheimta skuldina.¹²⁹ Hefði Powell gengið að safninu væri það e.t.v. nú varðveitt í Bandaríkjunum eða Bretlandi því að Powell lést árið 1882, aðeins fertugur að aldri, og fluttist ekkja hans til Bandaríkjanna og giftist þar aftur.¹³⁰ Óvíst er hvort hún hefði tekið safnið með sér eða reynt að koma því í verð í Bretlandi. Þá má benda á að í *Norðlingi* í apríl 1880 var lagt til að safn Jóns yrði afhent til Möðruvallaskóla sem stofnaður var sama ár.¹³¹ Safnið hefði þá e.t.v. orðið eldi að bráð en árið 1902 kom upp eldur í húsnæði skólans þar sem Ólafur Davíðsson, þjóðsagnasafnari og náttúrufræðingur, (1862–1903) missti mörg handrit, bæði sín eigin og nokkur sem hann hafði í láni, bókasafn Jóns A. Hjaltalíns skólastjóra (1840–1908) glataðist í eldinum

127 Lúdvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 298–299. JS 144 fol. (bréf, uppköst og minnisblöð JS).

128 Sama rit, 305–306.

129 Guðjón Friðriksson, *Jón Sigurðsson II*, bindi, 541–543.

130 Lúdvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 340.

131 [Án höfundar/titils] *Norðlingur* 6. apríl 1880: 27.

og einnig bækur og „tvö handrit merkileg“ Stefáns Stefánssonar kennara (1863–1921) eins og segir í *Norðurlandi* í mars 1902.¹³²

Í ágúst 1877 samþykkti efri deild Alþingis að verja allt að 25.000 krónum af fjárlögum næstu tveggja ára til kaupa á handrita- og bókasafni Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta.¹³³ Í umræðum á þinginu sagði Jón Pétursson (1812–1896) yfirdómari að safnið væri „hin dýrmætasta eign og margfalt betri fjársjóður fyrir Ísland en einar 25.000 krónur“ og Ásgeir Einarsson þingmaður Húnvetninga sagði að sjálfsagt væri að kaupa það „svo framarlega sem Íslendingar virtu nokkurs fornfræði lands síns ...“.¹³⁴ Ákvörðunin var þó ekki óumdeild því að kaupverðið var 4% af áætluðum heildarútgjöldum fjárlaga næstu tveggja ára, á sama tíma og aðhaldsstefna var ríkjandi í fjármálum landsins.¹³⁵ Grímur Thomsen (1820–1896) formaður fjárlaganefndar „hvítnaði í andliti og hristi höfuðið“ þegar Tryggvi Gunnarsson (1835–1917), þingmaður Suður-Múlasýslu, kynnti þessa hugmynd fyrir nefndinni eins og hann segir í endurminningum sínum.¹³⁶ Nokkru síðar lögðu þeir Konráð Gíslason og Vilhjálmur Finsen (1823–1892) mat á safnið, sem þá var í fórum Jóns í Kaupmannahöfn, og töldu að umsamin upphæð væri réttmæt. Þeir bentu á að í safninu væri að finna mikið af uppskriftum úr íslenskum fornritum, nokkra annála, uppskriftir ýmissa maldaga, uppskrift af Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar, ágrip margra annarra jarðabóka, talsvert safn af frumrituðum skjölum og ritgerðum um íslenskt réttarfar, bókmenntir, tungu og sögu, kvæðasöfn og margt fleira.¹³⁷

Hinn 24. maí 1878 samþykkti Kristján IX. Danakonungur (1818–1906) kaupin og 12. júní sama ár fékk Jón andvirði þess greitt.¹³⁸ Hann lést rúmu ári síðar, 7. desember 1879, og var þá hafist handa við að flytja safnið til

132 „Möðruvallaskóli brunninn.“ *Norðurland* 29. mars 1902: 106.

133 *Alþingistíðindi* 1877 I, 213.

134 Sama rit, 209–210.

135 Í frumvarpinu voru heildarútgjöld árána 1878 og 1879 áætluð 628.663 krónur. *Alþingistíðindi* 1877 I, 8.

136 Tryggvi Gunnarsson, *Endurminningar Tryggva Gunnarssonar. Sérprent úr Tímanum* 1918 (Reykjavík: [s.n.], 1918), 125.

137 *Stjórnartíðindi* 1878 B, 107. Sjá um kaupin á handritasafni Jóns og aðdragandann að þeim: Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 205–339. Einnig: Páll Eggert Ólason, *Jón Sigurðsson* IV. bindi, 48–49 og V. bindi, 326–328.

138 *Stjórnartíðindi* 1878 B, 107. Lúðvík Kristjánsson tilgreindi að kaupin hefðu verið frágengin ári síðar (þ.e. 12. júní 1879) en það kemur ekki heim og saman við dagsetningu á kaupsamningnum sem varðveittur er í JS 172 fol. Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 317.

Íslands. Það barst til landsins í þremur sendingum í mars, apríl og maí 1880 í alls 43 kössum og komst formlega í vörslu Landsbókasafns árið 1881 þar sem það hefur verið æ síðan.¹³⁹ Handritum Jóns Árnasonar, sem Jón hafði keypt 1875 og voru varðveitt í Reykjavík, var bætt við safnið samkvæmt samkomulagi nafnanna þar um og árið 1888 skilaði Árnafnd nokkrum handritum úr safni Jóns sem hún hafði haft í láni.¹⁴⁰ Þá afhenti Stjórnarráð Íslands árið 1911 samtíning Jóns frá því í júní 1878 um bóka- og handritasafn sitt sem var bætt við safnið og einnig gögn um dánarbú þeirra hjóna (JS 171–172 fol.). Bréf Jóns voru varðveitt á Landsbókasafni (JS 141–142 fol.) og Þjóðskjalasafni (E.10). Þar eru jafnframt varðveittir ýmsir reikningar Jóns, blaðaúrklippur og gögn vegna dánarbúsins (E10.17–23).¹⁴¹

Ýmislegt hefur verið fært til innan handritasafns Jóns eða afhent Þjóðskjalasafni í árunna rás. JS 443–445 4to var t.d. upphaflega í JS 82 fol. og ýmis skjöl úr JS 607–608 4to voru síðar afhent Þjóðskjalasafni ásamt JS 101 fol., JS 131–132 fol., JS 136 fol. og JS 216 4to ásamt nokkrum fornbréfum. Þá voru ýmis skinnblöð og fornbréf tekin úr handritum úr safni Jóns og skráð sérstaklega þegar Jakob Benediktsson (1907–1999) tók saman skrá yfir skinnblöð í handritasafni Landsbókasafns árið 1959.¹⁴²

Þegar fréttir bárust af því að yfirvöld hefðu keypt safn Jóns til landsins skrifaði Jón Ólafsson (1850–1916) ritstjóri í *Skuld* árið 1881:

Vér höfum nýlega ... keypt handritasafn og bókasafn Jóns Sigurðssonar fyrir 25.000 kr. – Það sýnir, að vér metum þó bókmenntalega fjársjóði nokkurs. En til hvers höfum við keypt þetta? – Ekki til að láta það fúna niður og liggja ónotað sem gull í jörðu grafið. Nei! Þær ástæður, sem knúðu oss til að kaupa safn þetta, þær sömu ástæður verða og að hvetja oss til að sjá svo um, að fjársjóður þessi verði hagnýttur.¹⁴³

139 *Stjórnartíðindi* 1881 B, 81. Sjá: Lúðvík Kristjánsson, *Á slóðum Jóns Sigurðssonar*, 335–336. Sjá einnig: Jón Jacobson, *Landsbókasafn Íslands*, 123–124 og 133–135. Bóka- og handritasafn Jóns kom til landsins í 39 kössum og svo skrár að auki í fjórum kössum.

140 Jón Jacobson, *Landsbókasafn Íslands*, 137–138, 152.

141 Sjá um bréfasafn Jóns og varðveislusögu á Þjóðskjalasafni: Gísli Baldur Róbertsson, „Eftir hvaða leiðum barst Þjóðskjalasafni bréfasafn Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta (1811–1879)?“ Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands. Heimild mánaðarins. <https://heimildir.is/heimild-manadarins-november-2023/> Sótt 8.8.2025. Á Þjóðminjasafni eru jafnframt varðveittar minnisbækur Jóns í Safni Jóns Sigurðssonar.

142 Jakob Benediktsson, „Skrá um skinnblöð í Landsbókasafni Íslands.“

143 Jón Ólafsson, „Landsbókasafnið,“ *Skuld* 22. janúar 1881: 299.

Ein af forsendum þess að hægt væri að nota safnið var að gerð yrði aðgengileg skrá yfir það eins og kallað var eftir strax í desember 1879. Ónafngreindur greinarhöfundur skrifaði í *Mána* á Þorlákssmessu það ár:

Bóka- og handritasafn Jóns Sigurðarsonar er nú þegar orðið landsins eign, er flytst hingað upp á sínum tíma, en eigi er allt unnið fyrir það; landsmenn vita eigi sjálfir hvað þeir hafa keypt, meðan engin skrá (Catalog) er yfir bókasafnið. Viljum vér því stinga upp á því, að heppilegt mundi vera að næsta alþingi (fyrst það eigi var gjört þegar í sumar) veitti fé til þess að skrá yfir bóka og handritasafnið yrði samín og prentuð, er alþjóð á heimting á, þar eð verð safnsins er greitt úr landssjóði.¹⁴⁴

Það leið þó hálf öld þar til skrá yfir safnið birtist loks á prenti í II. bindi fyrrnefndrar skrár Páls Eggerts Ólasonar yfir handritasafn Landsbókasafns en það bindi kom út 1931–1932.¹⁴⁵ Upplýsingar úr skránum voru svo færðar yfir á vefinn handrit.is rúmum 80 árum síðar og þar má jafnframt skoða þó nokkur handrit úr safni Jóns sem hafa verið mynduð.

Niðurstöður

Saga einstakra handritasafnara og safnana þeirra er mikilvægur hluti af íslenskum handritaarfi. Í þessari grein hefur stuttlega verið fjallað um hina viðamiklu handritasöfnun Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta er hófst um 1840 og stóð allt fram að andláti hans árið 1879. Upphaf söfnunarinnar má einkum rekja til þess að Jón hafði töluverðar áhyggjur af erlendri ásælni í íslensk handrit og skjöl, bágra varðveisluskilyrða á Íslandi og fræðaáhuga hans sem setja má í samhengi við þann mikla söfnunar- og skráningaráhuga fræðimanna víða um Evrópu á sama tíma. Söfnunarstefna Jóns var afar víðfeðm — hann vildi einfaldlega eignast allt er laut að Íslandi, gamalt og nýtt, prentað og handskrifað. Sú stefna var afar metnaðargjörn miðað við stöðu hans á þeim tíma er hann hóf söfnunina en þá var hann á þrítugsaldri og bjó við takmörkuð úrræði fyrir slíka söfnun, ólíkt söfnurum úr embættis-

144 „Bóka og handritasafn,“ *Máni* 23. desember 1879: 23.

145 Ýmsar handskrifaðar skrár höfðu þó verið teknar saman fram að þeim tíma, t.d. af Pálma Pálssyni árið 1890 (Lbs 5725 4to).

mannastétt á borð við Finn Magnússon. Jón eignaðist handrit einkum með þrennum hætti; með kaupum á einstaka handritasöfnum, með marglaga tengslaneti er aflaði honum handrita víða um land og með aðsendum handritum sem hann fékk frá Íslandi, oft gegn greiða eða útréttingum í Kaupmannahöfn.

Þrátt fyrir að Jóni hafi tekist að víða að sér um 2.000 handritum samtals í sitt eigið safn eða safn Bókmenntafélagsins þurfti hann að takast á við nokkrar hindranir við söfnun sína. Einkum komu fram gagnrýnisraddir þeirra er voru andsnúnir því að senda handrit úr landi til Jóns í Kaupmannahöfn og vildu frekar varðveita þau áfram á Íslandi. Í búsetu Jóns í Kaupmannahöfn voru þó einnig fólgin tækifæri því að margir töldu að handritunum væri einfaldlega betur fyrir komið í öflugu fræðasamfélagi Kaupmannahafnar þar sem þau kæmu að notum heldur en á Íslandi þar sem slíkt samfélag var á bernskuskeiði. Að auki voru samgöngumál innanlands með þeim hætti að einfaldara og ódýrara var að senda handrit til Kaupmannahafnar en á milli staða á Íslandi. Á hinn bóginn voru sumir er síður vildu senda Jóni handrit vegna aðkomu hans að fjárkláðamálinu sem olli honum töluverðum óvinsældum innanlands um tíma. Bágar varðveisluaðstæður skjala og handrita innanlands voru jafnframt ógn við söfnun Jóns og annarra en sífellt fleiri fóru að safna handritum líkt og Jón, svo að um nokkurs konar kapphlaup milli þeirra var að ræða.

Handritasafni Jóns má skipta í þrennt; hans eigin handrit og gögn er lutu að fræðastarfi hans og stjórnmalastarfi, uppskriftir ýmissa handrita af söfnum á Íslandi, Bretlandi og Norðurlöndum og loks handrit og handritasöfn er hann ýmist keypti eða fékk send. Þau eru allflest frá sautjándu öld eða yngri og af öllum gerðum í samræmi við söfnunarstefnu hans; bæði veraldleg og geistleg handrit og skjöl er lúta að Íslandi með einum eða öðrum hætti, einkum sögu þess og bókmenntum. Samið var um kaup safnsins til Íslands árið 1877 en það var um skeið í véböndum breska auðkýfingsins George Powells. Það barst til landsins vorið 1880 en nokkru áður hafði þegar verið kallað eftir skrá yfir safnið svo að landsmenn gætu nýtt sér það. Sú skrá kom þó ekki fram fyrr en hálfri öld síðar og hefur nú verið nýtt til enn frekari skráningar safnsins á vefinn handrit.is. Þar má jafnframt finna úrval myndaðra handrita er ungur fræðimaður í Kaupmannahöfn hóf að safna fyrir bráðum tveimur öldum.

HEIMILDASKRÁ

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ÁGRIP

„Hugsaðu til mín, bróðir minn, ef þú sérð merkileg handrit, eða gamlar bækur vel um gengnar.“ Yfirlit yfir handritasöfnun Jóns Sigurðssonar 1840–1879

Efnisorð: Jón Sigurðsson, handritasöfnun, Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag

Í þessari grein er veitt yfirlit yfir handritasöfnun Jóns Sigurðssonar forseta. Greint er frá orsökum þess að Jón réðst í söfnunina, söfnunarstefnu hans og stöðu sem safnara, söfnunaraðferðum og tengslaneti, þeim tækifærum og hindrunum er urðu á vegi hans, samsetningu og umfangi handritasafnsins, fyrri rannsóknunum, afdrifum þess og skráningu.

