

SCRIPTA ISLANDICA

ISLÄNDSKA SÄLLSKAPETS

ÅRSBOK 62/2011

REDIGERAD AV VETURLIÐI ÓSKARSSON

under medverkan av

Pernille Hermann (Århus)
Mindy MacLeod (Melbourne)
Else Mundal (Bergen)
Guðrún Nordal (Reykjavík)
Rune Palm (Stockholm)
Heimir Pálsson (Uppsala)

UPPSALA, SWEDEN

Tryckt med bidrag från Vetenskapsrådet

© Författarna och Scripta Islandica

ISSN 0582-3234

Sättning: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB

Tryckning: Reklam & Katalogtryck AB, Uppsala 2011

Innehåll

INGVIL BRÜGGER BUDAL, Who is “T”? Translation of <i>riddara- sögur</i> as a collective performance	5
FINNUR FRÍÐRIKSSON, Modern Icelandic: Stable or in a state of flux?	19
SVANTE JANSON, The Icelandic calendar	51

Recensioner

SUSANNE HAUGEN, anm. av Kormaks saga. Historik och över- sättning av Ingegerd Fries	105
HEIMIR PÁLSSON, rec. av Úlfar Bragason, Ætt og saga: Um frá- sagnarfræði Sturlungu eða Íslendinga sögu hinnar miklu	109
HELGI SKÚLI KJARTANSSON, rec. av Rikke Malmros, Vikingernes syn på militær og samfund: Belyst gennem skjaldenes fyrste- digtning	119
LASSE MÅRTENSSON, rec. av Vår eldste bok. Skrift, miljø og bilet- bruk i den norske homilieboka. Bibliotheca Nordica 3. Red. Odd Einar Haugen och Åslaug Ommundsen	125
RUNE PALM, rec. av. Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 2. From c. 1035–1300 (Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages II). Ed. Kari Ellen Gade	131
ÚLFAR BRAGASON, rec. av Margaret Clunies Ross, The Cam- bridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga	139

Isländska sällskapet:

HENRIK WILLIAMS & AGNETA NEY, Berättelse om verksamheten under 2009	145
--	-----

Författarna i denna årgång	147
--------------------------------------	-----

Who is “I”? Translation of *riddarasögur* as a collective performance

INGVIL BRÜGGER BUDAL

Translating a text is a written performance, an interpretation of the content, language and tenor of a source text. Modern translation can be seen as “reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message; first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (Nida and Taber, 1974, 12). However, within the medieval educational system, the work of translating and copying texts was also a writing exercise, and students were encouraged to modify and improve a chosen *materia* through a variety of techniques, thus adding to the meaning and altering the style. Through the constant rewriting of the narratives, multiple redactors leave their imprint on the text, and a medieval text can often be considered to be a truly collective work, a choir of voices. These voices are most easily identified in prologues and epilogues, where the often formulaic authorial “I” might be individual or collective – and where the wording at times reveals information about the redactors’ or translators’ perception of their part or role in the transmission and transformation of the texts.¹

This article is based on a paper given at the conference “Performance and Performativity in Medieval Europe. Texts and Transformations” hosted by the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Bergen, August, 2010.

¹ On the instability and *variance* of texts in a manuscript culture, see for instance Cerquiglini (1989), *Eloge de la variante* and Zumthor (1972), *Essai de poétique médiévale*. Regarding the authorial role in medieval texts, A.J. Minnis is essential, i.e. his *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (1984). Using Peter Lombard’s *Libri Sententiarum*, Minnis (1984, 94) illustrates the medieval awareness of both the textual movements through copying and editing manuscripts and the diversity of roles text redactors can assume, depending on their approach to their source texts. A different approach is that of Sturges (1995) in the anthology *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices* (ed. Thomas J. Farrell) where he seeks to define “how the multiple voices in a medieval manuscript interact with each other” through using Bakhtin’s concept of modern polyphonic texts (1995, 126). On the genre of prose prologues in general, see e.g. Tore Janson (1964), *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions*.

A mapping and categorizing of these voices in the prologues and epilogues of a selection of *riddarasögur*, romances translated from Old French into Old Norse during the 13th century, will give some understanding of this particular group of text redactors' attitudes towards their performance, i.e. towards their source texts, the work they were executing and their audience. It is in particular the use of pronouns that can give an indication of how the translators perceived the texts and their own role in translating them. Are later text redactors' voices present? How do they relate to and render the original narrators' voices? Do they claim some kind of ownership of the texts, or do they seem to be cautious about doing this? Are both the original and potential new audiences included in the text? Are there chronological patterns? What happens to these voices over time?

The advantages and limitations of the sources

Within the stylistic conventions of different genres, the potential of visible authorial voices varies greatly. The use of the translated *riddarasögur* as sources limits the material to a single genre – although one could discuss whether this is actually the case with the *riddarasögur*. Nevertheless, within the Old Norse literature, the *riddarasögur* are generally considered to be a genre set apart and their style is usually referred to as *høvísk stíl*, courtly style.² Yet, the *riddarasögur* stem from a multitude of genres of Old French courtly literature. It is thus necessary to keep in mind that eventual stylistic differences, including the presence or absence of narrators' voices, do not necessarily originate from Norse translators or text redactors, but could derive from the stylistic ideals of different Old French genres. However, the advantages of using these texts when looking for the voices of narrators and text redactors are numerous. First and foremost, they are all framed by a prologue and an epilogue, both narrative elements where it is likely that the narrators makes themselves heard. Secondly, they are translations, vernacular renderings of foreign sources and distant, exotic plots. As their written sources and action were out of the ordinary, the translators – or perhaps

² See e.g. E.F. Halvorsen's comparative study of *Chanson de Roland* and *Karlamagnus saga* where he introduces a tripartite division of the Old Norse Court Style (1959, 8–11).

later text redactors – might have felt moved or even obliged to comment upon not only the source itself, but the action of the story, the act of translating and the circumstances surrounding their work. Last, but certainly not least, the time span of the primary manuscripts containing the *riddarasögur*, dating from 1270 to 1650 provides information about the diachronic development of these voices. Neither the original translations nor their direct Old French sources are transmitted, and it is thus primarily the development of authorial voices in the translations *themselves*, and not in comparison to the known versions of their Old French sources, that are of interest here. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that the genre and narrative structure of the Old French source texts will inevitably impact on the use of authorial voices in the translated *riddarasögur*, partially explaining eventual variations from *riddarasaga* to *riddarasaga*.

The source material

The *riddarasögur*-genre is commonly divided into two subgenres, the main dividing criteria being not stylistic differences, but rather geographical origin: either foreign or domestic. The translated *riddarasögur* are linked to King Hákon Hákonarson and his court in Bergen. The genre itself and the imported stories were imitated and their motifs recycled in Iceland, giving birth to numerous indigenous *riddarasögur*.³ The source material used here is exclusively the translated *riddarasögur*.

In chronological order, not in terms of the estimated date of translation, but according to the manuscripts and their age, the *riddarasögur* included are:

- The two *riddarasögur* found amongst other texts in De la Gardie 4–7, a manuscript dated to approximately 1270 and referred to as “our oldest and most important collection of so-called “courtly” literature in Norse translation”:⁴

³ See for instance the entry on *riddarasögur* in *Medieval Scandinavia* (ed. Pulsiano and Wolf, 1993). The encyclopedia’s editors have chosen to present the *riddarasögur* material as a bipartite entry, where Geraldine Barnes presents the translated material and Marianne Kalinke presents the indigenous sagas.

⁴ This statement was made by Mattias Tveitane in his introduction to the photographic facsimile edition of De la Gardie 4–7 (1972, 9).

- The *Strengleikar*-collection: A prologue and 21 translated short stories originating from the Old French *lais*-genre. Approximately half of the stories are translations of Marie de France's writings. The majority of the other half originates from the so-called anonymous *lais*, but some of these translated stories have no known Old French original.⁵
- *Elis saga ok Rósamundu*: A translation of an Old French *chanson de geste*, *Elie de Saint Gille*. The Old French source for the translation was most likely defective, and the Old Norse story breaks off mid-action in this manuscript. A newly composed continuation is found in several Old Icelandic manuscripts. The only text edition of *Elis saga ok Rósamundu* (Kölbing, 1881) presents the continuation as found in a late 15th-century manuscript, Holm Perg. fol. 7.⁶
- *Ívens saga*: Although the oldest known version of this translation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Yvain ou Le Chevalier au Lion* is from a somewhat defective early 15th-century manuscript, Holm Perg. 6 4to, with two major lacunas, these lacunas are only a problem when editing the text. They are both situated mid-text, and thus have no impact on the prologue or epilogue.⁷
- *Parcevals saga* with *Valvens þátr*: The primary and oldest manuscript of *Parcevals saga*, the Norse translation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Parceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, is dated to approximately 1400. There is a lacuna mid-manuscript. However, this does not impact on the prologue or epilogue. *Valvens þátr* is an indigenous ending to the story which was left unfinished by Chrétien.⁸
- *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*: The Norse translation of the Tristan-

⁵ The *Strengleikar*-collection is available in full in a variety of editions: Keyser and Unger's normalized text edition (1850); Tveitane's photographic facsimile edition (1972); Tveitane and Cook's diplomatic edition, presenting a parallel English translation (1979); and my own diplomatic edition, presenting a synoptic Old French text (2009). I have chosen not to include text editions with modern Icelandic orthography. For more information on the source texts of the *Strengleikar*, see e.g. Tveitane and Cook (1979) and Budal (2009).

⁶ Tveitane (1972) is a photographic facsimile edition of De la Gardie 4–7 and thus includes the oldest known version of *Elis saga ok Rósamundu*.

⁷ *Ívens saga* has been edited in full several times: Kölbing (1872 and 1898); Blaisdell (1979); and Kalinke (1999).

