

nediktssyni 20. júlí 1977 (eds. Einar G. Pétursson/Jónas Kristjánsson). (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar – Rit 12). Reykjavík, 481–490.

Kock, Axel (1906–1929), *Svensk ljudhistoria* 1–5. Lund/Leipzig.

Melberg, Håkon [1952], *Origin of the Scandinavian nations and languages* 1. Halden.

Noreen, Adolf (1904), *Altschwedische Grammatik*. Altnordische Grammatik 2. Halle.

Noreen, Adolf (1913), *Geschichte der nordischen Sprachen*, 3rd ed. (Grundriss der germanischen Philologie 4). Strassburg.

Noreen, Adolf (1923), *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik*. Altnordische Grammatik 1, 4th ed. Halle.

Seip, Didrik Arup (1955), *Norsk språkhistorie til omkring 1370*, 2nd ed. Oslo.

Skautrup, Peter (1944), *Det danske sprogs historie* 1. København.

Wessén, Elias (1968), *Svensk språkhistoria* 1, 8th ed. Stockholm.

Kjartan Ottosson, Oslo (Norway)

91. The history of Old Nordic manuscripts I: Old Icelandic

1. Introduction
2. The first period
3. The second period
4. From parchment to paper
5. Epilogue
6. Literature (a selection)

1. Introduction

In his *Book of the Icelanders* (*Íslendingabók*), composed in the 3rd decade of the 12th c., Ari Þorgilsson (d. 1133) tells us that during the winter 1117–18 the Icelanders started to record their law in writing at Hafliði Másson's residence in Breiðabólstaður in Northwest Iceland (Ísl. Fornr. I, 1968, 23). This date has generally been considered to mark the beginning of secular writing in Iceland.

The *Book of the Icelanders* also informs us that Iceland adopted Christianity in the year 1000 (Ísl. Fornr. I, 1968, 17). With the legitimation of the new religion Christian literature must have followed; Christian learning was supported by written books in Latin. There exists no evidence of the use of Christian books in the first century of the new religion. They must, however, have been used. Without them Christianity could not have survived. Probably the first Latin books were brought to the country by the so-called Papar, probably Irish monks; however, they are said to have left the country when the heathen Norsemen arrived, and there is no evidence of Irish influence in the Icelandic church. The first missionary bishops, such as Bjarnharðr (Bernard) Vilráðsson the Book-wise are likely to

have had a more significant impact (Ísl. Fornr. I, 1968, 18; Bysk. I, 80; cf. Hreinn Benediktsson 1965, 37–38; Gjerløw 1980 I, 17; Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 62). Ísleifr Gizurarson (1006–1080) was the first Icelander to be ordained as a bishop at the newly established see at Skálholt (1056). At the cathedral he taught young men to be priests. We can therefore be sure that in the 11th c. both liturgical books and schoolbooks existed at Skálholt. Of those books no remains exist, but fragments of liturgical books from the 12th c. (Lbs fragm 58) and from the beginning of the 13th c. (AM 98 I–II 8vo) have survived (Gjerløw I 1980, 27–31). Latin letters were probably already known in Iceland at the beginning of the 11th c., but scholars do not agree on whether runes were used for writing books (cf. Björn M. Ólsen 1883, passim; Hagland 1993, 166–169; Sverrir Tómasson 1993, 237).

1.1. The first Icelandic bishops, Ísleifr Gizurarson and his son Gizurr Ísleifsson (ca. 1042–1118), were educated on the Continent (Bysk. I, 75, 83; Bisk. I, 151, 153; Hreinn Benediktsson 1965, 37–39; Sverrir Tómasson 1988a, 20–21). Until 1103 the see at Skálholt was part of the archdiocese of Bremen; with the establishment of the archdiocese of Lund in 1103, Skálholt and then Hólar (established as the diocese of northern Iceland in 1106) belonged to a Scandinavian ecclesiastical province. They were part of the archdiocese of Niðaróss (Trondheim) from its foundation in 1152 until 1550. It is probable that Icelandic book production was initially modelled on

northern European writing habits. Later it was influenced by Danish and Norwegian schools of writing (Foote 1975, 58; Köhne 1972, 13–16). It should, however, be kept in mind that some of the nation's most learned men, e.g. Sæmundr the Wise Sigfússon (1056–1133), St. Þorlákr Þórhallsson (d. 1193) and Bishop Páll Jónsson (d. 1211) had been educated in France and England, so literary influence from those countries may be expected (Magnús Már Lárusson 1967, 358; 1969, 80; Foote 1975, 68–71; Helgi Guðmundsson 1997, 331; Sverrir Tómasson 1988a, 19–24; 1988b, 73).

1.1.1. The Life of St. Jón of Hólar, originally composed at the beginning of the 13th c., tells us that a school was founded at Hólar by St. Jón during his first years as bishop (1106–1121). There young clerics must have been educated in the fundamental clerical studies, in the arts of grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic and music (Sverrir Tómasson 1988a, 16). References to the writings of learned men in the lives of the Icelandic bishops from the 13th and 14th centuries point to the composition of religious books in Latin in the country already in the 12th c. (*Bysk.* I, 96, *Bisk.* I, 240; *Guðmundar sögur biskups* 1983, 61; *Bysk.* II, 409; cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 63). There must also have been some sort of a secular school for the native elite in Oddi, in Rangárvellir, southern Iceland, at the end of the 12th c. (Sverrir Tómasson 1988b, 78; 1997, 201).