SUMMARY

“Think about me, my brother, if you see noteworthy manuscripts or old books in good shape.” A survey of the manuscript collecting of Jón Sigurðsson 1840–1879

Keywords: Jón Sigurðsson, manuscript collecting, The Icelandic Literary Society

This article examines the manuscript collecting of Jón Sigurðsson (1811–1879) who played a leading role in the extensive collecting of Icelandic manuscripts in the mid-nineteenth century, both in his personal collection and the collection of The Icelandic Literary Society. It explores the motivations behind Jón’s engagement in the collection, his collection policies and position as a collector, his methods and networks, as well as the opportunities and challenges he faced. Furthermore, the article examines the composition of the manuscript collection, the circumstances of its acquisition, and its cataloguing.

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MÓEIÐUR ANNA SIGURÐARDÓTTIR OG
RÓSA ÞORSTEINSDÓTTIR

„EIN SLÍK SAGA GETUR SPILLT FYRIR ÖLLU SAFNINU“

*Áhrif Guðbrands Vigfússonar á
Þjóðsagnasafn Jóns Árnasonar*

Þeir Jón Árnason (1819–1888) og Magnús Grímsson (1825–1860) eru jafnan taldir frumkvöðlar í skipulegri söfnun íslenskra þjóðsagna á seinni hluta nítjándu aldar. Það kom í hlut Jóns að ljúka verkinu með útgáfu safnsins sem er ávallt við hann kennt og kallað „þjóðsögur Jóns Árnasonar.“ Þegar kom að því að gefa út þetta fyrsta stóra safn þjóðsagna komu þó ýmsir aðrir þar að og ber þá helst að nefna þýska fræðimanninn Konrad Maurer (1823–1902) sem sá um prentunina í Þýskalandi. Hann má einnig teljast ritstjóri safnsins og það var að frumkvæði hans sem Guðbrandur Vigfússon (1827–1889), þá styrkþegi Árnanefndar í Kaupmannahöfn, var einnig fenginn til aðstoðar. Hér á eftir verður fjallað um þátt Guðbrands í útgáfuferlinu og áhrif hans á sagnaefnið og umgjörð þjóðsagnasafnsins.

Þjóðsagnasöfnun hefst

Árið 1845 er talið upphafsár skipulagðrar þjóðsagnasöfnunar í anda Grimm bræðra á Íslandi.¹ Oftast er litið svo á að söfnunin sem þá hófst hafi átt sér

1 Ögmundur Helgason, „Upphaf að söfnun íslenskra þjóðfræða fyrir áhrif frá Grimms-bræðum,“ *Árbók Landsbókasafns Íslands* (1989) nýr fl. 15 (1991): 117. Áður hafði tvegis verið kallað eftir að sagnaefni væri safnað á Íslandi: í spurningaskrá fornleifanefndarinnar (Commissionen for oldsagers opbevaring) 1917 og í ritstjórnargrein í *Fjölni* 1838 (*Frásögur um fornaldarleifar 1817–1823*, Sveinbjörn Rafnsson bjó til prentunar. Rit 24 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1983), I [xxxviii]; „Fjölnir,“ *Fjölnir* 4 (1838): 13; sjá einnig Terry Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends: Ripples, Flotsam, Nets and Reflections,“ *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*, ritstj. Terry Gunnell. National Cultivation of Culture 30 (Leiden og Boston: Brill, 2022), 386–392.

tvær óskyldar uppsprettur.² Annars vegar birti enski fornritafræðingurinn George Stephens (1813–1895) ákall í *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift*, mál gagni Fornfræðafélagsins í Danmörku,³ um að hefja skuli söfnun á Íslandi.⁴ Hins vegar var um að ræða skólabræður úr Bessastaðaskóla, þá Jón Árnason⁵ og Magnús Grímsson.⁶ Guðbrandur Vigfússon segir í formála þeim sem fylgdi *Íslenzkum þjóðsögum og æfintýrum* árið 1862 að Íslendingar hafi gefið ákalli Stephens: „litla áheyrn [...] ekki tæki að skrifa upp og senda burt til útlanda [...] Meðan á þessu stóð þokaði safni þeirra Jóns Árnasonar og síra Magnúsar nokkuð fram [...]“.⁷ Árið 1852 leit svo fyrsta prentaða þjóðsagnasafnið dagsins ljós með titlinum *Íslenzk æfintýri* og var efni bókarinnar skipt niður í 31 tölusett atriði og taldi 144 blaðsíður. Í bókinni eru bæði kvæði og sagnir en ekki eiginleg ævintýri, samkvæmt nútímaskilgreiningu, þrátt fyrir titilinn.⁸

Í formála Jóns og Magnúsar segjast þeir vona að landar þeirra „fyrstist ekki“ enda sé safnið „öllu fremur til sóma, en ósóma fyrir þjóðina.“⁹ Viðtökur við útgáfunni voru vægast sagt blendnar og Terry Gunnell orðar það svo að „þrátt fyrir áhugann á „alþýðlegum fornfræðum“ [...] erlendis er ljóst að saga þjóðfræða á Íslandi hófst með vandræðalegri þögn – ekki lófatki“.¹⁰ Skeytingarleysið á Íslandi virðist enda hafa dregið kjarkinn úr þeim

2 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,” 392–401.

3 George Stephens, „Forslag til Íslændernes uudgivne Folkesagns og Sanges Optegnelse og Bevaring,” *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift* 1843–1845: 191–192.

4 George Stephens hafði áður unnið að söfnun á sænsku efni með sænska þjóðsagnasafnaranum Hylltén-Cavallius: sjá John Lindow, „George Stephens: An Unlikely Conduit,” *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*, ritstj. Terry Gunnell. National Cultivation of Culture 30 (Leiden og Boston: Brill, 2022), 239–258.

5 Nánar má lesa um Jón Árnason í grein Rósu Þorsteinsdóttur „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf,” *Andvari* (2019): 87–101.

6 Nánar má lesa um Magnús Grímsson og þátt hans í þjóðsagnasöfnuninni í kveri Sigurðar Nordals, *Síra Magnús Grímsson og þjóðsögurnar* (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1971) og grein Rósu Þorsteinsdóttur „Þjóðsögur Magnúsar Grímssonar: Hlutur Magnúsar Grímssonar í upphafi þjóðsagnasöfnunar á 19. öld,” *Gripla* 31 (2020): 105–124.

7 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,” Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (Leipzig: Hinrichs's Bókaverzlun, 1862–1864), I xxviii.

8 Magnús Grímsson og Jón Árnason, *Íslenzk æfintýri* (Reykjavík: E. Þórðarson, 1852).

9 Sama heimild, vi.

10 Terry Gunnell, „Viðhorf landsmanna til „þjóðmenningar“ og þjóðsagnasöfnunar um það leyti er Sigurður Guðmundsson kom heim frá Danmörku árið 1858,” *Málarímm og menningarsköpun: Sigurður Guðmundsson og Kvöldfélagið 1858–1874*, ritstj. Karl Aspelund og Terry Gunnell. Rit Þjóðminjasafns Íslands 47 (Reykjavík: Opna og Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2017), 236.

Jóni og Magnúsi¹¹ allt þar til Þjóðverjinn Konrad Maurer kom til sögunnar og blés í glæður þjóðsagnasöfnunar á Íslandi. Magnús hafði þá tekið við prestsstöðu og entist ekki aldur til að taka þátt í næsta þjóðsagnaævintýri með Jóni því að hann lést árið 1860.¹²

Konrad Maurer

Konrad Maurer virðist snemma hafa fengið áhuga á Íslandi sem sést á því að fyrstu skrif hans um Ísland eru frá árinu 1852 og hann var frá árinu 1855 í bréfasambandi við Jón Sigurðsson (1811–1879).¹³ Maurer fór fljótlega að skipuleggja ferð til Íslands og siglir þangað í lok apríl 1858.¹⁴ Áður en hann ferðaðist um landið, meðal annars til að safna sögum, dvaldi hann í Reykjavík í um tvo mánuði. Þar hitti hann Jón Árnason, hvatti hann eindregið til áframhaldandi þjóðsagnasöfnunar og lofaði að freista þess að finna útgefanda fyrir íslenskar þjóðsögur í Þýskalandi.¹⁵ Árið 1860 kom út afrakstur af ferð Maurers, safn af íslenskum þjóðsögum á þýsku, sem hann nefndi *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart*.¹⁶ Við söfnunina hafði einlæg

11 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf“, 90.

12 Magnús vann samt með Jóni að undirbúningi útgáfunnar allt fram að andlátinu líkt og kemur fram í bréfi frá honum frá 30. maí 1859: „Þú notar mig ef þú þarft og getur til að hreinskrifa eitthvað af sögum, [...] Eg óska af alhuga að verkið blessist okkur báðum og öllum, sem að því styðja.“ Bréf til Jóns Árnasonar frá Íslendingum eru varðveitt á Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum undir safnmarkinu NKS 3010 4to. Mörg þeirra hafa verið skrifuð upp og gerð aðgengileg á ismus.is. Bréfið frá Magnúsi er einnig prentað í *Úr fórum Jóns Árnasonar: Sendibréf*, 2 b., útg. Finnur Sigmundsson (Reykjavík: Hlaðbúð, 1950–1951), I 119–120.

13 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer: Cultural Conduit and Collector“, *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*, ritstj. Terry Gunnell. National Cultivation of Culture 30 (Leiden og Boston: Brill, 2022), 363–364.

14 Konrad Maurer, *Íslandsferð 1858*, þýð. Baldur Hafstað (Reykjavík: Ferðafélag Íslands, 1997), 5–13. Ferðabók Maurers kom fyrst út á íslensku en hefur nú verið gefin út á frummálinu (Konrad Maurer, *Reise nach Island (im Sommer 1858)*. Útg. Alessia Bauer og Kurt Schier. Münchner Nordistische Studien 31. München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2017), hér á eftir verður aðeins vitnað til íslensku útgáfunnar.

15 Kurt Schier, „Konrad Maurer, ævi hans og störf“, Konrad Maurer, *Íslandsferð 1858*, þýð. Baldur Hafstað (Reykjavík: Ferðafélag Íslands, 1997), xxv; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer“, 372.

16 Konrad Maurer, *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1860). Auk þeirra munnlegu heimilda sem Maurer safnaði eru í bókinni þýðingar hans á *Íslenskum æfintýrum* í heild sinni og efni sem hann byggir á öðrum skriflegum heimildum. Þýðing á sagnasafni Maurers kom út 2015 (Konrad Maurer, *Íslenskar alþýðusögur á okkar tímum: Leipzig 1860*, þýð. Steinar Matthíasson (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2015)).

framkoma og áhugi Maurers á þjóðsagnaefni heillað Íslendinga svo að lengi var í minnum haft og átti það eftir að liðka fyrir frekari söfnun á þjóðsögum.¹⁷ Maurer sjálfur virðist hafa haft áframhaldandi söfnun í huga á ferð sinni um landið því að hann hvatti einhverja heimildarmenn sína til þess að halda áfram að safna saman þjóðsagnaefni og láta Jóni Árnasyni í té.¹⁸

Þetta sama sumar kom Guðbrandur Vigfússon til Íslands og þeir Maurer hittust í Holti í Saurbæ laugardaginn 14. ágúst. Þeir ferðuðust saman í tvær vikur um innanverðan Breiðafjörð og Breiðafjarðareyjar. Leiðir skildi í Hjarðarholti í Laxárdal en þeir hittust aftur í Reykjavík og urðu síðan samferða með skipi til Kaupmannahafnar um haustið.¹⁹ Kynni Guðbrands Vigfússonar og Konrads Maurer höfðu hafist árið 1856 þegar Guðbrandur sendi Maurer bækur með „hr. cand. jur. Nellemann“²⁰ og þar á meðal fyrsta hluta af Biskupa sögum sem Guðbrandur vann þá að útgáfu af.²¹ Í bréfinu frá 11. júní lýsir Maurer þakklæti sínu og gleði, ekki síst er hann glaður yfir að hafa nú kynnst Guðbrandi. Þeir áttu síðan eftir að kynnst enn betur á meðan Maurer dvaldist í Kaupmannahöfn til að undirbúa ferð sína til Íslands. Hann vildi kynnst Íslendingum, fræðast um aðstæður á landinu og læra íslensku. Jón Sigurðsson mælti með að hann fengi Guðbrand sem íslenskukennara og það varð úr. Næst hittust þeir síðan áður en Maurer steig um borð í Íslandsfarið snemma vors 1858 og gátu þeir þá skipulagt samveru sína seinna um sumarið.²²

17 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 366–367.

18 Til dæmis vísar Maurer Jóni bæði á Skúla Gíslason (1825–1888) og Hólmfríði Þorvaldsdóttur (1812–1876) sem átti eftir að verða ein mesta sagnakona Jóns, sjá Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 373; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason þjóðsagnasafnari og heimildarfólkið hans,“ *Grasahnoss: Minningarrit um hjónin Rögnu Ólafsdóttur og Ögmund Helgason*, ritstj. Gísli Magnússon, Hjalti Pálsson, Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson og Sölvi Sveinsson (Saudárkróki: Sögufélag Skagfirðinga, 2014), 137–140.

19 Maurer, *Íslandsferð 1858*, 222–297; Konrad Maurer, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 22 (1890): 214–215.

20 Eins og kemur fram í bréfi Maurers til Guðbrands Vigfússonar frá 11. júní 1856. Bréf frá Konrad Maurer til Guðbrands Vigfússonar eru varðveitt með gögnum Guðbrands í Bodleian safni í Oxford undir safnmarkinu Bodl. GV Germ. d.2. Mörg þeirra hafa verið skrifuð upp og eru aðgengileg á Íslenskum músík- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=636&mottakandi=62&sida=1>, sótt 10. júlí 2025.

21 „Sendillinn“ hlýtur að vera Johannes Nellemann (1831–1906) sem seinna varð prófessor við Kaupmannahafnarháskóla og enn síðar dómsmálaráðherra og ráðherra Íslands, sjá Ditlev Tamm, „Johannes Nellemann,“ *Danmarks Nationalleksikon*, sótt 28. júlí 2025 af https://lex.dk/Johannes_Nellemann.