⁸ *Parcevals saga* has been edited in full by Kölbing (1872); Maclean (1968); and Kalinke (1999).

legend is the oldest known complete version of the story. Although presumably the first *riddarasaga* to be translated from Old French, allegedly in 1226, the oldest complete manuscript is a 17th-century manuscript, AM 543 4to. Some older fragments are known. However, these do not include the prologue and epilogue.⁹

- *Möttuls saga*: This *riddarasaga* derives from the anonymous French *Le mantel mautailé*. The main manuscript is a 17th-century paper manuscript. Some sections in the critical edition are from older vellum fragments. The text’s prologue is considered by scholars to be an independent addition of the translator (Kalinke, 1999, 3).¹⁰
- *Erex saga*: In its entirety, *Erex saga* is only preserved in post-medieval Icelandic manuscripts. The Norse version of Chrétien’s *Erec et Enide* is commonly considered to be the translated *riddarasaga* which derives the most in content and structure from its source. Only two 17th-century Icelandic manuscripts contain the full narrative, but two small vellum fragments from around 1500 contain some twenty lines from the beginning of the saga. The edition used gives the text from a manuscript dated to 1650, AM 181 b fol.¹¹

Method

The approach to the material is simple – a close reading of the texts, with a particular focus on prologues and epilogues, looking for narrators’ voices. However, these voices are at times also present when introducing a new chapter, and there are some instances of their being audible mid-text. These occurrences have thus also been included.

There is a surprising multitude of voices to be found – ranging from what most likely is directly translated from the source text, the translator adopting the narrator’s “collective I” in the prologue to *Strengleikar*: “oc

⁹ *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* has been edited by Gísli Brynjúlfsson (1851); and Kalinke (1999).

¹⁰ *Möttuls saga* has been edited by Cederschiöld and Wulff (1877); Gísli Brynjúlfsson (1878); Bennett and Kalinke (1987); and Kalinke (1999).

¹¹ *Erex saga* has been edited by Cederschiöld (1880); Valdimar Ásmundarson (1886); Blaisdell (1965); and Kalinke (1999).

fyrir þui ihugaða ec at gæra nokora goða sogu” (“and for this reason, I thought I should make some good stories”)¹² (ed. Tveitane, 1972, 6) – to the translator commenting on personal experiences which are somewhat related to the story, such as the translator of the werewolf-story *Bisclaret* stating that: “En sa er þessa bok norrœnaðe hann sa i bærnsko sinni æinn rikan bonda er hamskiftisk” (“And he who translated this book saw in his childhood a rich farmer who shifted shape”) (ed. Tveitane and Cook, 1979, 98). There is a new prologue to one of the texts and a moralizing addition to another, a fairly long epilogue that was most likely newly composed for yet another text, as well as the ends of two of the translated *riddarasögur* which were originally missing. As previously mentioned, the lack of ending to *Elis saga ok Rósamundu* was most likely due to the translator working with a source manuscript that seems to have broken off quite abruptly, so the 1270 manuscript version of the story ends mid-tale. However, at some point, possibly in Iceland, someone undertook the work of composing a new ending to the tale of this brave knight’s encounter with the heathens. A similar case is found with *Parcevals saga*. The Old French tale was never completed by the hand of Chrétien de Troyes and its numerous Old French continuations are all most likely composed by other authors. The situation of the Old Norse translation is parallel: *Parcevals saga* is actually bipartite. The first part, the true *Parcevals saga*, is a translation of Chrétien de Troyes’s *Perceval*, whereas its Old Norse continuation, *Valvens þáttur*, is a younger, indigenous addition which brings the tale to a conclusion. As these two texts are imitations of a foreign genre and bring the translated stories to an end, they are a rich material to use in comparison with the translated part of the story, and they might tell us something about the text redactors’ idea of this genre.

A variety of instances of “I” and “you”

The text redactor’s attitude and relation to the text itself and its source, and possibly towards the text’s original audience as well as his own attitude towards his new potential audience may be reflected in the use of a variety of pronouns. Based on the material gathered, it is possible to di-

¹² All translations are my own.

vide the pronouns reflecting authorial voices and attitudes used in the translated *riddarasögur* into seven categories:

1. **“I” – the original narrator.** The narrator’s voice, his “I”, is quite frequently assumed by text redactors, i.e. the translators and later scribes, as if it were their own and thus ends up being a collective, authorial “I”. An unnoticeable takeover leads to text redactors assuming something similar to the role modern translators are expected to perform in the texts they are translating, being invisible and making the text available to a larger audience across linguistic and cultural borders. In order to do this, it is necessary for the translator to leave as little personal imprint on the text as possible. Any references to the sources, the new audience, or to the act of translating or copying a text have no place in this setting. The frequent and stereotypical phrase “Nu vil ec segia frá” (“Now I will tell of”) falls within this category, as do introductory statements like “Mioc likar mér ok giarna vil ec syna yðr” (“It pleases me much and I would like to show you”) (*Strengleikar*, ed. Tveitane and Cook, 1979, 196).
2. There are, however, a number of occurrences of **“I” – the translator.** This “I” comments upon the text, addresses the audience directly, evaluates and comments upon the action and shares personal experiences, such as the earlier mentioned translator telling of his childhood werewolf-experience. At other times, the translator makes sure that the audience knows that he is the one who translated the text through naming himself. The translator also details where the initiative for the translation originated, and emphasizes what kind of sources he used. This is for instance the case in the famous prologue to *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, where the translator names himself “bróðir Robert” and claims to have translated the story “eptir befallingu ok skipan virðuligs herra Hákonar kónigs” (“at the command and initiative of esteemed King Hákon”) (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 28). At times it seems imperative to call attention to the written nature of the source, referring to a book or the act of reading or writing: for instance where *Elis saga ok Rósamundu* comes to an end: “þa er æigi a bok þessi skrifat” (“It is not written in this book”) (ed. Kölbing, 1881, 116).
3. There are some examples of the use of **“we/us” – apparently referring to the original narrator and his potential audience.**

This use of pronouns seems to some extent to have been transferred in translation, and is mostly found mid-text, in formulaic comments introducing a turn of events, a new chapter, or a new scene: “Nú skulum vér um Tristram þegja ok frá fóstrföður hans nokkut segja” (“Now we shall be silent about Tristram and say something about his foster-father”) (*Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. Kalinke, 1999, 62).

4. The next category is particularly interesting. At times there is a **“we/us” – referring to the translator and his new potential audience**, and there is a marked distance between this audience and the original audience. This kind of comment reinforces the foreign origin: “bretar kalla gotulæf. valskir men chæfrefuill. En ver megum kalla Geitarlauf” (“The Bretons call it gotulæf, the French chæfrefuill. And we can call it Geitarlauf”) (*Strengleikar*, ed. Tveitane and Cook, 1979, 198).
5. A **“They/them”-category, referring to the Bretons**, i.e. the ones who originally composed the tale based upon the true events and adventures that took place in olden times. The narrator’s voice is assumed by the translator, and can be illustrated by the following quote from the tale of the knight Desire in *Strengleikar*: “En bretar gerðo þessa sögu til aminningar (...) ok af þessom atburð fagan strengleic. Þann er þeir calla desire strengleic (“And the Bretons made this story for remembrance (...) and from this adventure, a beautiful song that they name the song of desire”) (ed. Tveitane, 1972, 132).

The two final categories are the two instances of “you”:

6. **The “you” of the original narrator addressing his audience:** “Nv uil ec segia yðr frá” (“Now I will tell you about”) (*Elis saga ok Rósamundu*, ed. Kölbing, 1881, 101).
7. **The “you” of the translator addressing his potential audience.** This kind of “you” is present in prologues and epilogues in particular: “þá norrœnaðe ek yðr” (“I translated it for you”) (*Möttuls saga*, ed. Kalinke, 1999, 6).

Within the translated *riddarasögur* all of these multiple narrators’ voices addressing several different potential audiences can be mixed in a single text. The multitude of voices and audiences can be confusing for a

present-day reader as it probably would have been for a medieval listener or performer.

Patterns in distribution

As previously stated, the time span of the primary manuscripts of the translated *riddarasögur* renders them suitable for a diachronic approach. Looking at the personal comments and their distribution over time, there is a remarkable change from the oldest texts, i.e. the *Strengleikar*-collection and *Elis saga ok Rósamundu*, both transmitted in a manuscript dated to approximately 1270, and the texts known only from younger manuscripts: *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the length of the stories varies and that the *riddarasögur* originate from a variety of Old French genres of chivalric literature. Nevertheless, there is a clear general tendency in the material. Following the initial chronological order of the manuscripts, the *Strengleikar*-collection contains a remarkable number of authorial voices and pronouns. The genre and composition of the collection provide a partial explanation for this, as the *Strengleikar* constitute 21 short stories, all variations of the same narrative structure, framed by a short prologue and an epilogue. The narrator is frequently present in both of these.

Transmitted in the same manuscript, *Elis saga and Rósamundu* has several direct calls for the audience’s attention, although the use of pronouns in these is sparse: one “I” and three occurrences of “you” (ed. Kölbing, 1881, 36, 101, 116). The indigenous continuation and its short epilogue reveal no such traces of a narrator or an audience.

The two sagas in the manuscript De la Gardie 4–7, *Elis saga ok Rósamundu* and *Strengleikar*, share a particularly strong emphasis on the written origin of the stories, through numerous references to writing, books and reading in *Strengleikar* (ed. Tveitane and Cook, 1979, 4, 6, 12, 66, 78, 80, 98, 146, 180, 193, 196, 204, 244) and a single reference in *Elis saga ok Rósamundu* (ed. Kölbing, 1881, 116). Amongst the *riddarasögur* known from younger manuscripts, there is a single such reference in *Möttuls saga*, located in the indigenously composed opening paragraphs to the saga (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 6).

No authorial comments or visible voices are present in the early

15th-century version of *Ívens saga*. This *riddarasaga* has no instances of “I”, nor of “me”, “you” or “they”. Whatever small remainders of voice left in the text are impersonal: there is no prologue to speak of, and the epilogue is a single short sentence, referring to the commissioner, King Hákon and the fact that the story was translated from Old French into Old Norse: “Ok lýkr hér sögu herra Íven er Hákon kóngr gamli lét snúa ór franzeisu í norrænu” (“And here ends the tale of Sir Iven that King Hákon the Old had translated from French into Old Norse”) (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 98).