1.2. The Latin alphabet alone was not sufficient for writing Old Norse texts. We can find indications in some manuscripts that scribes tried to do so. However, already in the 12th c. attempts were made to adapt Latin letters to the Icelandic phonemic system and to create an orthography more suitable for Icelandic (Holtmark 1936, 18–44; Hreinn Benediktsson 1965, 56). *The First Grammatical Treatise*, generally thought to be composed in the mid-12th c. but only preserved in a ms. of *Snorra Edda*, Codex Wormianus (AM 242 fol.) from the 14th c. is the oldest evidence of those attempts. However, the preface to all four of the grammatical treatises in Wormianus mentions the first mode of writing “hinn fyrsti lettrsháttur” which must allude to the orthography of Icelandic mss. before the rules of *The First Grammatical Treatise* were composed (Sverrir Tómasson 1993, 237). *The First Grammatical Treatise* also mentions the literary genres which were practised in the country

when the author was composing his work; he speaks (1972: 208) of “lög ok áttvísi eða þýðingar helgar eða svá þau hin spakligu fróði er Ari Þorgilsson hefir á bókr sett af skynsamligu viti” [laws and genealogies or sacred interpretations or also that wise lore that Ari Þorgilsson has put in writing with intelligent reason]. It is clear what the author means by laws and genealogies, but the meaning of *fræði* ‘lore’ in this connection is disputable. Scholars have considered *þýðingar helgar* ‘sacred interpretations’ to be some sort of interpretations of sacred texts similar to those in homilies or sermons. Of those genres mentioned by the First grammarian, there exist fragments of mss. of religious writings from the mid-12th c., such as AM 237a fol., and fragments of law codes from the latter half of the 12th c. (AM 315d fol.). However, no traces of mss. from this period containing genealogical material are now to be found, and the writings of Ari Þorgilsson are known only from late copies. If the word *fræði* is interpreted as meaning historical lore then, the oldest mss. of that genre are the fragments of *Veraldar saga* in the mss. AM 655 VII and VIII 4to, both from the beginning of the 13th c. (Morgenstern 1893, 52; Jakob Benediktsson 1944, XXVI–XXVIII, XXXIII–XXXV).

1.2.1. The oldest Icelandic ms. is an Easter table, AM 732a VII 4to, preserved on one leaf. It is a palimpsest and is considered to be from the first half of the 12th c. (Beckman/Kålund 1908–18 II, XII–XIV). It contains only Latin letters and is only of palaeographic and computational interest.

1.3. Few Icelandic mss. can be dated with absolute certainty. Only rarely do we find scribal names and dates such as those of Óláfr Ormsson, who tells us that he wrote AM 194 8vo (*Alfræði* I, 54) in the year 1387 in the small room at Geirröðareyri (now Narfeyri) in Snæfellsnes, West Iceland, or of Jón Þorláksson, who wrote his name and the date 1473 on one leaf of a missal (AM 80b 8vo) (*Smástykker* 1884, 128; cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1966, 44). Only a couple of other mss. can be dated with such accuracy. For example, on one leaf in *Skarðsbók* of the law code *Jónsbók* (AM 350 fol.) it is stated that the ms. was written in 1363 (Jón Helgason 1958, 15; Ólafur Halldórsson 1981, 19).

It is, however, possible to date some mss. using other criteria. When the scribes are known by name and we know when they lived,

the dating seems to be an easy task; for example, the scribes of *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol.), Jón Þórðarson and Magnús Þórhallsson, wrote their names in the preface of the manuscript. In some codices it is stated that the works they contain have been written at the request of famous chieftains. From such statements it is possible to find out when the works in questions were originally composed; however, the manuscripts themselves may be later copies, as is the case with the exegetical translations of the Old Testament in *Stjórn* I (AM 226 fol., AM 227 fol.). Originally this work seems to have been written during the reign of King Hákon Magnússon (d. 1319), but the main mss. are from the middle of the 14th c. Other mss. can be dated with some certainty if the same or similar handwriting can be found in a dated original charter or a letter. Unfortunately, very few original letters and documents older than the 14th c. have been preserved. Most Icelandic mss. can therefore only be dated by circumstantial evidence, whether palaeographic (Latin *f*/insular β), orthographic (*þ* at the front and end of words, *d* for δ) or morpho-phonological (the umlaut sign \acute{o} , later *ú*, the merger of $\text{æ}/\text{æ}$, the middle voice ending *sc/z*, *vó/vo* for older *vá*). Such evidence is then compared with materials whose provenance is secure (for example historical writings, documents and archeological findings), which can give some indication how the ms. in question should be dated. Owners' or readers' names or even place-names where the scribe stayed written in the margins of the mss. can also be of help in this respect.

1.4. It is difficult to divide the history of Icelandic ms. culture into periods. The first period is here considered to be from 1150 to 1250. The second is dated from the latter part of the 13th c. to the last decade of the 14th c. when *Flateyjarbók* was completed (1394). In Iceland the writing of vellum codices continued until the 17th c.