22 Maurer, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ 214.

Guðbrandur Vigfússon

Guðbrandur Vigfússon fæddist í Galtardal á Fellsströnd 13. mars 1827. Foreldrar hans voru Vigfús Gíslason (1798–1867) gullsmíður og eiginkona hans Halldóra Gísladóttir (1793–1866). Jón Þorkelsson (1859–1924) rekur ættir Guðbrands og eru það miklar höfðingjaættir. Þar eru nefndir margir sýslumenn, lögmenn og prestar og jafnvel biskupar en Þorkell Eyjólfsson (1815–1891), faðir Jóns, og Guðbrandur voru systkinasynir.²³ Katrín Vigfúsdóttir (1769–1843), afasystir Guðbrands, tók hann að sér í æsku og kom honum til mennta. Hann kom í Bessastaðaskóla 1844 og útskrifaðist síðan úr Lærða skólanum í Reykjavík 1849. Eftir það fór hann til Kaupmannahafnar og hóf háskólanám í latínu og grísku en sneri sér fljótlega að norrænum fræðum og varð styrkþegi Árnaneðndar 1856.²⁴ Guðbrandur varð mikilvirkur fræðimaður á sviði norrænna fræða og gaf út fjölda fornra texta.²⁵ Hann ferðaðist bæði til Noregs og Þýskalands á meðan hann bjó í Kaupmannahöfn og skrifaði skemmtilegar ferðalýsingar sem birtust í *Nýjum félagsritum* sem hann ritstýrði ásamt Jóni Sigurðssyni 1858–1864.²⁶ Aðra góða lýsingu gaf Guðbrandur á heimsókn sinni til Jakobs Grimm í Berlín en þar hafði hann þriggja daga viðdvöl á leið sinni

23 Jón Þorkelsson, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ *Andvari* 19/1 (1894): 1–7.

24 Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon: An Icelandic Philologist in Oxford,“ *Old Norse-Icelandic Philology and National Identity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ritstj. Gylfi Gunnlaugsson og Clarence E. Glad. National Cultivation of Culture 28. (Leiden og Boston: Brill, 2022), 394–395. Upplýsingar um ævi Guðbrands eru helst sóttar í Jón Þorkelsson, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ *Andvari* 19/1: 1–36 og Benedikt S. Benedikz, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon: A Biographical Sketch,“ *Úr Döllum til Dala: Guðbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays*, ritstj. Rory McTurk og Andrew Wawn. Leeds Texts and Monographs. New Series 11 (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1989), 11–33.

25 Yfirlit yfir þær útgáfur og önnur rit Guðbrands er að finna í „Skrá um ritstörf Guðbrands Vigfússonar,“ *Andvari* 19/1 (1894): 36–43; sjá einnig Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ 395–398.

26 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Ferðasaga úr Noregi,“ *Ný félagsrit* 15 (1855): 1–83; þessi frásögn var þýdd og birt í norsku blaði áður en hún kom út á íslensku (sjá Jón Þorkelsson, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ 11) en löngu seinna var hún gefin út sérstaklega með eftirmála eftir Hallfréð Örn Eiríksson: Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Ein Íslendingi í Noreg: Ei reiseskildring frá 1854*. Þýð. Ingeborg Donali. Vallset: Oplandske Bokforlag, 1990; umfjöllun um ferðasöguna úr Noregi er í Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ 398–399; Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Ferðasaga úr Þýskalandi,“ *Ný félagsrit* 20 (1860): 23–143; niðurlag frásagnarinnar birtist einnig í Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Ferðasaga um Þýskaland“ *Íslenzkar úrvælgreinar*. III. bindi greinar frá níjándu öld, ritstj. Bjarni Vilhjálmsson og Finnþogi Guðmundsson (Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1978), 89–95.

til Maurers í München.²⁷ Haustið 1864 fluttist hann til Englands til þess að vinna að orðabók Richard Cleasbys²⁸ og dvaldist í London fyrstu árin en átti síðan heima í Oxford til æviloka. Guðbrandur lauk aldrei prófi í Kaupmannahöfn en hlaut heiðursmeistaragráðu í Oxford og hafði nokkra nemendur: „All of these were one way or another influenced in their lives or careers by Vigfússon, and all have left affectionate reminiscences of him.“²⁹ Þegar Guðbrandur kom fyrst til London var Eiríkur Magnússon (1833–1913) í Frakklandi en hann átti síðan eftir að verða bókavörður við háskólabókasafnið í Cambridge. Svo virðist sem þeir hafi fyrst orðið góðir kunningjar en tvisvar áttu þeir í harðvítugum deilum „er af varð fullur fjandskapur milli þeirra og entist meðan þeir lifðu.“³⁰ Guðbrandur var gerður að heiðursdoktor við Uppsalaháskóla árið 1877 en fékk ekki fasta stöðu við Oxfordháskóla fyrr en 1884. Þeirri stöðu gegndi hann þar til hann lést 31. janúar 1889.

Þeir Guðbrandur Vigfússon og Konrad Maurer voru ef til vill ekki aldavinir ævilangt eins og flestar heimildir telja.³¹ Árið 1874 heim-sótti Guðbrandur Maurer í síðasta sinn en Maurer segir í minningargrein um Guðbrand að eftir það hafi þeir ekki skrifast eins mikið á og fyrr.³² Vinskapurinn virðist að minnsta kosti vera farinn að dvína þegar Guðbrandur skrifar til fræðimannsins Hugo Gerings (1847–1925) þann

27 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Prologue in Berlin“, Guðbrandur Vigfússon og F. York Powell, *Sigfred-Arminius and Other Papers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886, 1–4; sjá einnig Katrín Matthíasdóttir, „... augliti til auglitis við Jacob Grimm fáein andartök“, *Saga* 48/2 (2010): 181–195.

28 Um sögu þeirrar útgaðu má lesa í Jón Þorkelsson, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon“, 14–16; Benedikt S. Benedikz, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon“, 18–22; William A. Craigie, „Preface“, Richard Cleasby, Guðbrandur Vigfússon og William A. Craigie, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* 2. útg. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), iii–vii; Elizabeth Knowles, „Notes on a First Edition of ‘Cleasby-Vigfússon’“, *Saga-Book* 20 (1978–81): 165–178; sjá einnig um áhrif orðabókarinnar Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old-North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 344–346, 349.

29 Benedikt S. Benedikz, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon“, 21.

30 Stefán Einarsson, *Saga Eiríks Magnússonar* (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja, 1933), 84; sjá einnig Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 129, 356; um þessar deilur má lesa nánar í bók Stefáns, 84–93 og 217–230; sjá einnig Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon“, 402–404.

31 Sjá t.d. Schier, „Konrad Maurer, ævi hans og störf“, xxiii; Katrín Matthíasdóttir, „... augliti til auglitis við Jacob Grimm fáein andartök“, 185; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer“, 365.

32 Maurer, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon“, 218.

8. apríl 1879: „I am sad at reading Maurer’s wearisome criticisms, leaden monotony, reasoning & juristerey and no soul or sympathy [...] I am tired of it.“³³ Gering tekur upp hanskann fyrir Maurer og aðra þýska fræðimenn í svarbréfi 24. maí sama ár og segir að hann muni taka þessu svo að Guðbrandur hafi verið í vondu skapi þegar hann skrifaði bréfið.³⁴ Fáum árum seinna, eða 9. júní 1884, heldur Guðbrandur þó uppteknum hætti: „I have lost my faith and sympathy in your Möbiuses & Maurers ...“³⁵ og aftur snýst Gering til varnar. Hann telur að þýskir og norrænir fræðimenn sýni meiri nákvæmni og vandvirkni en þeir bresku og endar á að segja:

Hiernach werden Sie es auch verstehen, dass ich Ihre früheren arbeiten, die Eyrbyggja s., Fornsögur, Biskupasögur, Flateyjarbók etc. höher schätze als Ihre letzten publicationen (Sturl. u. Corpus), obwol ich auch in diesen die glänzende combinationsgabe und den reichtum an neuen und fruchtbaren gedanken bewundere.³⁶

Heimildir tala einmitt iðulega um að á meðan Guðbrandur var í Kaupmannahöfn „under the keen eye of Jón Sigurðsson and the Arnamagnæan Commission he did well“³⁷ en eftir að hann flutti til Englands hafi hann ekki viðhaft nógu vönduð vinnubrögð í fræðastörfum sínum. Maurer gefur þetta viðhorf sannarlega til kynna í minningargrein sinni um Guðbrand um leið og hann minnst hans með hlýju sem kærar vinar.³⁸ Sigurður Nordal segir að „samvinna þeirra Maurers og Guðbrands [hafi verið] mikil og merkileg, en verður þó líklega lengst í minnum höfð vegna Þjóðsagnanna.“³⁹

33 Hans Fix, „Gudbrand Vigfusson, Hugo Gering, and German Scholarship: Or, A Friendship Destroyed,” *Frederic Amory in Memoriam: Old Norse-Icelandic Studies*, ritstj. John Lindow og George Clark. The Wildcat Canyon Advanced Seminars: Occasional Monograph Series 2. (Berkeley og Los Angeles: North Pinehurst Press, 2015), 288.

34 Sama rit, 290.

35 Sama rit, 297.

36 Sama rit, 299.

37 Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,” *Old Norse-Icelandic Philology and National Identity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 410.

38 Maurer, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,” 218–219; sjá einnig t.d. Ragnheiður Mósesdóttir, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,” 410–412; Fix, „Gudbrand Vigfusson, Hugo Gering, and German Scholarship,” 300–302.

39 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall,” *Þjóðsagnabókin: Sýnisbók íslenzkra þjóðsagna I*, (Reykjavík: Almenna bókafélagið, 1971), xxxi.

Þjóðsögurnar

Stuttu eftir heimkomuna frá Íslandi skrifaði Konrad Maurer Jóni Árnasyni og sagðist vera kominn með munnlegt samþykki útgefandans Rost í Leipzig til þess að gefa út íslenskt þjóðsagnaefni í þremur bindum.⁴⁰ Eins og áður kom fram höfðu þeir Jón og Magnús svo gott sem misst móðinn hvað þjóðsagnasöfnun varðar eftir dræmar viðtökur *Íslenzkra æfintýra*. Þessi frétt virkaði því eins og langþráð vítamínsprauta og Jón tók upp þráðinn við vinnuna að áframhaldandi söfnun íslenskra þjóðsagna. Áhrif Maurers á söfnun og útgáfu íslenskra þjóðsagna eru óumdeild og án hans væri saga þjóðsagnaútgáfu á Íslandi önnur⁴¹ eða líkt og Guðbrandur Vigfússon skrifaði í formálanum að *Íslenzkum þjóðsögum og æfintýrum* „hefði þetta mál að líkum dottið þar niður, ef ekki hefði hans að notið.“⁴²

Upphófst nú vinnan sem átti eftir að leiða til útgáfu *Íslenzkra þjóðsagna og æfintýra* í tveimur bindum á árunum 1862–1864. Jón Árnason var ekki í aðstöðu til að ferðast um landið og safna sjálfur líkt og Maurer hafði gert enda bundinn í báða skó við fjölmörg störf í Reykjavík og vann alla tíð að þjóðsagnasöfnun í frítíma sínum.⁴³ Jón greip til þess ráðs sem hann lýsir svo í formála sem hann skrifaði fyrir þjóðsagnasafnið: „Þegar Maurer var farinn héðan um haustið 1858 tók ég mig til og skrifaði í allar áttir vinum mínum og skólabræðrum og öðrum fræðimönnum víðs vegar um landið og lét þar með fylgja yfirlit yfir það sem ég óskaði helst að safnað væri; það yfirlit kallaði ég *Hugvekju*.“⁴⁴ Viðtökurnar við Hugvekju Jóns voru góðar, snöggjum betri en þeir Jón og Magnús höfðu fengið nokkrum árum fyrr og tók nú mikið efni að berast Jóni víðs vegar að af landinu.⁴⁵

40 Bréf frá Konrad Maurer til Jóns Árnasonar, 25. mars 1859. Bréf frá Maurer til Jóns Árnasonar eru varðveitt í Konungsbókhöfðu í Kaupmannahöfn ásamt öðrum bréfum frá útlendingum undir safnmarkinu NKS 3009 4to. Mörg þeirra hafa verið skrifuð upp og eru aðgengileg á Íslenskur músík- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=636&mottakandi=2738&sida=1>, sótt 28. júlí 2025.

41 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 384.

42 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ xxviii.

43 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 402, 411–412; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf,“ 93.

44 Jón Árnason, „Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og ævintýri,“ (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1954–1961), I xx. Hugvekjan birtist fyrst á prenti í tímaritinu *Norðra* sem kom út á Akureyri þann 30. maí og þar skrifar undir Jón Borgfirðingur (1826–1912) sem var samstarfsmaður Jóns Árnasonar við þjóðsagnasöfnunina. Ítarlegri útgáfu birti Jón í tímaritinu *Íslendingur* þann 19. október árið 1861, þá undir eigin nafni.

45 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 403.

Ritstjórnarferli þjóðsagnasafnsins var nokkuð flókið og fyrst ber að nefna að efnið sem barst Jóni var iðulega skrifað upp eftir heimildarfólki, til dæmis af prestum.⁴⁶ Sumir skráðu sjálfir eða fengu aðra skrásetjara í verkið fyrir sig og var þá allur gangur á því hvort heimildarfólk var nafngreint eða ekki.⁴⁷ Jón breytti stundum efninu sem honum hafði borist, fór alls ekki dult með vinnubrögð sín og segir í formála þeim sem hann ætlaðist til að fylgdi safninu: „ef öllu hefði verið haldið orðréttu eins og mér barst það hefði safnið orðið næsta ólíkt sjálfu sér innbyrðis“.⁴⁸ Í fyrstu mun Jón hafa sent efnið milliliðalaust til Maurers en fljótlega komst þó sú aðferð á, að undirlagi Maurers, að efnið hafði viðdvöl hjá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni í Kaupmannahöfn.⁴⁹ Þetta var gert bæði vegna stopulla skipaferða til og frá Íslandi⁵⁰ en einnig vegna þess að Maurer taldi betra að Guðbrandur læsi yfir og leiðrétti það sem honum þætti þurfa þar sem hann taldi kunnáttu sinni í íslensku ábótavant.⁵¹ Á meðan efnið hafði viðdvöl í Kaupmannahöfn leitaði Guðbrandur stundum álitis Jóns Sigurðssonar.⁵² Frá Kaupmannahöfn fór efnið svo til Maurers í Leipzig sem las yfir áður en það var sent til prentsmiðjunnar og lokahnykkurinn fór fram hjá setjara sem ekki kunni stakt orð í íslensku.⁵³ Augljóslega voru þarna ansi mörg skref frá uppsprettunni til hins prentaða orðs og því spurning hversu nákvæmlega var haft eftir hinum upprunalega sögumanni eins og lagt var

46 Terry Gunnell, „Clerics as Collectors of Folklore in Nineteenth-Century Iceland,“ *Arv: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* 68 (2012): 50–59.