Turning to *Parcevals saga*, whose primary manuscript is dated to approximately 1400, the situation is quite similar, with a couple of impersonal authorial comments in the text. There seems to be a stylistic change over time, and the formulaic expression “Nv uil ec segia yðr frá” (“Now I will tell you about”) (*Elis saga ok Rósamundu*, ed. Kölbing, 1881, 101) in the oldest *riddarasögur* is replaced by variations of the expression “nú er at segja frá” (“now it is to be said about”) (*Parcevals saga*, ed. Kalinke, 1999, 178). In *Parcevals saga* no foreign origin of the story is mentioned and neither the narrator nor any audience is present in its indigenous continuation, *Valvens þátr*.

The 17th-century manuscript of *Möttuls saga* has an introductory chapter, most likely of indigenous origin (Kalinke, 1999, 3), where a book is referred to which tells of “einum kynligum ok gamansamligum atburð” (“a strange and entertaining adventure”) that the translator “norrænaðe ek yðr” (literally “Old Norsed for you”) as King Hákon asked him to do (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 6). Throughout the rest of the saga, the narrator/translator is present as an “I” addressing his audience as “you” on a couple of occasions (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 8, 12, 28).

Throughout the oldest complete version of the Tristan legend, the Norse *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, there are five such authorial comments (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 40, 50, 62, 72, 154). All of these introduce some kind of turn of events and are formulaic and, apart from the introduction, there is no trace of the actual translator, his attitude towards his sources and his audience, nor any trace of the multiple “I’s” – the narrator’s and the translator’s – throughout the text. The use of the plural form (*oss*, *vér* and *þér*; us, we and you) in all of these comments is remarkable and unique in the material examined.

The last of the *riddarasögur* studied is *Erex saga*, whose main manuscript is dated to 1650, and within the text there are some impersonal stereotypical comments: “Frá Erex er þat at segja” (“Of Erex is that to be

said ...”) (ed. Kalinke, 1999, 246). There is no mention of the Old French source.

Concluding remarks

The basic choices any translators or text redactors face when working with someone else’s text is to assume the narrator’s voice, add something of their own, or erase both. They can also choose to keep the narrator’s potential audience, introduce their own potential audience, or erase them both. Whatever choice they make provides information about their relationship to the text itself, their sources and their audience.

A mapping and categorization of the voices of a variety of text redactors in the translated *riddarasögur*, above all focusing on the use of pronouns in comments referring to the narrator, the translator and a potential audience, are revealing. As expected, the majority of these pronouns are found in prologues and epilogues. When comments are found mid-text, the majority of them are formulaic comments marking the beginning or end of a new episode, or a turn in the plot, and are variations of expressions such as: “Now I will turn to ...” or “Now, let us turn to ...”. Others briefly call for the audience’s attention.

As illustrated above, there are differences between the individual sagas, and there might be several plausible explanations for the diachronic development of the pronouns used. Of course, the question of genre and stylistic conventions might explain some of the differences between for example *Strengleikar* and *Erex saga*: the narrator, audience and translator are present in the former but have all disappeared in the latter. The missing narrator’s voice is also in accordance with the general tendency in Old Norse literature.

The text redactors’ voices and presence in the texts seem to move from the translator keeping the original narrator’s voice and being quite careful to inform the audience about the origin of the oldest texts, marking distance to it through introducing himself as an acting agent, to any references to both the original narrator and the translator being deleted from the youngest texts.

The tendency is for these pronouns and comments to vanish over time, partly erasing the references to the foreign origin of the sagas, but perhaps more importantly erasing the narrators’ and translators’ voices and

the audience's presence in the texts. There are few occurrences of the pronouns *ec*, *yðr*, *vér*, *oss*, *þeim* ("I", "you", "we", "us", "them"), in the 15th, 16th and 17th-century manuscripts, whereas the oldest manuscript, the 13th-century De la Gardie 4–7, has a high density of pronouns used in this way. The lack of surviving manuscripts makes it impossible to reach any kind of certainty, but it is plausible that a translator, narrator and audience were present in all of these texts, but that they have vanished, or rather been erased, over time.

The fluctuation or even uncertainty as to who the pronouns refer to within a single text might be part of the explanation for the disappearing pronouns. The use of pronouns is at times confusing and leads to a marked distance between two groups, an "us" referring to the Old Norse audience and a "them" referring to the Old French author and audience. Through this use of pronouns, an Old Norse text redactor, most likely the translator, makes the listener, the reader or the audience an accomplice. The use of "vér/oss" ("we/us") versus "þeir/þeim" ("they/them") highlights the foreign origin of the text and the distance in culture, possibly emphasizing that "they" do it this way, and that "their" customs and manners are the reason for this story being strange and foreign. If this is how some of these comments should be read, their later absence might indicate that the material has been assimilated into the target culture. Foreign origin is repeatedly highlighted above all in the oldest texts, in particular the *Strengleikar*-stories. Although the translator initially adopts the original narrator's voice as his own, it soon becomes quite clear that he has absolutely no intention of transmitting these stories as his own, or as emerging from the indigenous culture. Some kind of credibility, i.e. a mark of quality is nevertheless placed upon these *riddarasögur* through the mentioning of the translations' commissioner, the esteemed King Hákon. The general tendency in the material is not for textual ownership to be transferred from an original author to the translator or later redactors, but for all explicit textual traces of an author to be erased over time.

If the material at some point was so to say "indigenized", there was no longer any need for this strong emphasis on either the foreign, written sources or the royal commissioner adding his mark of quality to these texts by being the one who desired them, who wanted and liked them to such an extent that he had them translated for a new audience, most likely his royal entourage, his court. In the process of being "indigenized", the originally marked performers of the narrative seem to become invis-

ible; the narrator and translator no longer explain and guide an audience through the text and the audience is no longer part of the text.

Bibliography

- Bennett, Philip E. and Marianne E. Kalinke, eds. 1987. *Möttuls saga*. Editiones Arnamagnæanæ. Series B. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.
- Blaisdell, Foster W., ed. 1965. *Erex saga Artuskappa*. Editiones Arnamagnæanæ. Series B. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.
- , ed. 1979. *Ívens saga*. Editiones Arnamagnæanæ. Series B. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.
- Budal, Ingvil Brügger. 2009. *Strengleikar og Lais: høviske noveller i omsetjing frå gammalfransk til gammalnorsk*. (2 vols.). Universitetet i Bergen.
- Cederschiöld, Gustaf, ed. 1880. *Erex saga*. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur. København.
- Cederschiöld, Gustaf and Fredrik Wulff, eds. 1877. *Versions nordiques du fabliau français “Le mantel mautaille”*. *Textes et notes*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Cerquiglioni, Bernard. 1989. *Eloge de la variante*. Paris: Seuil.
- Gísli Brynjúlfsson, ed. and trans. 1851. *Saga af Tristram ok Isódd*. *Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighet*.
- Halvorsen, Eyvind Fjeld. 1959. *The Norse version of the Chanson de Roland*. Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana. København: Munksgaard.
- Janson, Tore. 1964. *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions*. *Studia Latina Stockholmiensia*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Kalinke, Marianne E., ed. 1999. *Norse romance*. *Arthurian archives*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.
- Keyser, R. and C.R. Unger, eds. 1850. *Strengleikar, eða Lioðabók: en Samling af romantiske Fortællinger efter bretoniske Folkesange (Lais): oversat fra fransk paa norsk ved Midten af trettende Aarhundrede efter Foranstaltning af Kong Haakon Haakonsson*. Christiania: Feilberg & Landmark.
- Kölbing, Eugen, ed. 1872. *Riddarasögur: Parcevals Saga, Valvers þáttur, Ívents Saga, Mirmans Saga*. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner.
- , ed. 1881. *Elis Saga ok Rosamundu: mit Einleitung, deutscher Übersetzung und Anmerkungen zum ersten mal*. Heilbronn: Henninger.
- , ed. *Ívens saga*. 1898. *Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek*. Halle a. S.: Max Niemeyer.
- Maclean, Helen Susan. 1968. “A Critical edition, complete with Introduction, Notes, an select Glossary of *Parcevals saga* from the Stockholm manuscript Codex Holmensis no. 6 Pergament quarto.” Thesis, The University of Leeds.
- Minnis, A.J. 1984. *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. London: Scholar Press.
- Nida, Eugene A. and Charles R. Taber. 1969. *The theory and practice of translation*. *Helps for translators*. Leiden: Brill.

- Pulsiano, Phillip and Kirsten Wolf, eds. 1993. *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*. Garland Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages. New York: Garland.
- Sturges, Robert S. 1995. "Medieval Authorship and the Polyphonic Text", in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell, pp.122–139. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Tveitane, Mattias, ed. 1972. *Elis saga: Strengleikar and other texts: Uppsala University Library, Delagardieska samlingen nos. 4–7 folio and AM 666 b quarto*. Corpus codicum Norvegorum medii aevi. Quarto series. Oslo: Selskapet til utgivelse av gamle norske håndskrifter.
- Tveitane, Mattias and Robert Cook, eds. 1979. *Strengleikar. An Old Norse translation of twenty-one Old French lais*. Norrøne tekster. Oslo.
- Valdimar Ásmundarson, ed. 1886. *Ævintýra-sögur 1. Ingvars saga víðförla. 2. Erex saga*. Reykjavík.
- Zumthor, Paul. 1972. *Essai de poétique medieval*. Paris: Seuil.

Summary

The ideal translation of a modern text should reveal no visual traces of the very act of translating, nor of the translator's voice. However, the medieval concept of text translation differs from that of modern and medieval text redactors; translators and scribes were trained to alter and improve narratives through a variety of techniques. Their constant rewriting makes these texts truly collective works. Through a mapping or categorizing of narrators' voices in a selection of translated *riddarasögur*, with a particular emphasis on the use and development of pronouns in prologues and epilogues, this article aims to increase understanding of a particular group of text redactors' attitudes towards their own performance, i.e. the work they were executing, their source text and their audience. In the examined material, the voices of both the original narrators and audiences and of the translators and their new potential audience disappear over time, thereby indicating that the material was being indigenized.

Keywords: Old Norse; Old French; translation; performance; textual transmission.