1.5. In a collection of translated exempla (*Geving* 1882, 100) there is a mention of *ritklefi* 'writing closet', a translation of *scriptorium*. This translation indicated that working places of that kind must have existed. In one version of the Life of Guðmundr Arason by Arngrímur Brandsson, the word *ritstofa* is used with the same meaning. It is, however, uncertain whether that word occurred in the original version of that saga. *Skrifstofa* 'scriptorium' is also mentioned twice in sources from the

15th c. (Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 86). It is not known for sure where the Icelandic scriptoria were or where most of Icelandic mss. were made. Scholars have thought it likely that most of them were written in cloisters or on estates in the neighbourhood of the ecclesiastic centers. A considerable number of mss. have been connected to those cultural centers by scholars (see 3.1.–3.2.2.).

As already mentioned, some scribes are known by name. Most of them were priests or monks; there were only a few laymen among them. It is, however, likely that Icelandic written culture also existed outside the religious houses and episcopal sees even though the main bulk of Icelandic mss. were certainly written at ecclesiastic institutions.

Icelandic mss. are for the most part written on vellum; sheepskin, but not goatskin, was also used for this purpose. The preparation of the Icelandic vellum is similar to the methods used elsewhere in Europe, and the techniques of binding are also similar. The gatherings were first sewn together on one or more leather strings which were fastened to wooden splints; these were put into small holes in wooden boards often made from driftwood, and sometimes afterwards covered with leather or sealskin. A simpler form of bookbinding was to sew all the gatherings or quires into a cover of leather or sealskin. Sources also mention writing on *rotulae* 'scrolls' (*Laurentius saga* 1969, 16). The formula used for Icelandic ink is not known (Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 78). Drafts were sometimes written on wax tablets (*Laurentius saga* 1969, 101; cf. Margrét Hallgrímsdóttir 1991, 102–132).

2. The first period

Traces of Carolingian palaeography are very visible early in the first period of Icelandic ms. history, but later on Gothic features appear in the script. Under the influence from insular and/or Norwegian handwriting new letters like δ and β appear. Only a few codices from this period have come down to us, but some of the preserved mss. and fragments show good examples of Icelandic scribal culture at the end of the 12th c. and the beginning of the 13th c. In this connection the *Icelandic Homily Book* (Stock Perg nr 15 4to), the miracles of St. Þorlákr and other saints' lives in the older part of AM 645 4to, various fragments of religious matter in AM 655 4to, the fragments of the sagas of the Norwegian kings in AM 325 IV α (*Saga of St. Óláfr*) and AM

325 II 4to (*Ágrip*, a short saga of the Norwegian kings) should be mentioned.

2.1. It is a rather difficult task to find out how comprehensive the oldest vellum codices were because preserved mss. from this period are mostly fragments. For example, the ms. fragment AM 655 III 4to contains the end of the *Life of St. Nicholas* followed by some miracles which are known from Latin versions composed at the end of the 11th c. The text itself is not divided into columns and the size of the written surface on each leaf is approx. 23.7 × 16.4 cm., suggesting that it was part of a large ms. It is impossible now to find out whether the *Life of St. Nicholas* was the only text in this ms. or whether it originally contained other saints' lives as well.

The situation is different for the *Icelandic Homily Book* (Stock Perg nr 15 4to). This ms. now consists of 13 gatherings, not all of the same size, and it is unclear how many leaves some of them contained originally or how they were arranged (van Weenen 1993, 22–25). The codex has been sewn with strings of leather and bound in a sealskin cover. There are some signs (runes and letters) carved in the cover, some of them into the leather itself, others cut into remains of the hair. The codex has only one column and there are no illuminations or rubrication. The *Icelandic Homily Book* not only contains sermons but also theological material which could be of use to clerics, e.g. a small chapter on music and fragments from the rule of St. Benedict. The sermons are not arranged according to the church year. To judge from the greeting *góð systkin* 'good sisters and brothers' at the beginning of some of the sermons, the intended audience included laymen as well as monks belonging to the rule of St. Benedict. Scholars concur that the *Icelandic Homily Book* was a single codex, even though they do not agree either on the extent to which its contents were translated from Latin sources or on the number of hands it represents (i.e. whether it was written by a single scribe over a long period of time or by a number of scribes).

2.2. It is remarkable that some of the oldest ms. fragments contain subject matter which was used in both cathedral schools and other educational centers, e.g. *Elucidarius* (AM 674a 4to) and *Physiologus* (AM 673a I 4to). Among these early mss. are also interlinear glosses, Latin words translated by Icelandic ones. They are preserved in a compilation of

early and late texts, GKS 1812 4to, where maps of the T-O type can also be found (Gering 1878, 385–394; Scardigli/Raschellà 1988, 299–315). Of other educational hagiographical literature from that period, the *Dialogues of St. Gregory* in AM 677 4to can also be mentioned. Few secular writings from this period have come down to us; among mss. containing secular literature are the fragments AM 325 II 4to (*Ágrip*), AM 162 A fol 0 with the *Saga of Egill Skallagrímsson*, and AM 162 D 2 fol. containing *Laxdæla saga* (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965, xxxix).

2.2.1. We do not know of any scribal schools from this first period. However, certain palaeographic similarities between the oldest existing Icelandic ms. fragments in AM 237a fol. and the oldest part of *Reykjaholtsmáldagi* 'the inventory of Reykjaholt' (Pskj1) have been pointed out. (Stefán Karlsson personal communication, cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 67.)