47 Konrad Maurer gefur góða lýsingu á ritstjórnarferli safnsins í bréfi til norska þjóðsagnasafnarans Peter Christen Asbjørnsen (1812–1885): NFS Asbjørnsen brev: Bréf Konrad Maurers til Peter Christen Asbjørnsen, 18. maí 1862: sjá Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir „Konrad Maurer,“ 375–376.

48 Jón Árnason, „Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og ævintýri,“ I xxi.

49 NKS 3009 4to: Bréf frá Konrad Maurer til Jóns Árnasonar, 20. maí 1860.

50 NFS Asbjørnsen brev: Bréf Konrad Maurers til Peter Christen Asbjørnsen, 18. maí 1862.

51 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2: Bréf frá Konrad Maurer til Guðbrands Vigfússonar, 26. júní 1860. Maurer hafði góða reynslu af samvinnu við Guðbrand um útgáfu íslenskra þjóðsagna eins og fram kemur í formála að þjóðsagnasafni hans (Maurer, *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart*, X–XI).

52 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 374. Guðbrandur Vigfússon greinir Jóni Árnasyni frá aðkomu Jóns Sigurðssonar í bréfi dags. 1. janúar 1861 og skrifar: „Eg verð enn að bæta við dómi Jóns Sigurðssonar. Þegar eg fékk hina næstsiðustu sending yðar, sýndi eg hana Jóni, því eg vildi ekki senda M. ókarað og heldr ekki skrifa eptir þokka míns eins“: NKS 3010 4to. Mörg bréf Guðbrands til Jóns Árnasonar hafa verið skrifuð upp og eru aðgengileg á Íslenskur músík- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=62&mottakandi=2738&sida=1>, sótt 28. júlí 2025.

53 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 403.

upp með í byrjun. Þrátt fyrir að ástæður þessa fyrirkomulags hafi í byrjun aðeins virst vera af praktískum toga varð Guðbrandur „fullkomlega þátt-takandi í ritstjórn þjóðsagnasafnsins“⁵⁴ líkt og fram kemur hér á eftir.

Stærsti hluti handrits þess sem Jón sendi í mörgum hlutum, svokallað prentsmiðjuhandrit, varð eftir í München í gögnum Maurers og barst síðan til Ríkisbókasafnsins þar í borg (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) en tvo hluta þess, sögur um einstaka galdramenn og kímnisögur, sendi Maurer Jóni með ódagsettu bréfi árið 1864⁵⁵ og eru þeir varðveittir með þjóðsagna-handritum Jóns í Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskólabókasafni.⁵⁶ Engin vitneskja var hér á landi um þann hluta prentsmiðjuhandritsins sem eftir varð í Þýskalandi fyrr en eftir að þjóðsögur Jóns Árnasonar höfðu verið gefnar út að nýju í sex bindum á árunum 1954–1961. Nákvæmar rann-sóknir á þeim breytingum sem Guðbrandur Vigfússon gerði á efni og umgjörð þjóðsagnasafnsins hafa þess vegna ekki verið auðveldar hér á landi fyrr en nú þegar bókasafnið í München hefur bæði afhent Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskólabókasafni handritið til varðveislu og birt stafrænar myndir af því á vefsíðu sinni.⁵⁷

Breyttar sagnir og viðbættar

Rithönd Guðbrands Vigfússonar er auðþekkjanleg þannig að auðvelt er að sjá athugasemdir hans, breytingar og viðbætur þegar prentsmiðjuhand-ritinu er flett. Breytingar hans eru margs konar og má skipta þeim í nokkra flokka. Til dæmis bætir hann stundum við neðanmálsgreinum og eru það þá oft upplýsingar um heimildir sem hann hefur haft betri aðgang að en Jón Árnason eða sem hann þekkti betur vegna vinnu sinnar við fornrit í Árnasafni.⁵⁸ Hann leiðréttir einnig staðreyndavillur, svo sem í sögunni af

54 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf,“ 91.

55 NKS 3009 4to.

56 Sögur af einstökum galdramönnum er að finna í Lbs 530 4to og kímnisögur í Lbs 529 4to. Hluti þess efnis sem Jón sendi en var ekki prentað er í Lbs 532 4to.

57 Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/manuscripts-in-further-european-languages/items>, sótt 28. júlí 2025. Sjá einnig Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn: https://landsbokasafn.is/index.php?mact=News,cntnto1,detail,o&cntnto1articleid=1911&cntnto1origid=42&cntnto1detailtemplate=LBS_News-Detail&cntnto1returnid=42, sótt 10. júlí 2025.

58 Svo sem við söguna „Snemma beygist krókurinn, sem verða vill“ þar sem Guðbrandur bætir við neðanmál: „Sbr. Snorra-Eddu um skipið Naglfara og skó Viðars“ (Jón Árnason,

Þórði Magnússyni á Strjúgi þar sem hann stríkar út setningu um að Þórður hafi verið einn af þeim sem orti á móti Skautaljóðum.⁵⁹

Þá kemur fyrir að Guðbrandur bæti upplýsingum við neðanmáls um ýmislegt sem hann þekkir af sínum heimaslóðum í Dölunum og leiðrétti sögur sem eiga að gerast þar eða í nágrenninu. Meðal þeirra eru sögur af forn mönnum, svo sem Geirmundi heljarskinn, Steinólfi lága og Einari skálaglamm.⁶⁰ Hann bætir einnig við sögum hér og þar og oft tengjast þær líka Dölunum, svo sem „Illþurka“,⁶¹ „Skarðs-Skotta“,⁶² og „Ólöf ríka á Skarði.“⁶³

Í sumum tilfellum gefst hann þó upp á að breyta sögnum sem honum finnast ekki nógu góðar. Þá stríkar hann alveg út og skrifar upp á nýtt.⁶⁴ Maurer tekur yfirleitt mark á slíkum breytingum og lætur prenta þær en oftast þegar Guðbrandur skrifar athugasemdir á spássíur gerir Maurer ekkert með þær í útgáfunni. Gott dæmi um þannig athugasemd er sú sem Guðbrandur gerir við söguna „Stúlkan í Álptamyrarsókn“.⁶⁵ Við hana skrifar hann: „Þessi saga er ósöguleg. Jón Sigurðsson sem er hédan ættaðr hefir aldrei heyrt hennar getið. Hvernig Jón Borgf. hefir komist að henni er bágð að vita. Eg held það væri réttast að sleppa henni, hún er raunar fánýti.“⁶⁶ Maurer sleppir sögunni ekki og lætur ekki prenta neina athugasemd við hana. Þessi dæmi og aðrar breytingar Guðbrands sýna glöggð að hann taldi ekki öll tilbrigði þjóðsagna jafnréttá og að sum þeirra væru réttari en önnur.

Guðbrandur bætir einnig við annarri draugasögu sem hann hefur eftir Jóni Sigurðssyni. Þetta er sagan „Holta-Jóka á Álptamýri“ en af handritinu

Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri (Leipzig: Hinrichs's Bókaverzlun, 1862–1864), II 2–3. Hér eftir vitnað í með JÁ₁); og „Skipamál“ þar sem hann vísar til Flóamanna sögu (JÁ₁ II 8–9).

59 Af spássíuskrifum Guðbrands (BSB Isl.Cod.3(2), 1087r) er ljóst að hann veit að verið er að rugla Þórði Magnússyni saman við Þórð Halldórsson sem orti á móti *Skautaljóðum* Guðmundar Bergþórssonar.

60 JÁ₁ II 84–86. Guðbrandur leiðréttir m.a. örnefni og lýsingar á staðháttum sem hann þekkir vel.

61 JÁ₁ I 211 og JÁ₁ II 87.

62 JÁ₁ I 367.

63 JÁ₁ II 112. Í sumum tilfellum er í útgáfunni nefnt að sögnin komi frá Guðbrandi en öðrum ekki. Útgefendur nýrrar útgáfu þjóðsagnanna telja að Guðbrandur hafi skráð frásagnir af Illþurru og Ólöfu ríku eftir sóknarlýsingu Friðriks Eggerz en Guðbrandur minnst ekkert á hana (sjá Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, II 570 og 572).

64 Þetta á við t.d. um söguna af draugnum Goggi: JÁ₁ I 393.

65 Sagan er prentuð í JÁ₁ I 298.

66 BSB Isl.Cod.3(1), 488r.

Breytingar Guðbrands eru oft smávægilegar orðalagsbreytingar sem ekki hafa nein áhrif á efni sagnanna en þó kemur fyrir að þær skipta máli fyrir lokagerð sögu. Nefna má að í sögunni „Feigðarspár af skygnleika“ skiptir Guðbrandur um kyn á aðalsögupersónunni í síðasta hluta frásagnarinnar og hefur þjóðsagnasafn Maurers til vitnis.⁶⁸ Í sögunni sem hann gefur titilinn „Mann dreymir dauðar konur“ tekur hann út öll nöfn þar sem honum þykir efnið vera of viðkvæmt fyrir fólk sem enn er á lífi.⁶⁹ Hann skrifar á spássíu: „ist sonst zu persönlich die Ragnh. die Frau von Þorv. bóndi í Hrappey Jarðþr. frá Staðarfelli † 13. Martz 1858. Jón Eggertsson kjaptur sagði mér.“ Ástæðan fyrir því að Guðbrandur vill samt ekki sleppa sögunni er líklega sú að í henni sér hann hliðstæðu í „Atlamálum hinum grænlenku“ sem hann getur neðanmáls.⁷⁰

Eins og áður hefur komið fram sendi Maurer Jóni Árnasyni til baka tvo hluta prentsmiðjuhandritsins árið 1864. Í meðfylgjandi bréfi segir Maurer að þessir hlutar hafði verið styttnir meira og breytt heldur en öðrum hlutum safnsins.⁷¹ Þessa sér stað í sagnaþættinum af „Eggerti hinum ríka“ sem ritaður var af Matthíasi Jochumssyni (1835–1920) og tilheyrir sagnaflokknum „af einstökum galdramönnum.“ Guðbrandur skrifar við þáttinn: „Þessi þáttur sýnist mér viðvæningslega samin og of fjölorðr, sumt kemr ekki við efni þessarar bókar og mætti fella út; sumt er gott,⁷² og sker miskunnarlaust niður. Þar sem þessi hluti prentsmiðjuhandritsins og þeir hlutar sem ekki voru prentaðir bárust aftur til Jóns Árnasonar varð mögulegt að prenta þá í nýju útgáfunni.⁷³ Það átti þó ekki við varðandi þær sögur sem enduðu á safninu í Bæjaralandi eins og raunin varð um þátt Bólu-Hjálmars (1796–1875) af Guðmundi Bergþórssyni sem Guðbrandur

68 JÁ₁ I 406; BSB Isl.Cod.3(2), 1003v–1004r.

69 Maurer hafði einmitt bent á að fólk sem tengist ákveðnum sögnum vilji síður að þær komist í hámmæli (Maurer, *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart*, VIII).

70 JÁ₁ I 415; BSB Isl.Cod.3(2), 1014v–1015r. Titill sögunnar í handritinu frá Jóni Árnasyni er „Jón Eggertsson“ og athyglisvert er að Jón Árnason kvæntist seinna dóttur konunnar, Ragnhildar Skúladóttur (1800–1852), sem Guðbrandur telur að tengist sögunni of persónulega.

71 NKS 3009 4to.

72 Lbs 532 4to, 306r–307v, sjá einnig Lbs 530 4to, 184v–187r. Hér og framvegis er vitnað til blaðatals skv. handrit.is.

73 Mismuninn á þættinum er hægt að sjá með því að bera saman frumútgáfuna og þá nýju: JÁ₁ I 592–594; Jón Árnason, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, I 581–585. Hér eftir vitnað í með JÁ₂.

stytti mikið.⁷⁴ Reyndar urðu margar sögur sem komu frá Hjálmar og Gísla Konráðssyni (1787–1877) fyrir barðinu á Guðbrandi.

Sagnaþættir Gísla Konráðssonar og Bólu-Hjálmars

Í bréfum sín á milli ræða þremmenningarnir Maurer, Guðbrandur og Jón Árnason oft þær sögur sem skráðar voru af Gísla Konráðssyni og Bólu-Hjálmar. Þeir Maurer og Guðbrandur eru báðir á móti því að nota þær en Jón er ekki á sama máli. Sögur skráðar af Gísla koma fyrst við sögu í bréfi sem Jón skrifar Maurer 5. apríl 1859 en þar segist hann hafa fengið sögur frá séra Eiríki Kúld (1822–1893) í Flatey „sem bæði hefir skrifað sjálfur upp og látið Gísla gamla Konráðsson skrifa upp þess konar handa okkur.“⁷⁵ Maurer segir Guðbrandi strax frá þessu og lýsir þá þegar vantrausti sínu á þessar uppskriftir:

Leider kann ich nur zu den aus Flatey kommenden Aufzeichnungen kein volles Vertrauen fassen. Sie stammen immer von der Hand des alten Gísli Konráðsson, und wir wissen ja leider, dass dieser nicht am Gewissenhaftesten mit seinem Stoffe umgeht.⁷⁶

Maurer hafði hitt Gísla í Flatey árið áður og myndað sér álit á skrifum hans:

Snúum okkur nú að Gísla Konráðssyni en hann er sérstakt fyrirbæri í íslenskri menningu. Hann var venjulegur bóndi en aflaði sér mikillar þekkingar af eigin rammleik og samdi fjölda ritverka en þýddi líka og endursagði úr dönsku. Hann safnaði miklu, einkum um síðari alda sögu heimabyggðar sinnar, en einnig ættarskrám, þjóðsögum og þess háttar. Þá skrifaði hann upp fjölda eldri verka. [...] Margt merkilegt hefur þannig vafalaust bjargast frá glötun og gleymsku. Ég get þó ekki látið hjá líða að hvetja grúskara framtíðarinnar til að vera á verði og fara að öllu með gát. Margur íslenskur safnarinn, og ekki aðeins úr hópi bænda, er eins og Gísli jafnframt rithöfundur sjálfur. Því er

74 Sjá BSB Isl.Cod.3(2), 1081r–1086r; JÁ₂ I 453–455.

75 Bréf Jóns Árnasonar til Maurers eru varðveitt á Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskóla-bókasafni undir safnmarkinu Lbs 2655 8vo. Mörg þeirra hafa verið skrifuð upp og eru aðgengileg á Íslenskur músík- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=2738&mottakandi=636&sida=2> sótt 29. júlí 2025.

76 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2: Bréf Maurers til Guðbrands Vigfússonar frá 29. maí 1859.