Ingvil Brügger Budal

associate professor

Ph.D. in Old Norse Philology

NLA Høgskolen

Olav Bjordalsvei 41, NO-5111 Breistein

Ingvil.Budal@NLA.no

Modern Icelandic: Stable or in a state of flux?

FINNUR FRIDRIKSSON

1. Introduction

In linguistic circles Icelandic has long been recognised as a prime example of a highly stable language (see e.g. Dixon, 1997; Milroy & Milroy, 1985; Trudgill, 1989, 1992, 1996, 2002). Icelanders themselves also seem to take pride in the stability of their language and often regard it as the “original” Old Norse language which has maintained its true Scandinavian characteristics while its sister languages have strayed much further from their origins. While this view may need some modification, Icelandic has indeed shown a comparatively high degree of stability throughout its history and some features have shown little or no change since Iceland was first settled in the 9th and 10th century. As for the reasons behind this stability, a number of suggestions have been put forth, including Milroy and Milroy’s (1985) claim that the stable and close-knit social networks in Iceland that emerged shortly after the settlement and were to remain largely unchanged, in nature at least, until the latter part of the 19th century had strong stabilizing effects on the language spoken in the country. Since the mid-19th century, however, Iceland has undergone large-scale societal changes, including a switch from an agrarian to an industrialized urban society which led, for example, to the dismantling of the aforementioned social networks which were not least based on the mutual dependencies between farmers and chieftains in a rural society. On this basis, it may come as no surprise that in the last few decades claims have been made, amongst the general public as well as in scientific circles, that the Icelandic language is currently undergoing changes, not least of a morphological and syntactic nature, at an increasing rate. These claims are in turn the starting point for this article, in which the main results of a recent study examining the stability of Ice-

landic are presented and discussed.¹ The key question posed in the study was whether Icelandic is really currently undergoing a higher degree of change than before or can still be characterized as a stable language. This question was then followed up with questions pertaining to the factors contributing to either continued stability or an increased rate of change. Here factors such as nationalistic sentiments, language attitudes and language planning were included for examination, alongside the more traditional variables of age, gender, class and social networks.

The article is structured along traditional lines. Following these introductory words, a brief description is given of the morphological and syntactic features chosen as indicators of the level of change vs. stability in modern Icelandic. Next the methods used for collecting and analyzing data are described and this is followed by a presentation of the main results of the study which are then discussed in the final section of the article.

2. The linguistic variables

In the introduction it is claimed that this article relates the major results of a study of the stability of Icelandic. This claim should be modified slightly as it is of course impossible to carry out a full examination of all features of Icelandic within the scope of a single study. Rather, a set of morphological and syntactic features were chosen for examination, primarily on the grounds that they appear to have been singled out, either by the general public or through previous research, as showing the clearest signs of potential change. It was believed that the level of change or instability found in the usage of these variables could be used as an indicator of the general level of change in modern Icelandic, even though this limited set of features does not of course allow any strong such generalizations to be made. The features in question are ‘dative sickness’ and other ‘verb sicknesses’; ‘genitive avoidance’; other case inflections; ‘new passive’; and ‘am-to-frenzy’. Each of these will now be briefly discussed.

¹ This article is based on my Ph.D. dissertation, *Language change vs. stability in conservative language communities: A case study of Icelandic*, which was defended at the University of Gothenburg in 2008.

2.1 ‘Dative sickness’ and other ‘verb sicknesses’

Icelandic contains a set of so-called impersonal verbs; such verbs allow their subjects to stand in oblique case rather than nominative as the more common personal verbs do. Most of these impersonal verbs in Icelandic take the dative case for their subjects, as in example (1) below, but there is also a smaller group of verbs that in standard language takes the accusative, as in example (2), and a handful of verbs even take the genitive, as in example (3):

- (1) mér finnst þetta gott
me(DAT) thinks this good
 I think this is good
- (2) mig vantar mjólk
me(ACC) lacks milk
 I lack milk
- (3) mín nýtur ekki við
me(GEN) presents not
 I am not present

The ‘sickness’ referred to in the term ‘dative sickness’ (‘þágufallssýki’)² stems from a tendency for accusative subjects to appear in dative form, as in example (4):

- (4) mér vantar mjólk
me(DAT) lacks milk
 I lack milk

Further signs of instability in the case marking for subjects of impersonal verbs have also been found. One of these has been labelled ‘nominative sickness’ (‘nefnifallssýki’) (Eyþórsson, 2000) or ‘nominative tendency’ (‘nefnifallshneigð’) (Jónsson & Eyþórsson, 2003) and it emerges when a limited set of verbs which in standard language take accusative or dative subjects appear with a nominative subject, thus, in a sense, rendering the verb personal. An example of this would be (5), which can appear in the form given in example (6):

² It should be noted that other, more neutral, terms, such as ‘dative tendency’ (Jónsson & Eyþórsson, 2003), have been suggested for this feature. However, ‘dative sickness’ is used here as this is the term under which the feature has become generally known.

- (5) bátnum hvolfði
boat-the(DAT) capsized
 the boat capsized
- (6) báturinn hvolfði
boat-the(NOM) capsized
 the boat capsized

A third type of ‘sickness’ of this kind can be labelled ‘reverse dative sickness’ or ‘accusative sickness’ as here verbs that in standard language take dative subjects take accusative ones instead. Thus the standard language example in (7) below becomes the form given in (8):

- (7) mér dettur eitthvað í hug
me(DAT) falls something in mind
 I will think of something
- (8) mig dettur eitthvað í hug
me(ACC) falls something in mind
 I will think of something

Finally, two personal verbs, *hlakka* (= ‘look forward to’) and *kvíða* (= ‘be anxious’) seem to show signs of instability in that they tend to appear with an accusative or a dative subject rather than the standard nominative one, thereby becoming, as it were, impersonal. In the public debate these two verbs have traditionally been placed under the ‘dative sickness’ heading, but it has been suggested (Eyþórsson, 2000) that the term ‘oblique case sickness’ (‘aukafallssýki’) is more appropriate as the subject case used can be either accusative or dative.

Previous research indicates that ‘dative sickness’ at least has found some footing in modern Icelandic. Thus, a study where 11-year-old school children were asked to fill in blanks in a text with the subject form of, on the one hand, a 3rd person singular feminine pronoun and a 1st person singular pronoun on the other, revealed that the dative case, rather than the standard accusative, was regularly used for subjects with verbs such as *vanta* (= ‘need’/‘lack’) and *langa* (= ‘want’). This tendency was especially strong in the case of the 3rd person singular feminine pronoun as the dative case was used by between 20% and 35% of the children with most of the impersonal verbs included in the study. The corresponding figure for the 1st person singular pronoun is between 3.5% and 15% (Svavarsdóttir, 1982).

In the study mentioned above, clear signs were also found of ‘oblique

case sickness' in that a majority of the children used an oblique case for the subject of *hlakka*, rather than the standard nominative case, both as regards the 3rd person singular feminine pronoun and the 1st person singular pronoun. As for *kvíða*, a similar tendency emerged, albeit slightly weaker. A few, less clear, signs of the aforementioned 'nominative sickness' also appeared in the results of Svavarsdóttir's study, while only traces of 'reverse dative sickness' were found.

Svavarsdóttir's (1982) study was partially duplicated by Jónsson and Eyþórsson (2003) about 20 years after she presented her results. In this latter study much the same patterns emerged as in the former one: the relatively firm footing of 'dative sickness' is confirmed and its level even seems to be rising slightly; there are still clear signs of 'oblique case sickness' as regards *hlakka* and *kvíða*; and the existence of 'nominative sickness' appears to be confirmed while only traces are found of 'reverse dative sickness'. A handful of smaller studies (see e.g. Gíslason, 2003, Halldórsson, 1982) show similar results to those of Svavarsdóttir (1982) and Jónsson and Eyþórsson (2003), at least as regards 'dative sickness' and 'oblique case sickness'. It remains doubtful, however, how much these results reveal about the extent to which these features are used in everyday language, especially its spoken form. The studies discussed above use data obtained in test settings rather than any form of spontaneous language and spoken language is not examined at all.

2.2 'Genitive avoidance'

The term 'genitive avoidance' ('eignarfallsflótti') can in essence be said to cover two main features. On the one hand this term has been used for a tendency for "abnormal use of case" (Kjartansson, 1979, p. 90), i.e. the use of nominative, accusative or dative case where genitive is required in the standard language, and on the other it can be taken to refer to a change in case endings which involves the usage of non-standard genitive case-endings. This latter type has been argued to be particularly common with a group of feminine nouns which have an *-ing* suffix and no ending in the nominative case, and with a group of women's names. In standard language, both these types of word take an *-ar* ending in genitive case but here 'genitive avoidance' emerges in the use of a *-u* ending instead. This ending is used, however, in standard language for both accusative and dative case in both types of words (Svavarsdóttir, 1994). It has also been suggested that 'genitive avoidance' is more likely

to occur in complex sentences that contain a number of case-inflected words and/or where the word governing the genitive case is in some way distanced from the inflected word (Kjartansson, 1979).

‘Genitive avoidance’ appears to be a relatively new feature which may explain the fact that, despite the definitions of it given above, no attempts have been made prior to the present study to establish just how frequently it occurs in the use of Icelandic. Arguably, this means that the work has started at the wrong end, as the isolated occurrences which seem to have sparked off the attempts at defining ‘genitive avoidance’ do not of course mean that this feature has become firmly established in the language.

2.3 Other case inflections

In recent years claims have been made, not least by teachers of Icelandic in elementary schools and high schools, that the genitive case is not the only oblique case under threat. According to these claims, the entire case inflectional system is showing increasing signs of instability or change which emerge either in the use of an “incorrect” case, e.g. dative where there should be accusative, or in a tendency not to inflect for oblique case at all, which would ultimately leave nominative as the only surviving case. Until the present study, however, these claims have not sparked off any scientific research into this matter.