3. The second period

As with the first period, the time limits of the second one are far from clear. The most noteworthy works of Icelandic literature, such as the Eddic lays and the sagas of the Norwegian kings in *Morkinskinna*, have been preserved in mss. from the second half of the 13th c. (*Konungsbók*, *Codex Regius*, GKS 2365 4to, and GKS 1009 fol. respectively). Other important mss. from the latter part of the 13th c. are those of the Icelandic law code *Grágás* (*Staðarhólsbók*, AM 334 fol., and *Konungsbók*, GKS 1157 fol.) and *Alexanders saga* (AM 519a 4to). From the first half of the 14th c. we have *Konungsbók* of Snorri's *Edda* (GKS 2367 4to) and *Jónsbók* (AM 343 fol.). From the middle of the century are *Kálfalækjarbók* with *Njáls saga* (AM 133 fol.), *Möðruvallabók* (AM 132 fol.) and a collection of saints' lives (AM 234 fol.). *Króksfjarðarbók* (AM 122a fol.) containing *Sturlunga saga*, *Skarðsbók* of *Jónsbók* (AM 350 fol.) and *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol.) are from the second half of the 14th c.; *Bergsbók* (Stock Perg nr 1 fol.) containing the saga of the two Olafs (Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson) is considered to be from the early part of the 15th c. During the 14th century the export of mss. from Iceland to Norway began. It ended around 1400, when the difference in language between Icelanders and Norwegians had become too great for easy comprehension (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990, 339–47; Stefán Karlsson 1979, 1–17.).

3.1. The Life of Jón of Hólar mentions a priest at Hólar named Þorgeirr, and describes a seizure he had when he sat writing. That event must have taken place around 1200. Þorgeirr's handwriting is unknown. *Laurentius saga biskups* mentions one Þórarinn kaggi Egilsson (d. 1283) who lived and ran a school at Svarfaðardalur. He was “hinn mesti nytsemðamaðr til leturs ok bókaþjórða sem enn mega auðsýnaz margar bækr sem hann hefir skrifat í Hólakirkju ok svá Vallastað”, [extremely productive in writing and book-making, as the many books which he wrote at the churches of Hólar and Vellir still bear witness] (*Laurentius saga* 1969, 2–3; cf. Hermann Pálsson 1959, 18–24; Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 86). Stefán Karlsson has suggested that Þórarinn was the scribe of the Kringla ms. of Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, of which only a single leaf, preserved in the National Library of Iceland/Landsbókasafn Íslands (Lbs. fragm. 82) survives (Stefán Karlsson 1976, 22). The handwriting of Kringla is also found in the main part of the Konungsbók ms. of *Grágás* (GKS 1157 fol.), where it is called the B hand, as well as in the Staðarhólsbók ms. of *Grágás*, the A hand (Stefán Karlsson 1976, 21–22). Sources from the 14th c. name the scribes Þórarinn pentr Eiríksson and the farmer Dálkr [Einars-son] who is said to have made a “graduale, samsetta með sequentiur ok þar með kyrjáll” [gradual, including sequences, and a kyriale with it] (DI III, 175–76; cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 86). No writings by these men are now known.

3.1.1. The works of several 14th c. scribes have survived. One is the lawman Haukr Erlendsson (d. 1334). A comparison with his autograph letters from Jan. 28, 1302 and Oct. 14, 1310 shows that he wrote part of the manuscript named after him, Hauksbók (Finnur Jónsson 1896, v–vii; Jón Helgason 1960, v–vii; Stefán Karlsson 1964, 114–121). The contents of this ms. range widely, including *Landnámabók*, *Vqluspá*, *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*. Haukr also had scribes in his service, and parts of the ms. were written by them. The compilation Hauksbók is now thought to have included the mss. AM 371 4to, AM 544 4to, and AM 675 4to. However, it is not clear whether all these mss. were originally part of a single codex.

3.1.2. With the exception of charters, *Lögmannsannáll* (AM 420b 4to) is the only auto-

graph ms. to be preserved from the Middle Ages. It was composed by Einarr Hafliðason (1307–1393), priest and *officialis* at Breiðabólstaður in northwest Iceland.

3.1.3. Magnús Þórhallsson and Jón Þórðarson wrote Flateyjarbók in the years around 1390; it was probably completed in 1394 (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990, 209). Magnús also illuminated the ms., which was owned by Jón Hákonarson of Viðidalstunga (b. 1350, d. before 1416). He also owned another famous ms., Vatnshyrna, a collection of sagas of Icelanders which was destroyed in the great fire of 1728 in Copenhagen (Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1860, xv–xvi; Stefán Karlsson 1970, 279–300). It is probable that he also had the ms. Hulda (AM 66 fol.), a collection of sagas of Norwegian kings, made for him. We do not know where Magnús Þórhallsson and Jón Þórðarson wrote Flateyjarbók, but the monastery at Þingeyrar has been considered a likely location, among other things because of its proximity to Viðidalstunga. However, Ólafur Halldórsson has also suggested that the volume could have been written in Skagafjörður, because one of the scribes, Jón Þórðarson, is mentioned in a letter written at Hólar in Hjaltadalur, and a Jón Þórðarson, probably the same man, is named as the steward of the convent at Reynistaður in 1383 (Ólafur Halldórsson 1990, 206–7).