Það að þeir draga ekki skýr mörk milli þess sem þeir safna og þess sem þeir skálda. Það kemur fyrir að safnarinn umbreytir ósjálfrátt því efni sem honum berst og betrumbætir jafnframt að eigin smekk. Það gerist líka að hann spinnur að geðþótta upp viðbætur við það sem honum berst í hendur og reynir að ljá þeim andblæ fyrri tíðar. Þannig getur hann blekkst seinni tíma menn. Margar sögur í safni Jóns Árnasonar, þar á meðal nokkrar frá Gísla, eru með þessum svip. Einnig er vísum hiklaust bætt inn í eldri frásagnir eins og oft var gert í fornsögunum. Það verður að segjast eins og er að sögur sem venjulegt bændafólk segir eru ólíkt svipmeiri og heilsteyptari en tilgerðarlegar frásagnir lærðra klaufa.⁷⁷

Guðbrandur deilir þessu álitni og þeir setja sögur frá Bólu-Hjálmarinu undir sama hatt. Guðbrandur lætur þetta oft í ljós í bréfum til Jóns og segir til dæmis að sögur Gísla Konráðssonar séu „eins og stirðnað lík“⁷⁸ en kemst líklega sterkast að orði í bréfi sem hann skrifar 11. október 1860:

Eg hefi haft mesta gaman af sögum yðar víðast hvar, og eg vona að Maurer fari eins, en með því nulla regula er sine exceptione þá verð eg að minnast á Hallvarð Hjálmars í Bólu. Sú saga er að mínu viti öldúngis ótæk, eg held það sé ógjörlegt að prenta nema lítið eitt í henni, Ein slík saga getr spillt fyrir öllu safninu. Grafskript sera Snorra er þar rangt [...] skrifuð upp úr Minnisverðum tíðindum og flest í sögunni, enda þó það ætti við þetta safn hvað ekki er, væri okkr til óvirðingar. Málið, og eins er víða hjá gamla Gísla, er víða rangt sögumál, og bögunmælt fornryrði [...] Þér verðið að gjalda varhuga við að spilla ekki ágætu safni yðar með slíkum sögum.⁷⁹

Jón Árnason hafði látið í ljósi áhyggjur sínar af afleiðingum þess að breyta sögum Gísla og Hjálmars í bréfum bæði til Maurers og Guðbrands. Hann skrifar þeim báðum sama daginn og segir við Maurer: „mér finnst það skylda mín að láta sögurnar, sem við höfum feingið frá Gísla Konráðssyni, [...] halda sér að mestu óbreyttar“.⁸⁰ Til Guðbrands skrifar hann:

⁷⁷ Konrad Maurer, *Íslandsferð 1858*, 261.

⁷⁸ NKS 3010 4to: Bréf Guðbrands Vigfússonar til Jóns Árnasonar, 19. apríl 1860.

⁷⁹ NKS 3010 4to: Bréf Guðbrands Vigfússonar til Jóns Árnasonar, 11. október 1860.

⁸⁰ Lbs 2655 8vo: Bréf Jóns Árnasonar til Konrad Maurers, 29. júlí 1860.

Eg má játa eg er í vandræðum með sumar sögur þær, sem aðrir hafa sent mér tilbúnar, eins og t.d. frá Gísla Konráðssyni og Bólu-Hjálmar; ekki einúngis höfundarnir heldur og þeir, sem hafa útvegað mér hjá þeim sögurnar, verða reiðir við mig ef eg annað hvort fer að tína innan úr þeim (compilera og excerpera), eða eg ætli alls ekki að taka þær; hvorttveggja þykir þeim svo argt, að mér verður ekki stætt eptir. Eg finn því ekki annað úrræði, en senda sögurnar, eins og þær hafa komið til mín, að undanteknum breytingum á einstöku orðum og orðatiltækjum úreltum.⁸¹

Það er síðan Maurer sem tekur af skarið við Jón og segist taka alla ábyrgð á breytingum á sig:

Ich habe Ihnen noch in meinem letzten Briefe meine ernstlichen Bedenken wegen Form und Umfang einiger Beiträge, zumal von Hjálmar und Gísli Konráðsson, mitgetheilt, auch hat Guðbrandr auf meine Bitte, während ich krank lag, Mitte Winters Ihnen nochmals hierüber geschrieben. Mein Bedenken war ein zweifaches: erstens, das Unpassende der Form und zum Theil auch des Inhaltes für die specielle Aufgabe, welche einer Sammlung von Volkssagen verfolgt, zweitens aber auch der beträchtliche Raum machte mir zu schaffen, der durch jene Beiträge beansprucht wird. Die Zahl der Bogen, welche das Gesamtwerk umfassen soll, ist fest bestimmt und kann nicht erstreckt werden, was also auf hieher nicht gehörige Dinge oder durch zu grosse Breite der Darstellung verbraucht wird, dafür müssen die erheblichsten und besten Stücke am Ende einstehen. Nach reiflicher Überlegung und mehrmaligem Hin- und Herschreiben an Guðbrand habe ich mich endlich, mit dessen Billigung, dahin entschlossen, da Sie im Grunde mit uns völlig gleicher Meinung sind und nur den betr. Verfassern gegenüber die Verantwortung zu übernehmen scheuen, hier meinerseits vor den Riss zu stehen, von der von Ihnen mir übertragenen Erlaubniss an Ihrem Manuscripte zu ändern, Gebrauch zu machen, und auf

81 Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Guðbrands Vigfússonar eru varðveitt með gögnum Guðbrands í Bodleian safni í Oxford undir safnmarkinu Bodl. GV Icel. d.1. Mörg þeirra hafa verið skrifuð upp og eru aðgengileg á Íslenskur músik- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=2738&mottakandi=62&sida=1> sótt 11. júlí 2025.

eigene Wag und Gefahr hin mit Guðbrands sprachlicher Beihülfe die einschlägigen Stücke quo ad formalia umzugestalten. Sie mögen dann in der Vorrede bemerken, dass ich solche Änderungen vorgenommen habe, und so wird der etwaige Tadel, und der etwaige Verdruss der Verfasser an mir ausgehen, übrigens liegt ja solche Umgestaltung in Recht wie Pflicht jedes Herausgebers einer derartigen Sammlung, die ja nicht anders als unter Eines Leitung und Verantwortung erscheinen kann. Ich will nur hoffen, dass mein Entschluss, der wahrlich nicht leicht hin und nicht rasch gefasst wurde, in Ihrem Sinne sein möge, und mag mich mein guter Wille entschuldigen, wenn diess nicht der Fall sein sollte.⁸²

Raunin virðist þó vera sú að Guðbrandur er þá þegar búinn að breyta sögunum, strika út langa kafla og skrifa nýja texta sjálfur. Þetta sést af bréfi sem Maurer skrifar Guðbrandi sama dag og hann skrifar Jóni þar sem hann tekur fram að hann vilji ekki að Jón viti hvers konar breytingar þeir hafi gert á sögunum þannig að hann fari ekki að hafa neinar skoðanir á því.⁸³ Breytingar Guðbrands sjást vel í prentsmiðjuhandritinu og er gott dæmi einmitt sagan af Hallvarði á Horni sem Guðbrandur nefnir í bréfinu sem vitnað er í hér á undan. Frumgerðin ber titilinn „Þáttur af Halli á Horni, Snorra presti í Aðalvík og Hallvarði Hallssyni“ skráð af Hjálmari Jónssyni. Afrit Jóns Árnasonar af þættinum sem hann hefur sent til birtingar í þjóðsagnasafninu er að finna í þeim hluta prentsmiðjuhandritsins sem nú er í Lbs 532 4to (248r–296v) og þar hefur Guðbrandur skrifað á fremsta blaðið: „Alveg ónýtt“ og síðan fleiri athugasemdir, svo sem: „Þessi kafli er allt að því óhæfur í þetta safn.“ Á spássíur hefur hann víða skrifað athugasemdir eins og „eitthvað brúkanl.“ (256r), „má nota úr“ (260v), „heyrist aldrei í tali á Íslandi“ (266r), „bull“ (285v), „má kannske brúka“ (287v), „merkilegt rugl“ (290r) og „þetta hjálpar ekki að prenta hér“ (292r). Niðurstaðan verður sú að þættinum er alveg sleppt í loka-gerðinni og í staðinn birt saga skráð af Skúla Gíslasyni um „Snorra og

82 NKS 3009 4to: Bréf Maurers til Jóns Árnasonar, 24. febrúar 1861.

83 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2: Bréf Maurers til Guðbrands Vigfússonar frá 24. febrúar 1861. Textinn í bréfinu er svohljóðandi: „Absichtlich habe ich an Jón nicht bestimmt geschrieben über die Art der Umgestaltung, die wir mit den Beiträgen von Gísli und Hjálmar vorhaben, er soll im Dunkeln, und damit unbefangen bleiben, auch die Sache schon als ein fait accompli betrachten.“

Hornstrendinga“. Aftan við hana vitnar Guðbrandur síðan í óprentaðan þátt Hjálmars um að Hallur hafi verið bannsunginn og birtir vísu Halls af því tilefni.⁸⁴ Söguefnið um þessar þrjár þjóðsagnapersónur hefur þannig verið skorið niður úr tæplega 50 blaðsíðum í handriti í eina opnu. Þegar allt er talið eru einungis fimm efnisatriði frá Bólu-Hjálmari prentuð í þjóðsagnasafninu⁸⁵ og eingöngu „Þáttur af Grími Skeljungsbana“ er prentaður nokkurn veginn í fullri lengd. Hin atriðin eru yfirleitt einungis brot úr frumritunum þar sem mikið hefur verið strikað út og breytt, ýmist af Jóni eða Guðbrandi.

Mun meira efni er komið í safnið frá Gísla Konráðssyni og þar er breytingunum aðeins öðruvísi farið. Jón fer þar greinilega oft að ráðum vina sinna, Guðbrands og Maurers, og breytir orðalagi. Yfirlýsingin frá Maurer, sem vitnað er í hér að ofan, hefur eflaust hjálpað til og ef til vill hefur Guðbrandur haft áhrif á Jón með fyrnefndu bréfi frá 11. október 1860 þar sem hann segir: „eg veit að Gísli gamli Konráðsson er heimtulaus og svo góðr maðr að honum dettr ekki í hug að engu megi breyta hjá sér, þegar menn að eins geta hans að góðu sem hann alla daga á skilið.“⁸⁶ Breytingar Jóns sjást t.d. á sögu frá Gísla sem hefur yfirskriftina „Draugahellir undir Jökli“ í frumútgáfu þjóðsagnanna.⁸⁷ Samanburðurinn er auðveldur þar sem sagan er prentuð í seinni útgáfu þjóðsagnasafnsins undir titlinum „Steintök í Dritvík og Draugahellir (undir Jökli)“⁸⁸ beint eftir uppskrift Gísla Konráðssonar.⁸⁹ Handritið Lbs 535 4to tilheyrir handritasafni Jóns Árnasonar en þar eru eingöngu sögur og söguþættir með hendi Gísla Konráðssonar. Úr þeim hefur Jón valið þó nokkrar sögur og oft breytt orðalaginu á svipaðan hátt og sögunni um Draugahelli.⁹⁰

84 JÁ₁, I 586–587; Lbs 530 4to, 175r–176r.

85 Þau koma fyrir í þessum sögum: „Þáttur af Grími Skeljungsbana“ (JÁ₁ I 247–256, JÁ₂ I 238–247); „Guðmundur Bergþórsson“ (JÁ₁ I 468–470, JÁ₂ I 453–455); „Síra Þorleifur Skaftason“ (JÁ₁ I 581–583, JÁ₂ I 569–572); „Hallur á Horni bannsunginn“ (JÁ₁ I 587, JÁ₂ I 576); „Þorbjörn kólka“ (vísa) (JÁ₁ II 130, JÁ₂ II 131).

86 NKS 3010 4to.

87 JÁ₁ I 304–305.

88 JÁ₂ I 293–294.

89 Uppskriftina er að finna á blöðum 158r–160r í Lbs 416 8vo en það er eitt frumhandrita þjóðsagnasafns Jóns Árnasonar í handritasafni Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns.

90 Sögurnar eru: „Héðinsfjarðarvofa“ (Lbs 535 4to 11v–13v; JÁ₁ I 289–290, JÁ₂ I 277–278); „Draugurinn Hundi“ (Lbs 535 4to 10r–11r; JÁ₁ I 300–301, JÁ₂ I 288–289); „Húskarlinn á Hólum“ (Lbs 535 4to 13v–14v; JÁ₁ I 307–308, JÁ₂ I 294–295); „Klaufi“ (Lbs 535 4to

Guðbrandur skiptir sér ekkert af þessum tiltölulega stuttu sögum og hið sama má segja um sögur þar sem Jón nýtir sögur frá Gísla þegar hann steypir saman mörgum heimildum í eina frásögn. Öðru máli gegnir um langa sagnaþætti Gísla en með þá fara Guðbrandur og Maurer eins og með þætti Hjálmars. Sem dæmi má nefna að Gísli hefur skrifað slíka þætti um séra Hálfðan í Felli, Galdra-Leifa, Eirík í Vogsósum og Stokkseyrar-Disu og Jón sent þá til prentunar. Þeim er öllum annaðhvort mikið breytt af Guðbrandi eða alveg felldir niður.⁹¹ Hann afsakar þetta síðan í formála sínum með orðunum: „Rúm og efni safns þessa leyfði því miðr ekki, að hagnýta nema stöku greinir úr þáttum Gísla Konráðssonar um sira Eirík í Vogsósum, sira Hálfðan á Felli, og Þorleif Þórðarsson, en bók þessi sýnir þó best hvað mart höf. hennar á að þakka ljúfri aðstoð þessa margfróða manns.“⁹²

Bæta má við að í prentsmiðjuhandritinu kallar Jón Árnason Gísla ávallt „Gísla fróða“ en Guðbrandur strikar „fróði“ út. Hann strikar líka út „fróði“ sem Jón hefur sett aftan við nafn Daða og setur Níelsson í staðinn.⁹³ Þannig smábreytingar gerir Guðbrandur oft og Maurer tekur yfirleitt alltaf tillit til þeirra þó að þar séu undantekningar á. Sem dæmi má nefna að við nafn Níelsar skálda vill Guðbrandur bæta neðanmáls „er nýdauðr, leirskáld“⁹⁴ en það gerir Maurer ekki.