2.4 ‘New passive’

As the term implies, ‘new passive’ (‘ný þolmynd’) refers to a change in how passive sentences are constructed in Icelandic. At least three types of traditional passive constructions have been recognized in the language: nominative passive, oblique passive and impersonal passive, and the change in question appears to affect the first two of these. In standard nominative passive constructions, the accusative object from the corresponding active sentence becomes nominative as it moves to the subject position in the passive. There is also agreement between the subject and the finite verb and the past participle. This results in constructions such as (9) below:

- (9) Ég var sendur heim
I(NOM) was sent home
 I was sent home

A ‘new passive’ version of this construction, however, would be as in (10):

- (10) Það var sent mig heim
It/There was sent me(ACC) home
 I was sent home

Here there is no movement of the object to subject position and the object retains its case, i.e. accusative. Furthermore, a dummy *það*, i.e. ‘it’ or ‘there’, is inserted in the subject position and the finite verb is always in the 3rd person singular form, while the past participle always appears in the neuter gender, nominative singular form.

An example of an oblique passive construction can be seen in (11):

- (11) Honum var strítt á leikvællum
He(DAT) was teased at playground-the
 He was teased at the playground

Here the object case, which is dative in the example above but can also be genitive, of the corresponding active sentence is preserved despite the movement to a subject position and there is no agreement between the subject and the finite verb and the past participle as the verb is always in 3rd person singular and the participle always in the neuter gender, nominative singular form. The ‘new passive’ counterpart of the oblique passive sentence in (11) is shown in (12) below:

- (12) Það var strítt honum á leikvællum
It/There was teased him(DAT) at playground-the
 He was teased at the playground

Just as with the transition from nominative passive to ‘new passive’, the object here retains its case, regardless of whether it is dative or genitive, and a dummy *það* is inserted in the subject position. The 3rd person singular form of the verb and the neuter gender, nominative singular form of the participle are maintained.

As is the case with ‘genitive avoidance’, ‘new passive’ appears to be a relatively new phenomenon in Icelandic. The earliest recorded examples date from 1959 (Sigurjónsdóttir & Maling, 2001) and the feature first aroused academic interest in 1982 (Bernóðsson, 1982). Again, this might explain why relatively little is known about its spread although there are some indications in the work of Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir (1997; Sigurjónsdóttir & Maling 2001, 2002) who examined the extent

to which ‘new passive’ constructions were accepted by 1,731 15–16-year-olds from all over Iceland, and a smaller group (N=205) of adults. Sigurjónsdóttir’s and Maling’s (2001) results showed that in most parts of Iceland the majority (53%–75%) of the teenagers accepted ‘new passive’ constructions. The exception to this rule was central Reykjavík where only around one-third of the teenagers viewed ‘new passive’ as acceptable language. The adults, however, showed much lower figures; here the acceptance rate never rose above 9%. Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling interpret their results as indicative of ‘new passive’ constructions being commonly used by children and teenagers. That claim seems a little premature, however, as accepting a certain form is not the same as using it.

2.5 ‘Am-to-frenzy’

This last of the features examined in this study appears to be the newest as it seems to have first emerged a little more than a decade ago. It is therefore probably hardly unexpected that no clear data exist on the spread of this feature and it still remains to be thoroughly defined. Accordingly, no common agreement exists on its label and even though ‘am-to-frenzy’ (‘er-að-æði’) is used here, a number of other suggestions have been put forth.

Even though the ‘am-to-frenzy’ has thus not been fully defined it seems clear that this feature involves an expansion of the construction *vera að* + infinitive (copula to + infinitive), which is commonly used in Icelandic for continuous aspect. Until recently this construction was used only with verbs that refer to an action which is limited in time, to show that the action is ongoing or continuous. A typical example of this standard usage can be seen in (13) below:

- (13) *Ég er að lesa*
I am to read
 I am reading

Now, however, it appears that constructions of this kind are open to the use of verbs which have not hitherto been used in a continuous sense. This expansion includes at least certain verbs of perception (14), a number of stative verbs (15), and some verbs which can be said to be momentive, i.e. which refer to an action which it takes only a split second to perform (16) (Friðjónsson, 2003):

- (14) Ég er ekki að skilja þetta
I am not to understand this
 I don't understand this
- (15) Vörnin var að standa sig vel í leiknum
Defence-the was to perform well in game-the
 The defence performed well in the game
- (16) Markvörðurinn var að verja vel í leiknum
Goalkeeper-the was to save well in game-the
 The goalkeeper saved well in the game

The full progress of this expansion, however, is less than clear.

3. Method

Data for this study was collected from a total of 108 subjects, 12 from each of the 9 locations included. In each location the 12 informants were divided equally between three age groups, i.e. 4 informants in each group. The age groups were teenagers (16–20 year olds), young to middle-aged adults (21–65 years of age) and senior citizens (above 65 years of age). This division can be seen partly as a response to the approach used in some of the studies mentioned in the previous section. There it appears to be more or less taken for granted that, at least as regards ‘dative sickness’ and ‘new passive’, only children and teenagers are affected by the alleged changes, although the results are nonetheless viewed as an indicator of the general spread of the features in question. The standpoint taken in this study is that no claims about the overall spread of the features can be made if adult speakers are not included. As for the lower limit, i.e. 16, it is used as an attempt to avoid the impact of language acquisition as much as possible. At this age Icelandic teenagers have received their last formal instruction in Icelandic and should thus have a fair grasp of Icelandic grammar as it is taught in schools, which does as yet not include the new features.

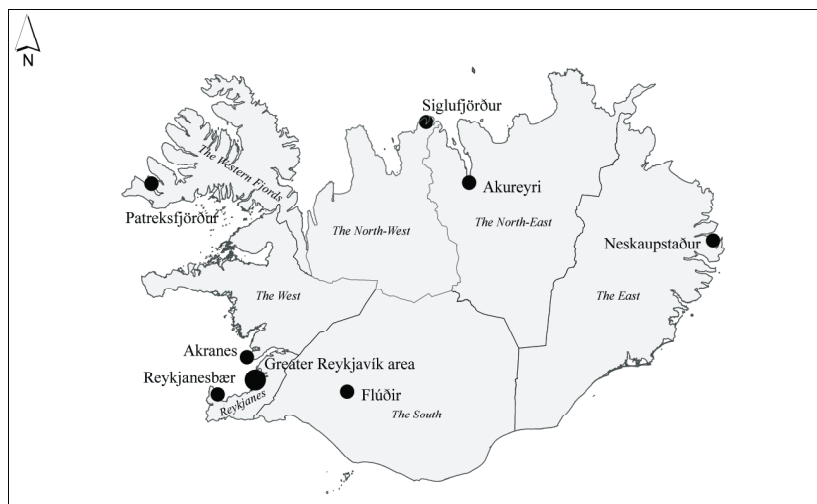
It should also be mentioned that an attempt was made to include as even a number as possible of men and women in all age groups in each location, i.e. two of each gender in each age group. In most locations this target was reached and the end result was that 55 of the 108 informants were women while the remaining 53 were men. A special note should also be made of the fact that in each location care was taken to construct

a cross-section of people of varied socio-economic backgrounds which at the same time reflected the general societal structure and characteristics of the municipality in question at each time. Thus, to give one example, the samples from the fishing villages mentioned below naturally include fishermen and/or people involved in the local fishing industry, but subjects were also included from other industries or the service sector which can be found in almost any Icelandic village however generally dependent it may be on fishing. As for how informants were recruited, a version of the “friends-of-a-friend” method used for example by Lesly Milroy (1980) in Belfast was utilized. Benefitting somewhat from the general Icelandic belief that “everybody knows everybody”, I used my personal contacts in each of the included communities to create a group of recruiters who then made initial contact with potential informants on the basis of the criteria for inclusion in the sample. These informants were then contacted by me, informed further about their role in the project and formally asked to participate.

As was mentioned above, nine locations were included in the study. These were Akranes, Patreksfjörður, Siglufjörður, Akureyri, Neskaupstaður, Flúðir, Reykjanesbær, and finally the greater Reykjavík area, which was divided into two parts, central Reykjavík on the one hand and suburban areas of Reykjavík and neighbouring municipalities on the other. The reason behind this division is twofold. Essentially, nearly two-thirds of the Icelandic population live in the greater Reykjavík area and thus it was judged necessary to include at least twice as many informants from this area as from any of the other locations. Furthermore, this division was thought to be interesting in light of the aforementioned results of Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling’s (2001, 2002) research on the extent to which ‘new passive’ constructions were accepted; here there was a clear difference between central Reykjavík on the one hand and the rest of the country, including suburban Reykjavík and the neighbouring municipalities, on the other.

The communities mentioned above are evenly spread throughout the country and this was done in order to ensure that all the generally acknowledged administrative and official regions of Iceland were included. The communities were also chosen to ensure that all the different basic types of communities that can be said to exist in Iceland were represented. At the same time, care was taken that each community chosen was representative of the region it is located in. Thus for example the fishing villages of Patreksfjörður and Neskaupstaður were chosen as typical rep-

representatives of the Westerns Fjords and the East, while Flúðir represents the inland towns and villages in the South, which largely function as service centres for the surrounding agricultural areas. The location of the communities is displayed on the map below.



Communities included in the study. (Map: Tom Barry.)

The data collected can be divided into three main types. The first consists of spoken language, the second of written language and the third of various kinds of information obtained from the informants through interviews. The main emphasis of the study was on spoken language. As mentioned above, previous research on the features examined here has neglected spontaneous language, particularly in its spoken form, and the approach used here was not least aimed at correcting this imbalance. Thus the aim was to collect material that resembled as closely as possible the informal everyday language use of the informants. This means that the target was the vernacular, i.e. the style in which speakers pay minimum attention to monitoring their speech. This can in turn be traced back to Labov's (1970, p. 31) claim that "[o]bservation of the vernacular gives us the most systematic data for our analysis of linguistic structure." To reach this target, the informants were recorded while engaging in everyday conversations in groups of 2–4, where all the members of each group knew each other prior to the recording sessions. Peer-group sessions of this kind, where people who know and interact with each other are

brought together, are believed to be useful in obtaining casual speech from informants as the normal interactions of the group are judged to overcome the informants' awareness of being recorded (see e.g. Labov, 1970; Wolfram & Fasold, 1974; Wolfson, 1976). In other words, the approach used here was intended to meet the effects of Labov's (1970) well-known observer's paradox; i.e. even though standard ethical considerations meant that the informants had to be informed in advance that they would be recorded, an attempt was made to create a situation which they did not experience as special or deviating sharply from their everyday life. To further enhance this feeling, I was not present during the recording sessions themselves. Rather, the recording equipment was left behind and the informants were asked to carry out the recording when it suited them. Having listened to all the recordings, it seems safe to claim that the informants did not experience the recording as an awkward or stressful situation. Understandably, the first five minutes or so of most of the recordings are somewhat hesitant and comments such as "So, what should we talk about?" are common. However, as the recordings proceed, the informants focus less on the situation and more often than not surprisingly personal topics are discussed, including for example teenage relationships, problems at work, gossip about friends and neighbours, and even serious illnesses in the family.