3.2. In his study *Helgafellsbækur fornar* (1966), Ólafur Halldórsson showed that a manuscript of sagas about the apostles, AM 239 fol., had belonged to the monastery at Helgafell on Snæfellsnes. Among other sagas, the ms. contains incomplete the composite *Lives of St. John and James, Tveggja postula saga Jóns og Jakobs*. AM 239 fol. was written by two scribes (hand I and hand II), and hand I is the same as that found in Skarðsbók of the law code *Jónsbók* (AM 350 fol.). Ólafur Halldórsson argued that the texts of *Tveggja postula saga Jóns ok Jakobs* in Skarðsbók (SÁM 1 fol.) and in AM 653a 4to, in which there were 9 leaves of the same *Tveggja postula saga*, were copied from AM 239 fol. Written in the same hand as SÁM 1 fol. and AM 653a 4to were also AM 238 fol. fragm. VII (*Silvester saga*), AM 61 fol. (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar hin mesta*), AM 156 4to (*Jónsbók*), and hand II in AM 233a fol. However, hand I in AM 233a fol. is the same as Skarðsbók of *Jónsbók*, AM 350 fol. Ólafur Halldórsson concluded that SÁM 1 fol., and probably also Skarðsbók

of *Jónsbók* (AM 350 fol.), had been written for Ormr Snorrason (ca. 1320–1401/2), the landowner of Skarð on Skarðsströnd. Furthermore, AM 156 4to was in the possession of the family at Skarð in the 16th c. While it is conceivable that the mss. were written at Skarð itself, the fact that the majority of the mss. under discussion contained saints' lives, and the exemplars followed in SÁM 1, AM 653a 4to, and AM 239 fol. were owned by Helgafell monastery, suggests that they were copied at the monastery. Hand I in AM 239 fol. appears also to be found in the *Saga of St. Óláfr* in Bæjarbók (AM 73b fol.), and Unger (1874, xii) considered that AM 226 fol., a ms. of *Stjórn*, was written in the same hand. Stefán Karlsson added to this group of mss. AM 219 fol. and the fragments JS fragm 5, Lbs. fragm. 6 and Þjms. nr 176, originally belonging to the same ms., altogether 20 leaves which also contained the Lives of St. Jón of Hólar, St. Þorlákr and St. Guðmundr Arason. He considered that a single scribe had copied AM 383 IV 4to, consisting of 4 leaves from the Life of St. Þorlákr, AM 325 X 4to, 14 leaves from the sagas of Norwegian kings, Sverrir, Hákon Sverrisson, Hákon Hákonarson and Magnús lagabætir, and AM 325 VIII 3 a 4to, one leaf from the *Saga of King Sverrir*, probably belonging originally to the same book as AM 325 X 4to. Stefán Karlsson divided all those mss. into two groups. In the first group were the Skarðsbók of *Jónsbók* (AM 350 fol.), AM 226 fol. (*Stjórn*), AM 239 fol. and AM 233a fol. In the 2nd group were AM 219 fol., AM 73b fol. (Bæjarbók), AM 383 IV 4to and AM 325 X 4to. Stefán Karlsson argued that there was so much palaeographic difference between those two groups that they were probably written by two scribes (1967, 19–21). Stefán Karlsson's and Ólafur Halldórsson's research has shown that there was a productive scriptorium at Helgafell at the middle of the 14th c.

3.2.1. One of the best known mss. from the 14th c. is Möðruvallabók (AM 132 fol.), which is considered to have been copied sometime between 1330 and 1370. It contains eleven sagas of Icelanders, including *Njáls saga* (unfortunately incomplete), *Egils saga*, *Laxdæla saga* and *Bandamanna saga*. There were originally 26 quires in Möðruvallabók, each with 8 leaves and two columns per leaf. The first quire is lost, and a new one, consisting of 9 vellum leaves written in the 17th c., has been added. In a few places, primarily in the text of *Laxdæla*, the text had become difficult to

read by the 17th c. and an attempt was made to write over the original letters. There are no contemporary illustrations in *Möðruvallabók*.

Three scribes probably worked on the codex originally, although one of them was responsible for most of it. His hand is also known from the following mss.: AM 642a Ið 4to, a fragment of the *Life of St. Nicholas*; AM 325 XI 2b 4to, a leaf from the *Saga of St. Óláfr*; AM 240 V fol., miracles of the Blessed Virgin; AM 573 4to, fols. 46–63, the conclusion of *Breta sögur* and beginning of *Valvens þáttur*; AM 220 I fol., the *Priest's saga of Guðmundr Arason*; Lbs. fragm. 5, miracles of St. Guðmundr Arason; AM 173c 4to, containing the Christian Laws section of *Grágás* and the Christian Law of Bishop Árni; AM 229 II fol., *Stjórn*. A different scribe wrote the verses in *Egils saga*. His hand is known from other mss., including *Skálholtsannáll* (AM 420 4to) and the legal material in GKS 3268 4to and GKS 3270 4to. The third scribe wrote the rubrics with red ink (van Weenen 2000, 22–23). This description shows that Möðruvallabók must have been written in a scriptorium where at least three scribes worked on numerous mss. with varied contents. It is uncertain where Möðruvallabók was written, but references to a local use of words of direction suggest a location in the north of Iceland. It has been suggested that the scriptorium was at Möðruvellir monastery in Hörgárdalur in Eyjafjörður (Stefán Karlsson 1967, 26–29; cf. van Weenen 2000, 7.)