126r–126v; JÁ₁ I 339, JÁ₂ I 324–325); „Guðbrandur og Mókollur“ (Lbs 535 4to 126v–131r; JÁ₁ I 339–341, JÁ₂ I 325–328); „Draugurinn Kinni“ (Lbs 535 4to 11r–11v; JÁ₁ I 342, JÁ₂ I 328–329); „Einar prestur galdrameistari“ (Lbs 535 4to 28r–31r; JÁ₁ I 528–530, JÁ₂ I 513–516); „Galdra-Brandur“ (Lbs 535 4to 120v–124r; JÁ₁ I 599–601, JÁ₂ I 591–593); „Tómasar saga“ (Lbs 535 4to 79v–80v; JÁ₁ II 166–167, JÁ₂ II 167–168); „Drepinn útilegumaður“ (Lbs 535 4to 84r–85r; JÁ₁ II 167–168, JÁ₂ II 168–169); „Jón á Sauðá“ (Lbs 535 4to 81v–84r; JÁ₁ II 170–171, JÁ₂ II 171–172); og „Gunnsteinsstaða-Sigurður“ (Lbs 535 4to 80v–81v; JÁ₁ II 171–172, JÁ₂ II 174).

91 Ólína Þorvarðardóttir hefur fjallað um breytingarnar sem gerðar voru á efni Gísla og Hjálmars áður en prentsmiðjuhandritið varð aðgengilegt til rannsókna (Ólína Þorvarðardóttir, „Þjóðsögur Jóns Árnasonar? Tilraun til heimildarárýni,“ *Þjóðlíf og þjóðtrú: Ritgerðir helgaðar Jóni Hnefli Aðalsteinsyni*, ritstj. Jón Jónsson, Terry Gunnell, Valdimar Tr. Hafstein og Ögmundur Helgason (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1998), 253–256.

92 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ xxxi. Enginn þessara þátta var prentaður í nýju útgáfunni af þjóðsögnum enda taka útgefendur hennar fram að þeir hafi „af ráðnum hug gengið fram hjá handritum stórvirkra höfunda eins og Gísla Konráðssonar og Bólu-Hjálmars,“ (JÁ₂ VI 56).

93 BSB Isl.Cod.3(1), 434r.

94 BSB Isl.Cod.3(2), 968r.

Prentsmiðjuhandrit kímnisagna Lbs 529 4to (206r–246v)

Líkt og áður kom fram sendi Maurer Jóni aftur handritin að kímnisögum og sögum af einstökum galdramönnum sem hafði verið mikið breytt og efnið styt. Dæmi um styttingar Guðbrands í frumriti kímnisagna eru fjölmargar og margar hverjar án nokkurra frekari útskýringa.⁹⁵ Í einhverjum tilfellum má þó sjá á spássíukroti Guðbrands hvers vegna sögunnar voru felldar út. Á spássíu við upphaf sögunnar „Presturinn og grautar-krukkan“⁹⁶ hefur Guðbrandur til að mynda skrifað með blýanti „Cassiert. Illa sagt frá, sagan viðbjóðsleg, eg hefi heyrt hana betri.“ Við grófasta hluta sögunnar eða þegar vindur var leystur á graut er skrifað með rauðu bleki „hér!“ og sagan felld út. Aðrar sögur gætu hafa verið teknar út vegna óviðeigandi efnis og í minnsta kosti þremur tilfellum sést hvernig Jón Árnason gefur því sjálfur undir fótinn í athugasemd sem hann skrifar í prentsmiðjuhandritið:

(Þó eg láti hér aptast blað með NB á og 3. sögnum; 1. „Þar mun ljós af verða“. 2. „Hver hefir þig hingað borið, herlegur fólinn, dólinn?“ 3. „Þú veizt, sem er, eg þekki mörinn“, held eg þær geri vont verra, því nóg mun komið af öðrum óþverra. En eg læt þær fara með til sýnis).⁹⁷

Í þessum tilfellum var Guðbrandur sammála Jóni og felldi niður ofangreindar þrjár sögur.

Guðbrandur tekur þó ekki alltaf mark á athugasemdum Jóns, svo sem við sögnina „Þú nýtur þess, guð, eg næ ekki til þín“ þar sem Jón hefur sett athugasemd á efri spássíu innan sviga: „(Er ekki þessi saga of óguðleg? til að taka hana).“⁹⁸ Ekkert svar er skrifað á spássíuna við þessari lágværu athugasemd Jóns en búið er að strika yfir athugasemdina með blýanti, langlíklegast af Guðbrandi.⁹⁹ Álit Guðbrands er því nokkuð

95 Dæmi um sögu sem var strikuð út án athugasemda og líklegt er að Guðbrandi hafi þótt óviðeigandi er sagan „Arnbjörg fótálanga“: Lbs 529 4to, 221r–v (JÁ₂ V 426–427). Allar kímni-sögurnar sem voru felldar út birtust í hinni nýju útgáfu safnsins sem kom út 1954–1961.

96 Lbs 529 4to, 212r–215r.

97 Lbs 529 4to, 220v.

98 Lbs 529 4to, 211r.

99 Yfirstrikun er líklega Guðbrands samkvæmt skýringum og athugasemdum í JÁ₂ II 581.

ljóst: hans var einfaldlega að taka lokaákvörðun og sagan „óguðlega“ var prentuð í safninu þrátt fyrir efasemdir safnarans. Hér sést að það hefur verið afdrifarík ákvörðun að gera Guðbrand Vigfússon að milliliði þeirra Jóns og Maurers. Á endanum stóð það upp á Guðbrand að taka ýmsar lokaákvörðanir varðandi safnið sem ekki var svo einfalt að bera undir Jón og Maurer vegna fjarlægðar. Það lítur meira að segja út fyrir að kaflaheitið „Kímnisögur“ hafi ekki verið runnið undan rifjum Jóns sjálfs heldur frekar Guðbrands því að í bréfi til hans segir Jón: „Kímnisögurnar (skrítlur) þykir mér ljótt orð og ofnýmóðins fóstur til þess að samaldar alþýða geti gert það enn að óskabarni.“¹⁰⁰

Formálinn

Þegar farið var að stytta í að prentun fyrsta bindis þjóðsagnasafnsins hafist þurfti, eðli málsins samkvæmt, að ganga frá ýmsu er varðaði umgjörð safnsins.¹⁰¹ Í bréfi sem Maurer skrifaði Guðbrandi 27. október 1861 segist hann ætla að ganga frá fyrsta bindi á næstu fjórum vikum og því vanti titil, tileinkun og formála annað hvort frá Jóni eða Guðbrandi sem allra fyrst.¹⁰² Þann 24. nóvember hótar hann Guðbrandi góðlátlega með því að ef efnið berist ekki til hans innan 14 daga muni hann senda á hann draug.¹⁰³ Þann 3. desember er Maurer farinn að örvænta um að efnið berist fyrir jól og segir að ef það komi ekki þurfi Guðbrandur eða hann sjálfur að skrifa formála að safninu.¹⁰⁴ Þann 20. desember segir hann að

100 Bréf Jóns Árnasonar til Guðbrands Vigfússonar, 17. júní 1861. Í þessu bréfi lét Jón óvenju margt flakka varðandi skoðanir sínar á afskiptum Guðbrands og Maurers og var framar venju heitt í hamsi.

101 Sjá einnig Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 377–378.

102 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2.

103 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2.

104 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2. Guðbrandur skrifar til Maurers 21. desember 1861 að hann hafi hafist handa við að skrifa eigin formála: „Nú hefi eg sest niðr til að skrifa formála, eins og þú stakst uppá í bréfi þínu og hefi þessadagana verið að safna til hans en get þó ekki sent þér hann ásamt hinu fyr en um nokkra daga. Ég hefi sýnt Jóni [Sigurðssyni] uppkast mitt og líkar þeim það vel, og hjálpar mér til að grafast eptir fleiru, og hann hefir ráðið til að fara svona að heldr en að rita undir Jóns [Árnasonar] nafni, af því fátt sem ekkert verður notað af hans formála.“: Bréf frá Guðbrandi til Maurers eru varðveitt á Landsbókasafni Íslands – Háskólabókasafni undir safnmarkinu Lbs 1056 4to, mörg hafa verið skrifuð upp og gerð aðgengileg á Íslenskur músík- og menningararfur: <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/?sendandi=62&mttakandi=636&sida=4>, sótt 29. júlí 2025.

Guðbrandur verði að semja stutta útskýringu á því af hverju formáli Jóns fylgi ekki safninu en að hann muni birtast í öðru bindi.¹⁰⁵ Á endanum fór það svo að Guðbrandur Vigfússon skrifaði formála safnsins auk þess sem hann réði ýmsu öðru um umgjörð þess, líkt og farið verður yfir hér á eftir.

Jón Árnason hafði vissulega skrifað formála sem hann ætlaðist til að fylgdi safni sínu. Fyrst skrifaði hann stutt uppkast haustið 1860, þá mun lengri útgáfu undirritaða þann 25. apríl 1861 og svo 26. október sama ár endurbætta útgáfu sem Jón leit sjálfur á sem endanlegan formála.¹⁰⁶ Þessi formáli Jóns kom hins vegar ekki út á prenti fyrr en árið 1939 eða einum 78 árum eftir að hann var skrifaður og um 50 árum eftir lát Jóns og þá einungis sem viðauki í ljósprentaðri endurútgáfu safnsins.¹⁰⁷ Fyrstu tvær atlögur Jóns að formálanum virðast vera uppköst og af bréfum hans til Guðbrands er augljóst að honum þykja þessi skrif ekki auðveld og vill frekar einbeita sér að efni safnsins.¹⁰⁸ Enda var þessum tilraunum fálega tekið af Guðbrandi og í bréfi hans til Maurers skefur hann ekki utan af því: „Formáli Jóns líkar mér ekki; hann er þúngr gáfuskot ekkert, en strit og erfiði; vantar alla gleði og „humor“.“¹⁰⁹ Það var ekki fyrr en í lok ágúst 1861 sem Jóni Árnasyni bárust efnisleg svör um atlögu sína að formálanum frá 25. apríl. Þá var Guðbrandur staddur hjá Maurer í þýskri sveitasælu á bæ föður Maurers þar sem hann segist lifa „eins og blóm í eggi“ og þeir væru á leið saman til Alpafjallanna. Þar skrifaði Guðbrandur: „Til þess nú að spara tvímæli, þá skrifa eg í nafni okkar beggja Maurers og mín um sögur yðar það sem helzt er að athuga.“¹¹⁰ Guðbrandur ræðir svo ýmislegt varðandi safnið, til að mynda hvernig prentun þess gangi, hvaða efni verði að halda inni og hvað verði að víkja, áður en hann ræðir loks formálann. Aftur hvetur Guðbrandur Jón, líkt og áður, til þess að vera jákvæðari og diplómatisvari í garð prestanna og segir:

105 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2.

106 Þessar þrjár atlögur Jóns Árnasonar að formála má finna í handritum hans í handritasafni Landsbókasafns Íslands – Háskólabókasafns undir safnmörkunum Lbs 529 4to, 97r (frá 1860); Lbs 528 4to, 1r–11v (25. apríl 1861); og Lbs 528 4to, 12r–19v (26. október 1861); sjá einnig Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 377–378; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf,“ 92.

107 Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, 2 b. ljóspr., ritstj. Einar Arnórsson (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1925–1939), II 709–719. Þessari útgáfu fylgdi einnig ný nafnaskrá gerð af Guðna Jónssyni og efnisskrá gerð af Einari Ól. Sveinssyni.

108 Bodl. GV Icel. d.1. T.d. bréf 5. nóvember 1860 og 22. mars 1861.

109 Bodl. GV Germ. d.2: Bréf frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni til Konrad Maurers, 9. júní 1861.

110 NKS 3010 4to: Bréf Guðbrands Vigfússonar til Jóns Árnasonar, 23. ágúst 1861.

um formálann. Það er mikið undir, að hann sé sem alþýðlegastr og mjúkastr, til að glýja menn og hæna til að safna meir, og þér þurfið í tómi við að leika að rita hann svo hann sé sem best gjör Í formálanum getr eitt orð spillt allri bókinni. [...] Okkr þætti best og æskilegt, að hann væri ritaðr í léttu skapi og sem bestum huga til landsmanna. Allar sögurnar standa sem opin bók fyrir yðr, svo þér hafið um auðugri aldingarð að gresja en nokkur annara. Vel væri að geta að góðu allra þeirra á Íslandi, sem best skrifa sögurnar og alþýðlegastar¹¹¹

Nokkuð ljóst er af þessum skrifum Guðbrands að Jón þurfti að leggja meiri vinnu í formála sinn ef hann ætlaði að hljóta náð fyrir augum samverkamanna sinna. Jón Árnason gerir þá þriðju og síðustu atlögu sína að formála og er sá undirritaður 26. október 1861.¹¹² Í sviga við yfirskriftina „Formáli“ stendur nú skrifað „(emendation)“ og þá endurbættu útgáfu formálans sendir Jón Guðbrandi 24. nóvember 1861 og skrifar í fylgibréfi:

Formálinn er hér og með nokkuð breyttur; ekki veit eg, hvernig yður kann að lítat á hann, en eg get ekki feingist við hann meira. Það er sjálfsagt að þér og Maurer hafið vald til að breyta því sem ykkur líkar ekki í honum. Eg hefi brotið odd af oflæti mínu í honum í fleiru en einu, lofað Íslendinga, en dregið úr lofi Maurers etc.¹¹³

Um skoðun Guðbrands á endurbættum formála Jóns má svo lesa í bréfi til Maurers þann 21. desember 1861 þar sem hann greinir frá því að þeir Jón Sigurðsson hafi ákveðið í sameiningu að formálinn sé alls ekki við hæfi fyrir safnið eða „ótækan; hann er hinn fyrri í öngu bættr.“¹¹⁴ Það var ekki fyrr en í bréfi þann 12. apríl 1862, eða um fimm mánuðum eftir að Jón sendir formálann, sem Guðbrandur svarar kalli hans: „Með formálann sjáid þér, hvað við höfum gjört. Eg vona að þér ekki firtist því, eins og það og er gjört í græskuleysi, og veit enginn nema Jón Sigurðsson og Maurer neitt um það.“¹¹⁵

111 Sama heimild.

112 Formálann (emendation) frá 26. október 1861 má finna í Lbs 528 4to, 12r–19v.

113 Bodl. GV Icel. d.1: Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Guðbrands Vigfússonar, 24. nóvember 1861. Með þessu bréfi fylgdi einnig bréf Jóns til Jakobs Grimm og í bréfi til Maurers 21. desember segist Guðbrandur vera ánægður með það bréf, Lbs 1056 4to.