A special note should be made of the fact that even though the informants were aware they were being recorded, they were not informed in advance about precisely which linguistic features were being examined. This was deemed a necessary approach as at least some of the features under scrutiny are highly stigmatized which means that the informants might have been overly conscious of their usage in the recording situation. Full information about which linguistic features from the recordings would be studied was given to the informants immediately after each recording session and they were then given the opportunity to withdraw from the project. No one used this option. Furthermore, the informants were interviewed to obtain personal information only after they had been given this information and had themselves given their consent for further participation. It was hoped that this approach would meet all the ethical demands and this seems to have been the case, at least in a formal sense, as a description of the project and the methodology used was submitted to the Icelandic Data Protection Authority which did not view any of the aforementioned issues as problematic.

Each recording lasted between 30 and 75 minutes and the total length

was 29 hours and 50 minutes, spread over a total of 44 recordings. All the recordings were transcribed in full, using a somewhat simplified and modified version of the Modified Standard Orthography (version 6) developed within the research program Semantics and Spoken Language at the Department of Linguistics at the University of Gothenburg (Nivre, 1999). The studied features were then excerpted from the transcriptions, along with their standard counterparts, and registered together with relevant extra information on for example grammatical and conversational context.

To then turn to the data on written language, the intention was to collect written material from all 108 informants. However, this material was not to be produced specifically for the purpose of the study, but rather was to comprise examples of writing produced for various purposes which the informants still had available. This was felt to result in more authentic data which gave a better reflection of the informants' everyday use of written language than work written specifically for the project would have done. Unfortunately, this approach turned out to be less fruitful than intended as only 52 informants submitted written data. Furthermore, these 52 were quite unevenly spread as regards the different social categories included. Thus while up to ten informants from some communities submitted written material, as few as two informants in other communities did so. Similarly, writing samples were obtained from far more teenagers than senior citizens. The main reason for this general shortage of written material was simply that a fairly large proportion of the informants in the sample had little or no reason to use written language in their everyday lives and thus had little or no written material available. Another reason is that even though the informants were asked to bring samples of their writing to the recording session, quite a few forgot to do so and then did not respond to later reminders to send material.

This shortcoming does of course mean that any detailed comparisons between spoken and written language are more or less impossible: instead, only very broad and general comparisons between the spoken and written data as a whole had to suffice. As for the analytical handling of the data obtained, despite the above limitations, it followed the specifications described for the data on spoken language above.

As indicated above, the third main type of data consisted of various pieces of information about the informants. This information was obtained in interviews which were carried out immediately after the record-

ing sessions. In these interviews the informants were first asked a set of questions pertaining to their personal background, i.e. their age, education and occupation. The teenagers were also asked about their parents' education and occupation. Information about the informants' gender and where they lived was obvious enough for me to simply record it without posing any specific questions.

Following this first set of questions, the informants were asked a series of questions about their social networks. This information was deemed to be important since, as indicated in the introduction, it has been suggested that the structure of social networks in Iceland has been a crucial element in the maintained stability of the Icelandic language (Milroy & Milroy, 1985). The list of questions used was based on previous work of a similar nature, e.g. Lippi-Green's (1989) work on social-network integration and language change in Grossdorf and Milroy's (1980) study of the effects of social networks on language change in Belfast, all adapted to an Icelandic context. The questions included dealt with the informants' family and kinship ties, their friendship ties, their ties to people they worked or attended school with, their participation in various local social activities, and their level of integration into their home municipalities. On the basis of the answers provided, the informants were then placed in a scale of five network categories, on both a local as well as a national level, according to the strength and density of their networks.

The final set of questions posed to the informants concerned their attitudes towards language change. Here information was obtained both about the informants' views of language change in general and about their attitudes towards the particular features examined in the study as well as their familiarity with them. In the analysis of the answers regarding the informants' attitudes, they were all ranked on a five-point scale which moved from 'highly positive' via 'positive', 'neutral' and 'negative' to 'very negative'.

4. Results

In this section an overview of the results from the present study will be given. First the results regarding the linguistic variables is presented, followed by the results pertaining to the informants' attitudes towards the features in question.

4.1 ‘Dative sickness’ and other ‘verb sicknesses’

In the spoken data, accusative verbs, i.e. impersonal verbs which in standard language take accusative case subjects, were used on a total of 99 occasions by a total of 57 speakers. Amongst these 99 instances there are 13 examples of ‘dative sickness’ which come from 13 different speakers. This means that the overall frequency of ‘dative sickness’ is 13.1% in the spoken data. Furthermore, the 13 speakers involved make up 12% of the total sample and 22.8% of the speakers who use the accusative verbs found in the data. At the same time the overall frequency just mentioned conceals a few interesting facts which are revealed if it is broken down according to some linguistic factors as well as the informants’ socio-economic background.

The first feature of note in this respect is that ‘dative sickness’ appears to be significantly less likely to occur when the subject used is either the 1st person singular pronoun (*mig* in the standard accusative case; *mér* in its ‘dative sickness’ form) or the 2nd person singular pronoun (*þig* in the standard accusative case; *þér* in its dative form) than when it is of some other type (e.g. 3rd person singular feminine or masculine pronoun). Thus, 1st or 2nd person singular pronouns were used as subjects on a total of 73 occasions and on only four, or 5.5%, of these the dative rather than the standard accusative case was used. However, subjects other than 1st or 2nd person singular pronouns were used on a total of 26 occasions and on 9, or 39.1%, of these ‘dative sickness’ appeared. Apparently less important, however, is which verb is involved, as the most commonly used verbs in the data, i.e. *langa* (= ‘want’/‘long’) and *vanta* (= ‘lack’/‘need’) showed no clear signs of occurring more frequently with ‘dative sickness’ than a group of 11 other verbs which were less frequently used in the data.

To then turn to the informants, it should first be pointed out that the 13 speakers who produced the 13 examples of ‘dative sickness’ used a total of 27 accusative verbs, which means that their average rate of ‘dative sickness’ was 48.2%. At the same time, certain groups of speakers appeared more likely than others to be affected by this tendency, although care should be taken with interpretation of the figures as the overall number is of course very small. The clearest difference which emerged in this respect is that women appear to be markedly more likely than men to produce examples of ‘dative sickness’. The women in the sample are responsible for 11 of the 13 instances of ‘dative sickness’ in the data

which means that the relative frequency of this feature in their speech is 20.4% (i.e. 11 occurrences of ‘dative sickness’ from a total of 54 accusative verbs). The corresponding figure for the men is 4.4%, as they produced only two examples of ‘dative sickness’ from the 45 accusative verbs they used. This gender difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.024$)³ and cannot be explained by the men using more 1st or 2nd person singular pronoun subjects than the women. This result is quite interesting in light of the fact that sociolinguistic studies similar to this one consistently show women conforming more closely than men to the standard language in question. However, given the previously mentioned low number of occurrences that the present result is based on, the possibility that it is a coincidence which would be reversed in a larger bulk of data should probably not be excluded.

Amongst other differences between the social groupings, it can be mentioned that the inhabitants in two of the three fishing villages included in the study, i.e. Siglufjörður and Neskaupstaður, seem to be slightly more likely than informants elsewhere to show signs of ‘dative sickness’, as in these communities the relative frequency of this feature was 27.3% and 28.6% respectively while no other community showed a rate higher than 17.7%. At the same time informants from both central Reykjavík and Flúðir showed no signs of ‘dative sickness’. However, this might be explained by the fact that an overwhelming majority of the subjects used by informants from these communities were either 1st or 2nd person singular pronouns.

There are also some signs that the level of ‘dative sickness’ decreases as the informants’ educational/occupational level rises, although this appears to apply only to 1st and 2nd person singular pronoun subjects. This could be a possible result of the fact that in schoolbooks dealing with impersonal verbs and ‘dative sickness’, subjects of this type are much more often used as examples than any other types.

Interestingly, the three age groups included in the study display very similar levels of ‘dative sickness’. Thus, the relative frequency of this feature was 12.8% amongst teenagers, 16.1% amongst adults and 10.3% amongst senior citizens. Admittedly, five, or nearly 30%, of the 17 teenagers who use accusative verbs show examples of ‘dative sickness’

³ In the presentation of the results, *P*-values are mentioned only where there is a significant difference.

while five, or 25%, of the 20 adults and three, or 15%, of the 20 senior citizens who use accusative verbs produce examples of this non-standard usage, but the unspoken assumption apparent in previous work on this feature, i.e. that it hardly appears at all amongst adult speakers, seems not to be tenable at all.

Due to the limitations mentioned above, no strong claims can be made about the distribution of ‘dative sickness’ in the written data. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that two instances of this feature were found amongst the 39 accusative verbs used here. This makes for a relative frequency of 5.1%. Both these examples come from the same speaker but on this basis no general claims can be made about the social rooting of ‘dative sickness’ in written language. It may be more interesting to note that the subject used in both examples is a 3rd person singular feminine pronoun while no written examples were found of ‘dative sickness’ on the 18 occasions the subject was either the 1st or 2nd person singular pronoun. In other words, this pattern appears to be the same in spoken and written language, even though ‘dative sickness’ generally seems to be more marginal in the latter.