3.2.2. One of the best known mss. of Snorri's *Edda* is Codex Wormianus. It now consists of 63 leaves, and in addition to the *Edda* it contains the four grammatical treatises. It was written in the middle of the 14th c. Finnur Jónsson (1888, xvi) noticed that the fragment of *Egils saga* in AM 162 A β fol. was in the same hand as Wormianus, and Unger (1891, 182) pointed out that the same hand was to be found in the first part of AM 227 fol. (hand A) and the first part of AM 229 fol., both of which contain *Stjórn*. In his introduction to Hauksbók, Finnur Jónsson (1896, xxxvi) considered that *Vǫluspá* in Hauksbók (AM 544 4to, 20r–21r) was written by the same scribe. Jón Helgason (1960, xi) pointed out the similarity between these hands and added AM 657 a–b 4to to the group. Its contents include *Mikjál's saga* by Bergr Sokkason, Abbot of Munkaþverá (d. probably before 1350) and *Clarus saga*, which is thought to have been composed by the Norwegian Dominican

Bishop of Skálholt, Jón Halldórsson (1322–1339) (cf. Jakobsen 1964, 109–111). Jakob Benediktsson (1980, 10–12) made a detailed analysis of these mss. in his edition of *Rómverja saga* from AM 595 a–b 4to, and concluded that the same scribe had written 11 mss. In addition to those just mentioned, he wrote *Jónsbók* (GKS 3269a 4to), part of *Jónsbók* in AM 127 4to (hand 2), a fragment of *Mariú saga* (AM 240 IV fol.), a fragment of *Jóns saga baptista* (AM 667 IX 4to) and part of *Karlamagnús saga* (NRA 62). Jakob Benediktsson agreed with Stefán Karlsson that these mss. were of different ages, in particular *Vqluspá* in Hauksbók and *Clarus saga*. Jakob Benediktsson believed that these mss. were from the north, because AM 657 a–b 4to had been owned by the church at Bólstaðarhlíð in Langadalur, Húnavatnssýsla, and GKS 3269a 4to contained a list of bishops of Hólar, the last of whom was Gottskálk Nikulásson (d. 1520). To this group may be added a leaf from a psalter, now in Sweden, written by the same man (Stefán Karlsson 1982, 320–22). Guðbjörg Kristjánsdóttir has pointed out that the illuminations of this fragment and the mss. appear to have been done by the same individual, and considered it likely that the men who made these mss. worked together, probably in a scriptorium in the north of Iceland, most likely the Benedictine monastery at Þingeyrar (1983, 65–73).

4. From parchment to paper

Icelandic book production does not cease with the creation of the impressive mss. of the 14th c., but the time of such ambitious volumes was over. The single exception is *Helgastaðabók* (Stock Perg nr 16 4to). Liturgical books, now lost, are, however, mentioned in contemporary sources (DI III, 175–76; cf. Ólafur Halldórsson 1989, 86). Up until 1550, parchment books were mostly written for Icelandic aristocrats; the beginning of the 16th c. saw the arrival of paper. Bishop Gissur Einarsson (ca. 1512–1548) was probably one of the first Icelanders to use paper for letters, and during his episcopate the first extant Icelandic books printed on paper were produced. Books printed on vellum were also known. Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason of Hólar (d. 1656) was probably the last Icelandic to have parchment mss. written, among them Snorri's *Edda* (Stock Perg nr 3 4to). Another example of a parchment ms. written in the 17th c. is the saga collection in GKS 1002–1003 fol.

5. Epilogue

The history of Icelandic vellum codices is rarely easy to trace. Árni Magnússon (1663–1730), the indefatigable collector of Icelandic mss. was in the habit of recording where he had obtained each ms. These notes of his often contain valuable evidence about previous owners, and it is sometimes possible to determine that a ms. has been in the possession of a single family, handed down from one generation to the next. At the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th c. some of the best known Icelandic mss. were still in the possession of Icelanders, and it can often be deduced from the writings of Icelandic humanists like Arngrímur Jónsson the Learned (1568–1648) what mss. they used (Jakob Benediktsson 1957, 82–106). Nothing is known about the history of many mss. before they came into the hands of Árni Magnússon in Copenhagen. Some famous mss., such as Codex Regius (GKS 2365 4to) of the Eddic poems, Flateyjarbók (GKS 1005 fol.) and Codex Wormianus (AM 242 fol.) were given to scholars, noblemen and kings in the 17th c. Little is known about the owners of the mss. which Jón Rúgmán obtained or those which Jón Eggertsson collected and sold to the Swedes, although the prices of some of them were recorded.

5.1. The majority of medieval Icelandic mss. are now preserved primarily in two collections, the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar in Iceland and Det Arnamagnæanske Institut in Denmark. There are also significant collections in Sweden and Norway, and a scattering of medieval Icelandic mss. are to be found in Britain, Ireland, Germany, and the United States.

6. Literature (a selection)

Beckman, N./Kålund, Kr. (eds.) (1908–1918), *Alfræði íslenzk.* Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur I–III. København.

Benediktsson, Hreinn (1965), *Early Icelandic Script.* Reykjavík.

Benediktsson, Hreinn (ed.) (1972), *The First Grammatical Treatise.* Reykjavík.

Benediktsson, Jakob (ed.) (1944), *Veraldar saga.* København.

Benediktsson, Jakob (ed.) (1957), *Arngrimi Jonae Opera Latine Conscripta IV. Introduction and Notes.* (Bibliotheca Arnarnagnæana XII). Hafnia.