114 Lbs 1056 4to.

115 NKS 3010 4to.

Hér má sjá að Guðbrandur gaf Jóni í raun litlar sem engar útskýringar á þeirri ákvörðun að formáli hans hafi verið látinn víkja fyrir skrifum Guðbrands sjálfs. Maurer stakk upp á því í bréfi þann 5. janúar 1862 að þeir segi Jóni að formáli hans hafi borist þeim of seint en eins og Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir hefur bent á þá „er áhugavert að sjá að Guðbrandur laug aldrei að Jóni eins og Maurer hafði stungið upp á“ hvað þetta varðaði.¹¹⁶ Opinbera skýringin varð hins vegar sú að formáli Jóns Árnasonar hafi ekki borist í tæka tíð til þess að verða prentaður vegna þess að bókin hafi verið „prentuð í fjarska við höfundinn“.¹¹⁷ Ekki er mikið vitað um viðbrögð Jóns, hvað þá raunverulega skoðun hans á gjörningi Guðbrands og Maurers.¹¹⁸ Sigurður Nordal bendir á í „Forspjalli“ sínu í *Þjóðsagnabókinni* frá 1971 að sér þyki Jón „furðu fáorður“¹¹⁹ um þetta mál en varla fari „hjá því, að Jóni Árnasyni hafi fundizt hann sárt leikinn, [...] annar maður ritaði formálann að honum fornspurðum, þótt reynt væri að leyna lesendur því beiskasta af sannleikanum.“¹²⁰ Greinilegt er að þeim Guðbrandi og Maurer var mikið í mun að sleginn yrði réttur tónn í formála íslenska safnsins og efnið rammað inn á þann hátt sem þeim þótti sómi vera að. Höfnun þeirra á skrifum Jóns Árnasonar og möguleikinn á að særa hann var fórnar-kostnaður sem þeir voru tilbúnir að færa. Hagur safnsins var settur framar

116 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf,“ 92.

117 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ xxxii.

118 Þegar seinna bindi *Íslenzkra þjóðsagna og æfintýra* kom út 1864 stóð til að Jón Árnason skrifaði eftirmála sem hann og gerði og sendi áleiðis þann 27. nóvember 1863 (mest af bréfinu sjálfu hefur glatast en þetta má sjá í athugasemd sem Jón skrifar á bréf frá Guðbrandi dags. 2. nóvember 1863, NKS 3010 4to). Eftirmálinn er stuttur, um það bil ein blaðsíða, og hann sendir Jón ásamt „nafnaregistri þeirra sögumanna sem ekki eru nefndir í sögunum, einnig prentvillu blaðið úr 5 eða 6. fyrstu örkunum“. Í bréfi 2. september 1863 hafði Jón biðlað til Guðbrands um að eftirmáli hans yrði prentaður án breytinga: „Ýmsra orsaka vegna finn eg mig samt knúinn til að gefa eptirmála í fáeinum línun, formálinn er áður kominn; þér kannist við það; en þær fáu línur óska eg helzt að komi óbreyttar aptan við.“ Ekki gekk það eftir því að eftirmálinn sem fylgdi 2. bindi var skrifaður af Konrad Maurer og í bréfi 30. mars 1864 segir Guðbrandur Jóni að líkt og með formálann hafi eftirmáli hans borist þeim of seint í hendur: „Eptirmáli yðar kom þó um seint, og þótti Maurer það meir en illt. Hann setti sjálfur eptir mála stuttan og lista yfir sögumenn.“ Óneitanlega minnir ferlið varðandi eftirmálann á formálamálið og því ekki loku fyrir það skotið að skrif Jóns hafi aftur verið dæmd ónothæf af samstarfsmönnum hans og slæmar samgöngur notaðar sem tyllíastæða. Eftirmáli Jóns sem og listi hans yfir samverkamenn hans birtist enn seinna en formáli hans gerði (1939) eða tæpum 90 árum eftir ritun hans og þá í sex binda útgáfu verksins sem kom út á árunum 1954–1961, JÁ₂ II 561.

119 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall,“ xlviii.

120 Sama heimild.

öllu öðru og það varð formáli úr penna Guðbrands Vigfússonar sem fylgdi fyrsta bindi *Íslenzkra þjóðsagna og æfintýra* úr hlaði.

Rétt er að rýna stuttlega í mögulegar ástæður þess hvers vegna þeim Guðbrandi og Jóni Sigurðssyni fannst formáli Jóns Árnasonar ekki þess verður að fylgja safninu. Terry Gunnell hefur bent á að mögulega hafi Guðbrandi ekki þótt mikið til ritstíls Jóns koma en einnig hefur nálgun Jóns og afstaða til efnisins trúlega vegið þungt.¹²¹ Jón eyðir þó nokkru púðri í að svara þeirri gagnrýni sem fyrri safn hans og Magnúsar Grímssonar hafði fengið, sem og að ræða andstöðu margra presta við nýafstaðna söfnun. Hann segir að prestarnir hafi flestir viljað „útrýma slíkum kenningum úr hjörtum tilheyrenda sinna“¹²² og að mikið hafi kveðið „að vandlætingum hinna ákafari presta“.¹²³ Jón sýnir þessari afstöðu sumra presta þó einnig vissan skilning og segir: „Prestunum var hin mesta vorkunn og bein embættisskylda þeirra að útrýma hindurvitnum og hjátrú úr söfnuðum sínum, en með hjátrúnni misstist meira; því þegar búið var að koma inn fyrirritningu á munnmælum og alþýðlegri fornfræði hjá almenningi var það bein afleiðing að það legðist af að „segja sögur“.“¹²⁴ Eins og áður hefur komið fram má sjá í bréfum milli Guðbrands og Maurers að þeir voru mjög ósáttir við þær sneiðar sem Jón sendi prestum á Íslandi í formálanum því að þeir höfðu margir hverjir verið hans helstu hjálparhellur við þjóðsagnasöfnunina.¹²⁵

Formáli Guðbrands (24 bls.) er mun lengri en formáli Jóns (7 bls.)¹²⁶ og er heilt á litið meira á fræðilegu nótunum¹²⁷ því að Guðbrandur nýtir sérfræðipækkingu sína við skrifin. Hann byrjar á því að leggja línurnar varðandi hvernig skilja á efnið í gegnum hin nýju gleraugu þjóðernis-rómantíkur sem hefur umbylt hlutverki þjóðsagna: „Þær eru fornar í anda en nýjar að smíð; [...] skáldahugr þjóðarinnar leiðir æ fram nýjar.“¹²⁸ Guðbrandur fer síðan yfir söfnun þjóðfræða bæði í Þýskalandi og

121 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 404; sjá einnig Gunnell, „Clerics as Collectors of Folklore“.

122 JÁ₂ I xvii–xviii.

123 Sama heimild, I xviii.

124 Sama heimild, I xviii.

125 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 404; sjá einnig Gunnell, „Clerics as Collectors of Folklore“.

126 Fjöldi blaðsíðna er miðaður við hvernig þeir birtast í sex binda útgáfunni frá 1954–1961.

127 Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 404–408.

128 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ vi.

Danmörku, Svíþjóð og Noregi.¹²⁹ Þessu fylgir hann eftir með nokkuð ítarlegri yfirferð á söfnun þjóðfræða á Íslandi fyrr á öldum og nýtir þar menntun sína til fullnustu. Einnig stígur Guðbrandur mun léttar til jarðar í að gagnrýna prestastéttina heldur en Jón í sínum skrifum þegar hann segir að „sumir prestar skrifuðu raunar, að þetta „væri fyrir neðan sig“ og sendu ekkert, en þetta hefir margfalt bætzt upp, því aðrir prestar hafa aptr sýnt sig sem alþýðlega fræðimenn, og verið beztu sögumenn safns þessa.“¹³⁰ Gunnell segir einmitt Guðbrandi takast að feta þröngt einstigi eða:

an excellent piece of trapeze walking, not least in its expertise at meeting the interests of two markets at once, underlining the value of the collection for Old Norse enthusiasts, while simultaneously stressing that the present “united” nation is equal in ability to the forefathers.¹³¹

Guðbrandur minnst einnig töluvert á þjóðsagnapersónur í skrifum sínum, sem og góða sögumenn og gerir formálann með því kjarnyrtari og ef til vill skemmtilegri aflestrar en ella.

Tileinkun

Í bréfaskriftum sín á milli ræða þeir Jón og Guðbrandur einnig hverjum eigi að tileinka íslenska þjóðsagnasafnið og þar komu einungis tveir til greina, annaðhvort sjálfur Jacob Grimm¹³² eða samstarfsmaður þeirra Konrad Maurer. Jón leggur upp með að tileinka safnið Grimm¹³³ og biður Guðbrand um að senda sér fornafn hans og titil. Guðbrandi list ekki vel á þetta í fyrstu og skrifar: „Að eigna hana Jacob Grimm er ekki nær en að eigna hana Guttenberg eða Dr. Faust af því þeir fundu upp prentverkið

129 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ xxv–xxvi; Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends,“ 405.

130 Guðbrandur Vigfússon, „Formáli,“ xxx.

131 Terry Gunnell, „Daisies Rise to Become Oaks: The Politics of Early Folklore Collection in Northern Europe,“ *Folklore* 121 (2010): 26.

132 Wilhelm Grimm hafði látist árið 1859.

133 Líkt og gert var í fyrri bindi sænska sagnasafnsins *Svenska folk-sagor och äfventyr* en það var eina þjóðsagnasafnið útgefið af safnara sem Jón Árnason hafði séð áður en hann hóf sína söfnun (*Svenska folk-sagor och äfventyr: Efter muntlig öfverlemnning* samlade och utgifna af Gunnar Olof Hyltén-Cavallius och George Stephens. Stockholm: A. Bohlins Förlag, 1844; Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, „Konrad Maurer,“ 379 n. 81).

og annar var göldróttir.¹³⁴ Guðbrandur telur að betur fari á því að tileinka safnið Maurer því hann væri: „betri meðmæling bókinni en Grimm sem Íslendingar ekki þekkja, enda þó hann sé ágætismaður þá á hann engan en M allan þátt í yðar bók.“¹³⁵ Jón segist samþykkja þessa tillögu Guðbrands þó honum þyki enn fara betur á því að safnið verði tileinkað Grimm.¹³⁶ Fyrsta dag ársins 1861 sendir Guðbrandur hins vegar bréf með þeirri frétt að Maurer sé það þvert um geð að láta tileinka sér safnið vegna náinnar þátttöku hans í vinnslu þess og hverfa þeir aftur að því að tileinka safnið Grimm sem Guðbrandur segir engan titil þurfa: „Nafn hans er titill hans.“¹³⁷ Jón sættir sig við þennan viðsnúning en segir samt við Guðbrand:

Leiðinlegt er með Dedicationina, það er orðin úr henni eilífur hræri grautur, Maurer er þar alt af sá sami, en þér hafið hrært í mér, og þykir mér nú ekki minna fyrir að breyta aptur til Grims Dedicationinni en áður til Maurers, þó verð eg að gera það, en mest á eg Maurer að þakka, og því er kannski ástæða að láta þetta eptir honum.¹³⁸

Tileinkun Jóns var á þessa leið:

Hinum ágæta
fræðimanna öldúngi
Jacob Grimm,
höfundi alþýðlegra sagna
eru
þessar alþýðusögur og munnmæli
helguð
af
safnandanum.¹³⁹

134 NKS 3010 4to: Bréf frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni til Jóns Árnasonar, 11. október 1860.

135 Sama heimild.

136 Bodl. GV Icel. d1: Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Guðbrands Vigfússonar, 5. nóvember 1860.

137 NKS 3010 4to. Í sama bréfi frá 1. janúar 1861 segir Guðbrandur Jóni að hann hafi þegar sent Maurer tillögu að orðalagi tileinkunarinnar til Grimms: „Eg bjó til og sendi M. Dedication sem þim líkar vel: hún er svo: Hinum ágæta fræðimanna öldúngi // Jakob Grimm / höfundi alþýðlegra sagna // eru helguð fornfræði þessi/.“

138 Bodl. GV Icel. d1: Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Guðbrands Vigfússonar, 22. mars 1861.

139 Lbs 528 4to, fremra saurblað 4r. Á sama tíma stakk Jón Árnason upp á titlinum *Safn af íslenskum alþýðusögum og munnmælum*, sjá hér á eftir.

Þrátt fyrir að upphaflega hugmynd Jóns hafi hér orðið ofan á þá líkar Guðbrandi illa við orðalag Jóns og segir: „Mér líkaði ekki, og eg stakk „inter nos“ undir stól yðar dedicatio til hans“ en segir áður: „Dedicationin til Grimms held eg fari bezt sem Maurer stakk upp á síðast í bréfi sínu, hún verður að vera einföld og titlalaus“.¹⁴⁰ Rétt eftir að Guðbrandur hafnar orðalagi Jóns á tileinkuninni hrósar hann samt safninu sem heild og talar um „smáaðfindni“ sína, líkt og til að blíðka Jón ef honum líkaði illa afskiptasemin.¹⁴¹ Tillaga Guðbrands (með spurningarmerki á eftir) berst Jóni frá Maurer í bréfi dagsettu 24. febrúar 1861 en kom upphaflega til Maurers frá Guðbrandi:¹⁴²

Hinum ágæta fræðismanna öldúngi,
Jakob Grimm,
höfundi alþýðlegra sagna,
eru helguð fornfræði þessi?¹⁴³

Sú tileinkun sem á endanum var prentuð kom milliliðalaust frá Guðbrandi og var á þessa leið:

Hinum ágæta fræðimanna öldúngi
JAKOB GRIMM
höfundi alþýðlegrar sagnafræði
eru helgaðar þjóðsögur þessar.¹⁴⁴

Guðbrandur setur hér orðið þjóðsögur í staðinn fyrir fornfræði og rímar það við endanlegt nafn þjóðsagnasafnsins sem einnig kom frá Guðbrandi eins og næst verður rætt.

140 NKS 3010 4to: Bréf frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni til Jóns Árnasonar, 18. apríl 1861.

141 Sama heimild.

142 Sjá Lbs 1056 4to: Bréf Guðbrands til Maurers 14. október og 1. desember 1860 og Bodl. GV Germ. d.2 frá Maurer til Guðbrands 1. nóvember og 27. desember 1860.