To then turn to other ‘verb sicknesses’, the spoken data indicates that there is some tendency amongst speakers of Icelandic to both ‘nominative sickness’ and ‘oblique case sickness’. As regards the former, *dreyma* (= ‘dream’) and *reka* (= ‘drift’) appear to be the affected verbs. Thus *dreyma* appears with a nominative, rather than a standard accusative subject, on two of the four occasions the verb is used in the spoken data and with *reka* a nominative subject is used on two of the three occasions the verb is used. These low overall figures do of course mean that any further breakdown is somewhat meaningless. In the case of ‘oblique case sickness’, the verb *hlakka* (= ‘look forward to’) is used on a total of five occasions by three different speakers and on two of these occasions an accusative subject is used rather than the standard nominative one. The same speaker is responsible for both of these non-standard examples. The other verb allegedly sensitive to ‘oblique case sickness’, i.e. *kvíða* (= ‘be anxious’) (Jónsson & Eyþórsson, 2003; Svavarsdóttir, 1982), is used only once in the spoken data and here the standard nominative case is used for the subject. Again the low figures overall render any further breakdown more or less meaningless while more data is needed before any strong claims can be made about the general tendency to these two types of ‘verb sicknesses’. As for the last type, i.e. ‘reverse dative sickness’ or ‘accusative sickness’, no traces of it were found amongst the 680

instances of usage of dative verbs, i.e. verbs which in standard language take dative case subjects.

In the written data only traces of ‘nominative sickness’ and ‘reverse dative sickness’ were found while little can be said about ‘oblique case sickness’ as the verbs associated with it simply did not occur.

4.2 ‘Genitive avoidance’

In short, it can be said that ‘genitive avoidance’ appears not to have established itself as anything more than a vague tendency in both spoken and written language. Thus, in the spoken data only 16 instances of non-standard usage were found amongst a total of 1266 tokens/words used in a context which calls for genitive case. The overall relative frequency of non-standard usage was thus 1.3%. The corresponding figures in written language were 21 instances of non-standard usage from a total of 3,241 tokens/words used in a context requiring genitive, i.e. a relative frequency of 0.7%. Furthermore, in both the spoken and the written data, less than half of the non-standard examples appear to fall firmly within the frame of ‘genitive avoidance’ as it has been defined by Kjartansson (1979, 1999) and Svavarsdóttir (1994), and no examples were found of feminine nouns which have an *-ing* suffix and no ending in nominative being used with anything other than the standard *-ar* ending for genitive case. Rather, the majority of the instances of deviation from the standard appear simply to be the odd slip of the tongue or the pen rather than any indication of a systematic change of any sort. It should also be added that some of the seemingly clear examples of ‘genitive avoidance’ raise questions about how appropriate this term is, at least for a certain type of this feature as it has been defined. Here I am referring to the examples of ‘genitive avoidance’ such as (17) below (from the spoken data), where the word governing the genitive case is in some way distanced from the inflected word:

- (17) að fara til(PREP-GEN) messu(GEN) hérna þegar maður var krakki það /
 sérstaklega jólamessuna(ACC)
 to go to(PREP-GEN) mass(GEN) here when man was child it / particu-
 larly Christmas mass-the(ACC)
 to go to mass here when one was a child / particularly the Christmas mass

In this example the preposition *til* governs the genitive case on *messu* and this case governing effect should strictly speaking be extended to

jólameßuna which should then take the genitive form *jólameßunnar* rather than the accusative form in which it appears. As will become clearer in the next section, contexts of this kind can not only cause some fluctuation in the use of genitive case but also as regards both accusative and dative case. It thus seems doubtful that it is the case inflection as such which is problematic; it seems just as likely that the difficulty lies in maintaining the case governing effect across a long distance or in keeping track of which case to use for which word in a string of inflected words.

As a final note in this section it should be added that the scarcity of clear examples of ‘genitive avoidance’ in both the spoken and the written data means that no conclusions can be drawn regarding their social distribution.

4.3 Other case inflections

The pattern that emerged with respect to ‘genitive avoidance’ largely repeats itself when it comes to other case inflections. Thus, amongst a total of 15,668 tokens/words that appear in accusative contexts in the spoken data, only 52, or 0.3% appear in a non-standard form, i.e. in another case or with a non-standard case ending. Similarly, 101, or 1% of the total 9,994 tokens/words that appear in dative contexts deviate from the norm. As for written language, only 30, or 0.4%, of a total of 8,572 tokens/words that are used in accusative context appear in a non-standard form, while out of the total of 8,459 tokens/words used in dative contexts, 45, or 0.5%, are used in a non-standard form. Again, the majority of these relatively few instances of deviation from the form can be classified as either slips of the tongue or the pen, or as the result of a relatively complex syntactic context where there is either a gap between the case governing the word and the case-inflected word, as in example (18) below (from the spoken data), or a long string of inflected words which make it difficult, particularly in spoken language, to keep track of which case to use for each word.

- (18) mér finnst bara að horfa á(PREP-ACC) húsið(ACC) að utan sérstaklega fyrri byggingin(NOM)
I think just to look at(PREP-ACC) house-the(ACC) from outside especially first building-the(NOM)
 I think that just looking at the house from the outside especially the first building

Here the particle verb *horfa á* governs the accusative case on *húsið* and should do so on *byggingin* as well, which should thus appear as *bygginguna* rather than in the nominative form above. Note the similarity between this example and example (17) above in the results regarding ‘genitive avoidance’.

Having stated that there are very few signs of any general instability in the case inflection system of Icelandic, it should be noted that words from two case inflectional groups appear systematically amongst the non-standard occurrences. These groups consist of, on the one hand, women’s names, such as *Guðný* and *Fanney*, which are compound names that end with a *-ný* or *-ey* suffix in the nominative case, and, on the other, the kinship terms *systir* (= ‘sister’), *dóttir* (= ‘daughter’), *móðir* (= ‘mother’), *bróðir* (= ‘brother’), and *faðir* (= ‘father’).

In standard language the *-ný* or *-ey* suffix in nominative case of the women’s names mentioned above is replaced by *-ju* in both accusative and dative case and by *-jar* in genitive. However, the data reveal a seemingly strong tendency for the *-ju* ending to be dropped in both accusative and dative case, with the nominative form being used for both these cases. Thus, in the spoken data, names of this kind are used on a total of 16 occasions in accusative or dative contexts by 11 different speakers and eight, or 72.7% of the speakers produce 13 examples of non-standard usage of the kind just described, which makes for a relative frequency of 81.3%. Admittedly, the number of examples these figures are based on is very low, and renders their correlation with the speakers’ social background factors more or less futile, but the overwhelming majority of non-standard instances amongst these examples nonetheless indicates that there is a clear tendency for the nominative form to be used in the accusative and dative case as well. The existence of this tendency may then be further confirmed by the fact that on two of the five occasions where the relevant women’s names are used in an accusative or dative context in the written data, the *-ju*-less nominative form is used.

As for the kinship terms, the deviation from the standard found here resembles that found in the usage of the women’s names given above. The standard inflectional pattern of the kinship terms is that the nominative ending *-ir* changes to *-ur* in all three oblique cases, i.e. accusative, dative and genitive. To this it should be added that the root vowel *a* in nominative *faðir* changes to *ö* in the oblique cases. The tendency which emerges in the data is for the nominative *-ir* ending to be maintained for all cases, at least as regards spoken language. Thus the relevant kinship

terms are used on a total of 56 occasions in accusative, dative or genitive contexts in the spoken data and on 26, or 46.4%, of these the nominative form is used. Interestingly, the level of this non-standard usage seems to vary somewhat according to case, as it reaches 56.5% in dative case while it is 41.7% for accusative and 33.3% for genitive. These relatively low figures for genitive might, however, be traceable to the fact that in the data the kinship terms in question are used to a much lesser extent in genitive than in the other two oblique cases. Another interesting point is that this tendency seems to be much weaker in written language as there only four instances of non-standard usage were found from a total of 89 kinship terms in accusative, dative or genitive contexts. The relative frequency thus drops to 4.5% as compared to 46.4% in spoken language.

The relatively frequent use of kinship terms in the spoken data allows some further breakdown of the figures given above and some tentative correlations can be made between the various social groupings and the examples of standard versus non-standard usage. When this is done it emerges that speakers in the Reykjavík area and in Flúðir are less likely than speakers elsewhere in Iceland to use the relevant non-standard forms and that male speakers are slightly more likely to do so than female speakers. Also, men who use non-standard forms in the first place appear to do so with a high degree of consistency. As for the age groups, teenagers and adults are more frequent and more consistent users of non-standard forms than senior citizens, but at the same time the parity in non-standard usage amongst teenagers (55%) and adults (52.6%) might indicate that non-standard usage has reached a level where it is now stabilizing itself, i.e. the variation involved is becoming stable. Finally, speakers who have a relatively low standing on the educational/occupational scale are considerably more likely than those higher up to use non-standard forms, while the fact that speakers with moderately strong to strong social networks are more likely than others to use non-standard forms is probably the simple result of nearly all speakers who use the relevant kinship terms having networks of this type.

4.4 'New passive'

As was mentioned in section 2.4 above, previous research (Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir, 1997; Sigurjónsdóttir & Maling 2001, 2002) into the level of acceptance of 'new passive' constructions indicates that this feature has found some foothold in modern Icelandic. However, the results

from the present study point in another direction. In the spoken data, the two types of passive constructions, i.e. nominative passive and oblique passive, from which ‘new passive’ can be formed, are used on a total of 494 occasions and on only 13 of these is a ‘new passive’ construction used. The overall relative frequency of ‘new passive’ is thus 2.6%. Note also that nominative and oblique passives appear to be equally resistant in this respect as the relative frequency of ‘new passive’ constructions with nominative passives is 2.7% (12 ‘new passive’ constructions from a total of 446 nominative passives) and 2.1% (one ‘new passive’ construction from a total of 48 oblique passives) with oblique passives. These 13 examples overall of ‘new passive’ also show no clear linguistic pattern as 13 different verbs are involved and no particular conversational or syntactic context appears to be more productive than others in this respect. This indication of ‘new passive’ not having become firmly established in Icelandic is further strengthened by the fact that in the written data only four ‘new passive’ constructions were found amongst a total of 908 nominative and oblique passives. The relative frequency here is thus as low as 0.4% and none of the four informants involved showed clear signs of being consistent users of ‘new passive’.