- Benediktsson, Jakob (ed.) (1968), *Íslendingabók* (Ísl. Fornr. 1). Reykjavík.
- Benediktsson, Jakob (ed.) (1980), *Catilina and Jugurtha by Sallust and Pharsalia by Lucan. In Old Norse: Rómverja saga. AM 595 a–b 4to.* (Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile XIII). Copenhagen.
- Björnsson, Árni (ed.) (1969), *Laurentius saga biskups.* Reykjavík.
- Foote, Peter (1975), Aachen, Lund, Hólar. In: *Les relations littéraires franco-scandinaves au moyen âge. Actes du Collège de Liège.* Paris, 53–73. (Reprinted in: *Aurvandilstá*, 1984, 101–120).
- Foote, Peter (1984), *Aurvandilstá.* Odense.
- Gering, Hugo (1878), Isländische Glossen. In: *ZfdPh* 9, 385–394.
- Gering, Hugo (ed.) (1882), *Islendzk æventyri.* I. Halle.
- Gjerløw, Lilli (1980), *Liturgica Islandica I–II.* (Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXXV). Hafnæ.
- Guðmundsson, Helgi (1997), *Um haf innan. Vestrænir menn og íslenzk menning á miðöldum.* Reykjavík.
- Hagland, Jan Ragnar (1993), Møte mellom to skriftspråkskulturar? Til spørsmålet om runeskrift har noko á seia for lingvistisk analyse i Første grammatiske avhandling. In: *IMAM* 15, 159–171.
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1963), *Úr sögu skinnbóka.* In: *Skírnir* 137, 83–105. (Reprinted in: *Grettisfærsla* 1990, 51–72).
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1965), Flutningur handrita milli Íslands og Noregs fyrr á öldum. In: *Tíminn* 17. 6. (Reprinted in: *Grettisfærsla* 1990, 339–347).
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1966), *Helgafellsbækur fornar* (Studia Islandica 24). Reykjavík.
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1970), Jónar tveir Þorláks-synir. In: *Afmælisrit til Dr. phil. Steingrims J. Þorsteinssonar 2. júlí 1971.* Reykjavík, 128–144 (Reprinted in: *Grettisfærsla* 1990, 254–270).
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1981), Skarðsbók. – Uppruni og ferill. Skarðsbók. Codex Scardensis AM 350 fol. In: *Íslensk miðaldahandrit* I. Reykjavík, 19–25.
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1987a), Af uppruna Flateyjarbókar. In: *Ný saga* 1, 84–86. (Reprinted in: *Grettisfærsla* 1990, 427–431).
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1987b), Á afmæli Flateyjarbókar. In: *Tímarit Háskóla Íslands* 2, 56–62. (Reprinted in: *Grettisfærsla* 1990, 196–214).
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1989), Skrifafar bækur. In: *Íslensk þjóðmenning VI. Munnmenntir og bókmenntir.* Reykjavík, 57–89.
- Halldórsson, Ólafur (1990), *Grettisfærsla. Safn ritgerða eftir Ólaf Halldórsson.* Reykjavík.
- Hallgrímsdóttir, Margrét (1991), Rannsóknir í Viðey. In: *Árbók fornleifafélagsins* 1990, 91–132.
- Helgason Jón (ed.) (1938–1978), *Byskupa sigur I–II.* Copenhagen.
- Helgason, Jón (1958), *Handritaspjall.* Reykjavík.
- Helgason, Jón (ed.) (1960), *Hauksbók.* (Manuscripta Islandica V). Copenhagen.
- Holtmark, Anne (1936), *En islandsk scholasticus fra det 12. århundre.* Oslo.
- Jakobsen, Alfred (1964), *Studier i Clarus saga.* Bergen.
- Johansson, Karl G. (1997), *Studier i Codex Wormianus. Skrifttradition och avskriftsverksamhet vid ett isländskt skriptorium under 1300-talet.* (Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis). Göteborg.
- Jónsson, Finnur (ed.) (1888), *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar.* København.
- Jónsson, Eiríkur/Jónsson, Finnur (eds.) (1892–1896), *Hauksbók.* København.
- Kålund, Kristian (ed.) (1888–1892), *Katalog over den Arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling I–II.* København.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1964), Aldur Hauksbókar. In: *Fróðskaparrit* 13, 114–121.
- Karlsson, Stefán (ed.) (1967), *Sagas of Icelandic Bishops.* (Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile VII). Copenhagen.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1970), Um Vatnshyrnu. In: *Opuscula* IV (Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXX), 279–303.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1976), Kringum Kringlu. In: *Landsbókasafn Íslands. Árbók* 1976, 5–25.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1979), Islandsk bogexport til Norge i middelalderen. In: *MM*, 1–17.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1982), Saltarabrot í Svíþjóð með Stjórnarhendi. In: *Gripla* 5, 320–322.
- Karlsson, Stefán (ed.) (1983), *Guðmundar sögur biskups* I. (Editiones Arnamagnæanæ. Series B. 6). København.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1997), Íslensk bókagerð á miðöldum. In: *Íslenska söguþingið 28.–31. maí 1997. Ráðstefnurit* I, 281–295. Reykjavík.
- Karlsson, Stefán (1999), The localisation and dating of Medieval Icelandic manuscripts. In: *Saga-Book* XXV, 138–158.
- Köhne, Roland (1972), Bischof Ísleifr Gizurarson, ein berühmter Schüler des Stifts Herford. In: *Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins der Grafschaft Ravensberg 1970.* Bielefeld, 1–38.
- Kristjánsdóttir, Guðbjörg (1983), Íslenskt saltarablað í Svíþjóð. In: *Skírnir* 157, 64–73.
- Lárusson, Magnús Már (1967), Gizur Ísleifsson. In: *Kirkjuritið* 33, 350–369.
- Lárusson, Magnús Már (1967), Þróun íslenzkrar kirkjutónlistar. In: *Fróðleiksþættir og sögubrot.* Hafnarfjörður, 79–94.
- Morgenstern, Gustav (ed.) (1893), *Arnamagnæanische Fragmente.* Leipzig.