143 NKS 3009 4to: Bréf frá Maurer til Jóns Árnasonar, 24. febrúar 1861.

144 JÁ₁ I [3]; BSB Isl.Cod.3(1), [1v].

Titill

Í bréfi til Konrad Maurers þann 27. mars 1860 spyr Jón Árnason: „Hvað á þá barnið að heita“¹⁴⁵ og skiljanlegt er að slík ákvörðun hafi valdið þeim Jóni, Guðbrandi og Maurer „miklum heilabrotum“ enda var það „seint útkljáð.“¹⁴⁶ Samkvæmt Sigurði Nordal hafa tvö titilblöð Jóns Árnasonar að þjóðsagnasafninu varðveist og er hið fyrra á þessa leið:

Safn af alþýðlegri fornfræði
eftir Magnús prest Grímsson og Jón stúdent Árnason.
1. bindi
Alþýðusögur.¹⁴⁷

Sigurður segir að nafnið „alþýðleg fornfræði“ hafi verið líklegt til að verða fyrir valinu þó að Jón lýsi áhyggjum af því að orðið „fornfræði“ „lofi of miklu og stórmannlegu“¹⁴⁸ samanber bréf hans til Maurers frá 29. júlí 1860. Þar segir hann þó jafnframt að ef hvert bindi beri sinn titil, til dæmis að 1. bindi beri undirtitilinn „Munnmælasögur og æfintýri“, ætti orðið „fornfræði“ fyrir heildina ekki að verða „til hneykslis.“¹⁴⁹ Stuttu síðar þurfti þó að bregðast við fyrirmælum þýska útgefandans hvað varðar lengd safnsins sem þýddi að bindunum fækkaði úr þremur í tvö.¹⁵⁰ Sú breyting gerði það að verkum að „fornfræði“ átti ekki lengur við. Í bréfi frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni til Jóns frá 1. nóvember 1861 segir hann að sleppa verði:

kvæðum, þulum, gátum etc. og einnig leikjum, ef þér fallizt á það, og hafa aðeins sögur, og breyta eptir því titli bókarinnar, Að þessu verður varla öðruvísi farið [...] Eptir þessu verður að breyta titlinum og kalla t.d. „alþýðusögur og munnmæli.“ Fornfræði á síðr við, þar sem allt þetta, eða flest, lifir enn á tungurótum manna, þó það sé mart fornt í anda. Um þetta vonum við, að þér fallizt á okkar álit, því

145 Lbs 2655 8vo. Bréfið er prentað í *Úr fótum Jóns Árnasonar*, I 198–201.

146 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xxxix.

147 Þetta mun vera eitt elsta uppkast Jóns Árnasonar af titilblaði og er úr vasakveri hans í Lbs 2088 4to. Mynd af því er í JÁ IV iv. Sjá einnig Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xxxviii.

148 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xxxix.

149 Lbs 2655 8vo. Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Konrad Maurers, 29. júlí 1860.

150 Guðbrandur Vigfússon lýsir þessu vandamáli sem svo í bréfi til Jóns Árnasonar: „Þá vantar magarúm, en matinn ekki,“ NKS 3010 4to, 23. ágúst 1861.

síðar koma ráð, að gefa meira út, ef þetta gengr allt vel, og betra að hafa auðugt safn af sögum, en snefil af öllu.¹⁵¹

Seint í nóvember sést í bréfi til Maurers að Jón hefur breytt titlinum í samræmi við þetta: „Eptir tillögum Yðar og Guðbrandar hefi eg nú breytt titlinum og tileinkuninni, því þess þarf; enda hefðu sumir búizt við að finna fleira fornt, en er í safninu, hefði það heitið „Safn af alþýðlegri fornfræði.““¹⁵²

Síðara uppkast að titli Jóns Árnasonar, sem Sigurður Nordal bendir á, er á þessa leið:¹⁵³

Íslenzkar og alþýðlegar munnmælasögur og æfintýri

Safnað hefir Jón Árnason

I¹⁵⁴

Í bréfi til Maurers 6. nóvember 1860 sem Jón virðist hafa skrifað um sama leyti og þetta uppkast¹⁵⁵ skrifar hann:

Titillinn er eins og okkur hefir komið saman um, einúngis skal eg geta þess, að það er ef til vill ekki nauðsynlegt að hafa orðið æfintýri, þar sem það kemur fyrir á titlunum, og bið eg Yður þá gjöra svo vel og strika það út úr þeim, ef Yður þækti það betur fara, að sleppa því orði; því reyndar koma þau eiginlegu æfintýri ekki fyrri en í VII. flokki, sem verður þó sá VIII.¹⁵⁶

Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir hefur síðar bent á að til er þriðja uppkast Jóns að titli fyrir safnið.¹⁵⁷ Það er frá því í nóvember 1861 og hljóðaði einfaldlega: „Íslenzkar alþýðusögur og munnmæli.“¹⁵⁸

151 NKS 3010 4to. Viðhorfið sem hér kemur fram um að um nýtt efni sé að ræða en ekki beinlínis fornfræði endurspeglar bæði skoðanir Guðbrands sjálfs og Jóns Sigurðssonar, sjá Gunnell „Daisies Rise to Become Oaks“, 12–37.

152 Lbs 2655 8vo: Bréf frá Jóni Árnasyni til Maurers, 22. nóvember 1861.

153 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xxxix.

154 Þetta uppkast er í Lbs 529 4to, 96v og með fylgir tileinkun til Maurers.

155 Þetta sést á því að hann vísar í þennan titil og útskýrir af hverju hann vill nú tileinka Maurer verkið.

156 Lbs 2655 8vo.

157 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir „Jón Árnason, ævi og störf“, 98.

158 Lbs 528 4to, fremra saurblið 3r.

Þann 7. desember 1861 sendir Guðbrandur Maurer sína eigin útgáfu af heiti safnsins *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*¹⁵⁹ (auk tileinkunar) að því er virðist þegjandi og hljóðalaust til prentunar í Þýskalandi þó að formálinn bíði enn úrlausnar. Hann skrifar í bréfinu til Konrad Maurers: „Ég sendi titil og dedicatio en formála ekki, um það bíð eg svars upp á mitt fyrra bréf.“¹⁶⁰ Á myndum 2 og 3 er hægt að skoða síðustu tillögu Jóns að titli og bera saman við titil Guðbrands sem varð ofan á.

Rétt er að staldra við það að orðið „þjóðsaga“ hafi orðið ofan á sem titill íslenska sagnasafnsins því orðið „í þeirri merkingu, sem síðan varð einráð“¹⁶¹ átti sér á þessum tíma litla sem enga hefð í tungumálinu. Sigurður Nordal telur að orðið hafi fyrst komið fyrir á prenti í þessari merkingu í ritfregn Jóns Sigurðssonar í *Nýjum félagsritum* um bók Maurers *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart* árið 1860.¹⁶² Þessa beinu þýðingu á þýska orðinu *Volkssagen* telur Sigurður „hrjóta óvart úr penna Jóns“¹⁶³ [Sigurðssonar] og bendir á að í fyrirsögn ritfregnarinnar noti Jón sjálfur orðið „alþýðusögur“.¹⁶⁴ Orðið „þjóðsögur“ hafði þó áður komið upp hjá Jóni Árnasyni við vinnslu safnsins meðan enn stóð til að gefa út þrjú bindi og kom þá „Þjóðsögur Íslendinga“ til álita, væntanlega sem heiti á einu af bindunum.¹⁶⁵

Hér hefur verið farið yfir hvernig það æxlaðist að það var Guðbrandur en ekki safnarinn Jón Árnason sem bæði samdi formála að safninu auk þess að ákveða bæði tileinkun og titil. Guðbrandur Vigfússon ber þannig á endanum ábyrgð á flestu því er umgjörð íslenska þjóðsagnasafnsins varðar.

159 Terry Gunnell hefur bent á að titillinn sé „a direct echo of Hyllén-Cavallius and Stephens' collection from 1844–1849: *Svenska folk-sagor och äfventyr*“ (Gunnell, „Jón Árnason and the Collection of Icelandic Folk Legends“, 402).

160 Lbs 1056 4to. Bréf frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni til Maurers, 7. desember 1861.

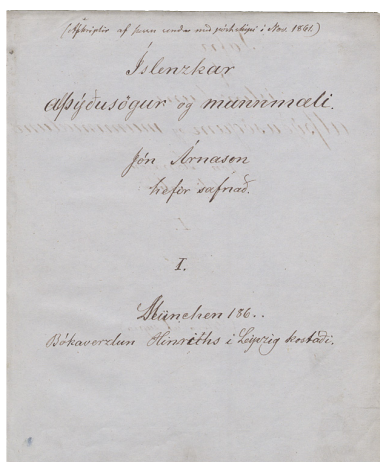
161 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xl.

162 Jón Sigurðsson, „Álit um ritgjörðir“, *Ný félagsrit* 20 (1860): 194.

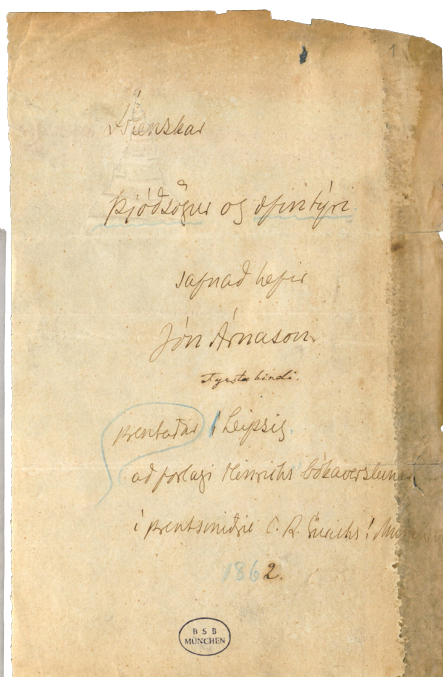
163 Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xl. Orðið var þá komið inn í sænsku: sjá hér nmgr. 159.

164 Sama heimild.

165 Á sama tíma og Jón Árnason hugsar sér aðaltitil safnsins sem *Alþýðleg fornfræði* stingur hann upp á í bréfi til Maurers að fyrsta bindi nefnist „Þjóðsögur Íslendinga“: sjá *Úr fornum Jóns Árnasonar*, I 200. Sjá einnig Sigurður Nordal, „Forspjall“, xl; og <https://ismus.is/tjodfraedi/bref/635>



Mynd 2. Þriðja uppkast Jóns Árnasonar að titli fyrir þjóðsagnasafnið (Lbs 528 4to, fremra saurblið 3r).



Mynd 3. Endanlegur titill þjóðsagnasafnsins frá Guðbrandi Vigfússyni (BSB Isl.Cod.3(1), 1r).

Niðurlag

Ljóst er að áhrif Guðbrands Vigfússonar á þjóðsagnasafn Jóns Árnasonar voru margvísleg, ekki síst þegar litið er til þeirra óbeinu áhrifa sem líklegt er að hann hafi haft á sjálfa söfnunina. Til dæmis er mjög líklegt að hann hafi bent Konrad Maurer á vænlega sagna- og fróðleiksmenn sem hann þekkti áður en Maurer hóf ferðalag sitt um Ísland sumarið 1858 en þetta var fólk sem Maurer benti Jóni Árnasyni síðan á að leita til þegar hann hóf sína söfnun af alvöru. Einn þeirra var áðurnefndur Skúli Gíslason en hann og Guðbrandur höfðu útskrifast saman úr Lærða skólanum árið 1849.¹⁶⁶

Í formála þeirra Jóns Árnasonar og Magnúsar Grímssonar að *Íslenzkum*

¹⁶⁶ Benedikt S. Benedikz, „Guðbrandur Vigfússon,“ 14–15.

æfintýrum 1852 sést að þeir voru undir áhrifum frá Grimm bræðrum líkt og aðrir þjóðsagnasafnarar þess tíma, svo sem í þeim efnum að ekkert skuli „aflaga [...] í meðferðinni, heldur segja það með sömu orðunum, og tíðast er manna á meðal“.¹⁶⁷ Guðbrandur Vigfússon var sannarlega fylgjandi þessari aðferð eins og vel kemur fram í bréfaskiptum hans bæði við Maurer og Jón við undirbúning útgáfu *Íslenzkra þjóðsagna og æfintýra*. Það þýddi þó greinilega ekki í hans huga að aldrei mætti laga orðalagið og stílinn ef þurfa þótti eins og við höfum séð. Í einu bréfi Guðbrands til Jóns Árnasonar bendir hann á að Jón sem ritstjóri safnsins hafi „skýlausan rétt að færa sögurnar í hjúp sem yðr sýnist beztr fella úr og breyta“.¹⁶⁸ Hann var þó ekki ávallt sammála ritstjórnarstefnu Jóns og þeir Maurer tóku stundum fram fyrir hendur hans, m.a. þegar þeir ákváðu að breyta sögum og fella niður. Það var greinilega vandratað milli skers og báru fyrir Jón í því að þóknast skoðunum Guðbrands og slá rétta tóninn bæði hvað varðaði framsetningu safnsins og innihald. Eins og við höfum sýnt fram á hér að framan breytti Guðbrandur sagnaefninu í safni Jóns Árnasonar á ýmsan hátt. Hann strikaði út og bætti við, breytti orðalagi, leiðrétti og bætti við heimildum.

Áhrif Guðbrands á safnið takmörkuðust ekki við val og meðferð á innihaldi þess, heldur koma þau ekki minnst fram í endanlegri umgjörð þjóðsagnasafnsins. Ekki einvörðungu ritaði hann formála safnsins heldur hlutaðist hann til um hverjum það var tileinkað og réð einnig endanlegum titli þess.

HEIMILDIR

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ÁGRIP

„Ein slík saga getur spillt fyrir öllu safninu“: Áhrif Guðbrands Vigfússonar á þjóðsagnasafn Jóns Árnasonar

Efnisorð: þjóðsögur Jóns Árnasonar, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri* (1862–1864), þjóðsögur, þjóðsagnaútgáfa

Greinin fjallar um áhrif Guðbrands Vigfússonar á þjóðsagnasafn Jóns Árnasonar, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri* (1862–1864). Sérstaklega er fjallað um ritstjórnarhlutverk Guðbrands þar sem hann breytti sögunum frá því sem Jón hafði ætlað, bætti við og sleppti sögum, auk þess að skrifa formála, tileinkun og titil. Með ítarlegri greiningu á bréfaskriftum og handritum sýnir rannsóknin fram á að Guðbrandur og samstarfsmaður hans, Konrad Maurer, höfðu mikil áhrif á lokaútgáfu safnsins. Rannsóknin varpar ljósi á hvernig Guðbrandur réð ekki aðeins miklu um efni þjóðsagnanna heldur einnig umgjörð og framsetningu safnsins.

SUMMARY

„Ein slík saga getur spillt fyrir öllu safninu“: Guðbrandur Vigfússon's impact on the published folktale collection of Jón Árnason

Keywords: Jón Árnason's folktales, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri* (1862–1864), folktales, folktale publication

The article examines the influence of Guðbrandur Vigfússon on Jón Árnason's folktale collection, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri* (1862–1864). It particularly discusses Guðbrandur's editorial role, whereby he modified the folktales from Jón's intended version, adding and omitting stories, as well as writing the preface, dedication, and title. Through a detailed analysis of correspondence and manuscripts, the study demonstrates how Guðbrandur and his collaborator, Konrad Maurer, determined the final form of the collection. The research highlights how Guðbrandur influenced not only the content of the folktales but also the framework and presentation of the collection.

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HANDRIT

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