- Ólsen, Björn Magnússon (1883), *Runerne i den old-islandske literatur*. København.
- Ólsen, Björn Magnússon (ed.) (1884), *Den tredje og fjærde grammatiske afhandling i Snorres Edda*. København.
- Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog. Register* (1989). København.
- Pálsson, Hermann (1959), Um bókagerð síra Þórarins á Völlum. In: *Skírnir* 133, 18–24.
- Scardigli, Piergiuseppe/Raschellà, Fabrizio D. (1988), A Latin-Icelandic glossary and some remarks on Latin in Medieval Scandinavia. In: *Idee. Gestalt. Geschichte*. Festschrift Klaus von See. Ed. Gerd Wolfgang Weber. Odense, 299–323.
- Småstykker 1–16* (1884–1891), (Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur XIII). København.
- Tómasson, Sverrir (1988a), *Formúlar íslenskra sagnaritara á miðöldum*. Reykjavík.
- Tómasson, Sverrir (1988b), Fyrsta málfræðiritgerðin og íslensk menntun á 12. öld. In: *Tímarit Háskóla Íslands* 3, 71–78.
- Tómasson, Sverrir (1993), Formáli málfræðiritgerðanna fjögurra í Wormsbók. In: *IMAM* 15, 221–240.
- Tómasson, Sverrir (1997), “Upp í garð til Sæmundar.” Lærdómssetrið í Odda og Snorri Sturluson. In: *Goðasteinn. Héraðsrit Rangæinga* 33, 188–202.
- Unger, Carl Richard (ed.) (1874), *Postola sögur*. Christiania.
- Unger, Carl Richard (1891), Bemærkninger om nogle islandske og norske Haandskrifter fra Middelalderen. In: *ANF* 8, 181–182.
- Vígfússon, Guðbrandur/Sigurðsson Jón (eds.) (1858), *Biskupa sögnr* I. Copenhagen.
- Vígfússon, Guðbrandur/Möbius Theodor (eds.) (1860), *Fornsögur*. Leipzig.
- van Weenen, Andrea de Leeuw (ed.) (1993), *The Icelandic Homily Book*. Reykjavík.
- van Weenen, Andrea de Leeuw (2000), *A grammar of Möðruvallabók*. Leiden.

Sverrir Tómasson, Reykjavík (Iceland)

92. The history of Old Nordic manuscripts II: Old Norwegian (incl. Faroese)

1. Introduction
2. The making of a manuscript
3. The first writing in Latin letters
4. The Norwegian codices – age and contents
5. The Norwegian diplomas
6. The Faroese manuscripts
7. The scribes and their milieu
8. The audience
9. The history of the codices
10. The history of the diplomas
11. Literature (a selection)

1. Introduction

This article deals with manuscripts written in OWN in Norway (incl. the Faroe Islands) before about 1350. Manuscripts written in Latin are not included. The term “manuscript” is used for codices (a collection of pages stitched together in book form), fragments and diplomas (letters). The earliest written texts in OWN are runic inscriptions, but we have no Norwegian (or Faroese) manuscripts written with runes. Hence they are not included in this article.

2. The making of a manuscript

The Old Norwegian manuscripts were written on parchment made of calfskin. We do not know who prepared the vellums, but the skinners mentioned in Bergen’s town law might have done such work. And we do not know with certainty how ink was made or how pigments for the illuminations were obtained, although we assume that ink was made of an extraction from boiled gallnuts. Writing was done with a quill pen, mostly made from the feathers of geese and swans. The manuscripts were usually bound in wooden boards, often covered with leather, but only a few of the medieval bindings have survived. More general information about OWN manuscripts are given in Holm-Olsen (1990) and Kristjánsson (1993).

The scribes usually left an empty space at the beginning of each section of the text. Later the scribe himself or another artistic person filled this in, sometimes with pictures related to the text. This art of decorating a manuscript

Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikations- wissenschaft

Handbooks of Linguistics
and Communication Science

Manuels de linguistique et
des sciences de communication

Mitbegründet von Gerold Ungeheuer (†)
Mitherausgegeben 1985–2001 von Hugo Steger

Herausgegeben von / Edited by / Edités par
Herbert Ernst Wiegand

Band 22.1

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York
2002

The Nordic Languages

An International Handbook of the History
of the North Germanic Languages

Edited by

Oskar Bandle (main editor) · Kurt Braunmüller

Ernst Håkon Jahr · Allan Karker

Hans-Peter Naumann · Ulf Teleman

Consulting Editors:

Lennart Elmevik · Gun Widmark

Volume 1

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York
2002