Having said that ‘new passive’ only appears to a negligible extent in the data, the few examples found of such constructions in the spoken data conceal one or two interesting points as regards their social distribution. Thus the relative frequency of ‘new passive’ constructions amongst teenagers, 6.3%, is significantly higher than the corresponding figures for the other two age groups (adults: 2.9%; senior citizens: 0%) and at the same time 26.7% of the teenagers who use passives in the first place show some signs of ‘new passive’ usage, while only 10% of adult speakers and 0% of senior speakers do so. This might indicate that even though the overall rate of usage of ‘new passive’ constructions is still quite low this feature is slowly gaining ground. Note, however, that the teenage speakers who produced examples of ‘new passive’ constructions appeared to do so no more consistently than adult speakers who produced the same type of examples.

Another aspect of the speakers’ social background should be mentioned. Speakers from Reykjanesbær show a somewhat greater tendency to use ‘new passive’ constructions than do speakers from other parts of the country. The relative frequency of these constructions is 10% in Reykjanesbær while it does not go above 3.3% anywhere else. This is not least interesting in light of Svavarsdóttir’s and Maling’s (2001, 2002)

previous work which indicated that the dividing line in this respect was between central Reykjavík on the one hand and other parts of the country on the other. However, this does not alter the fact that even in Reykjanesbær ‘new passive’ is not used to any great extent and comparisons between previous research into this feature and the present study primarily indicate that care should be taken not to equate accepting ‘new passive’ with using it. Finally, speakers with a low educational/occupational level appear to be slightly more likely than speakers with an intermediate or high level to use ‘new passive’ constructions.

4.5 ‘Am-to-frenzy’

As stated in section 2.5 above, no clear definition of the ‘am-to-frenzy’ exists. One result of this is that the contexts in which this feature might possibly occur are less than clear and this in turn means that here only a very general overview of the occurrences of non-standard forms can be given. No figures on relative frequencies can be presented, nor a meaningful examination of the feature’s social distribution made, although it is noticeable that teenagers produce more examples of it than adults do and that those who have a high educational/occupational level use it more often than those with a lower level, which is a reversal of the pattern found with regard to ‘dative sickness’, kinship terms and ‘new passive’.

In the spoken data a total of 37 clear examples were found of non-standard usage of *vera að* + infinitive in contexts where standard language normally requires the use of simple present or past tense. This means that, unless non-standard examples of case inflections are taken as a single group, this feature is, in terms of sheer frequency, the most common of all the non-standard forms examined here. However, this does not have to mean that its relative frequency is any higher than that of the other non-standard forms.

All in all, 27 different verbs are used on the 37 occasions *vera að* + infinitive is used outside its normal context. Most of these are used on one occasion each, but five verbs [*aðlagast* (= ‘adapt’); *fá* (= ‘get’/‘receive’); *hafa* (*á móti*) (= ‘have (against)’); *lifa* (= ‘live’); *taka* (= ‘take’)] are used on two occasions each, and one verb, *fatta* (= ‘get’/‘understand’), is used on four occasions. In this group of verbs the types mentioned in section 2.5 can be found, i.e. verbs of perception such as *fatta* and *skilja* (= ‘understand’), verbs referring to state such as *lifa* and *sitja*

(= ‘sit’), and other verbs, such as *fá* and *lúffa* (= ‘give in’), which refer to momentive actions. However, this group also contains verbs which in standard language appear in simple past or present tense when used in a general, repetitive or habitual context, but here appear in *vera að* + infinitive constructions, such as in example (19) below:

- (19) og þau eru ekkert að dansa saman
And they are nothing to dance together
 And they don’t/never dance with each other

Examples such as (19) might indicate that the field of usage of *vera að* + infinitive is expanding to potentially include the majority of Icelandic verbs. However, it seems too early to claim that the ‘am-to-frenzy’ has become firmly established in Icelandic in general, especially as no signs of it were found in the written data.

4.6 Attitudes

In the interviews which followed the recording sessions, the informants were first asked about their attitudes towards language change in general. Here, 50, or 46.3% of the 108 informants, expressed themselves in negative terms, while the remaining 58, or 53.7%, were either neutral (39, or 36.1%) or positive (19, or 17.6%) towards change. The overall response can thus hardly be claimed to be particularly negative.

It should be noted that once the informants had expressed their attitudes towards change in general, they were asked if they cared to elaborate on their views and whether they noticed any specific types of change more than others. Most informants took this opportunity and the content of their comments was surprisingly similar from one informant to the other. Thus 54 informants, i.e. half the sample, mentioned various examples of English influences as the most noticeable signs of change in modern Icelandic. Moreover, most, or 44 of these 54 informants, spoke of these English influences in negative terms and the arguments presented generally revealed clear nationalistic sentiments, where speaking “pure” Icelandic was regarded as an integral part of being Icelandic, and/ or followed the standard Icelandic language policy, which has a long tradition of focusing on the purity and stability of Icelandic. The end result here is thus possibly that change is not necessarily viewed in a negative light, as long as it cannot be traced to English influence.

In light of what was said above about the views on language change

in general not being particularly negative, it is interesting to examine the attitudes which the informants expressed when asked about each of the linguistic features studied here. An overview of these results is given in table 1 below:

Table 1. Overview of attitudes to linguistic features

Feature	Positive (nr (%))	Neutral (nr (%))	Negative (nr (%))	Total
'Dative sickness'	4 (3.7%)	30 (27.8%)	74 (68.5%)	108 (100%)
'Genitive avoidance'	0 (0%)	46 (42.6%)	62 (57.4%)	108 (100%)
Other case inflections	0 (0%)	23 (21.3%)	85 (78.7%)	108 (100%)
'New passive'	0 (0%)	21 (19.4%)	87 (80.6%)	108 (100%)
'Am-to-frenzy'	5 (4.6%)	49 (45.4%)	54 (50%)	108 (100%)

The table reveals a certain contrast. While the informants appeared not to view unspecified changes in an overly negative light, this view changed when this was broken down and they were asked about their views as regards separate signs of change. Then a clear trend for negative views emerged, which reached its peak when 'new passive' constructions were discussed. Note also that with few exceptions, such as a clear age-grading in the attitudes towards the 'am-to-frenzy', where younger informants were more positive than younger ones, the generally negative attitudes towards the non-standard features were shared by the different communities, age groups, educational/occupational groups, types of social networks and both genders.

A possible exception to the trend for negative views can be found in the attitudes towards the 'am-to-frenzy', as here only 50% of the informants expressed negative views. This is probably explained by the fact that this is the newest of the features included and, at least at the time the study was conducted, it had yet to become stigmatized. Note also that while a considerable proportion (17.6%) of the sample saw change in general as positive, no informants had anything positive to say about three of the five examined features. Interestingly however, the two features, i.e. 'dative sickness' and the 'am-to-frenzy', that do spark occasional positive comments are probably the best known and best established features as well as the newest ones. This makes it tempting to speculate that non-standard features, despite being generally treated with suspicion, can be regarded with at least some degree of positivity on the one hand when they have reached a certain level of embedding in the

consciousness of the language community and, on the other, before they can be said to have become at all embedded in the sense that stigmatization has not yet arisen, and they have yet to be dealt with to any extent by the available language cultivation institutions.

What may be most interesting, however, with regards to the informants' attitudes is how they are connected to their language use. This was examined, on the basis of the spoken data, for each of the linguistic features included in the study. As to 'dative sickness', 57 speakers used accusative verbs (i.e. verbs with which 'dative sickness' can occur), and 13 of these produced examples of 'dative sickness', whilst the remaining 44 used only the standard accusative case for the subjects in question. When these two groups were compared, a clear difference emerged. Only four, or 30.8%, of the 13 speakers who produced examples of 'dative sickness' were negative towards this feature, while the remaining nine, or 69.2% were neutral. However, in the group of 44 where no signs of 'dative sickness' were found, 33, or 75%, were negative towards it, while nine, or 20.5% were neutral and two, or 4.5%, were positive. This means that speakers who are negative towards 'dative sickness' are significantly less likely ($\chi^2 = 8.63, p = 0.05$) to produce examples of this feature than are those speakers who hold a more positive stance towards it.

With one possible exception, the pattern found for 'dative sickness' was repeated for all the other features, even though the difference did not reach the level of statistical significance on all occasions.⁴ The possible exception mentioned concerns 'genitive avoidance', where the low number of clear examples of the feature in question prevented any meaningful comparison of the above kind from being made. Furthermore, the attitudes to change in general of all 51 speakers who, in their spoken language, produced one or more examples of one or more of the non-standard forms in question were compared to the corresponding attitudes of the remaining 57 speakers who produced no relevant non-standard forms. Here again, the same tendency as before emerged, i.e. that speakers who are negative towards change are less likely than others to use

⁴ It should be mentioned that as regards the feature called 'other case inflections', the attitudes of users of non-standard forms of kinship terms (see section 4.3) were compared to the attitudes of speakers who only produced standard examples of these terms. In the case of the 'am-to-frenzy', the attitudes of speakers producing examples of this feature were compared to the attitudes of all the remaining speakers, thereby assuming that they all used verb constructions in which this feature could possibly appear.

non-standard forms. It thus seems clear that attitudes can play a part in maintaining linguistic stability.

5. Discussion

The results presented in the previous section indicate that the answer to the question posed in the title of this paper is that Icelandic can still be characterized as a highly stable language, at least in terms of the morphological and syntactical features examined here. Thus ‘genitive avoidance’ appeared only to a negligible degree, if at all and, apart from a clear tendency towards usage of non-standard oblique case forms of two highly limited groups of words, i.e. the kinship terms and women’s names discussed above, the inflectional case system as a whole shows no signs of instability. Similarly, ‘new passive’ appears not to have become established in the language, although there are some signs that this might be a change in its initial stages as constructions of this kind are used more frequently by teenagers than adult and senior speakers and these are as yet found almost exclusively in spoken language. As regards the ‘am-to-frenzy’, the results are somewhat less conclusive, but as yet there is nothing to indicate that this potential change has gone beyond its initial stages, not least as no signs of it were found in the written data. Finally, even though ‘dative sickness’ appears to have become relatively well established in Icelandic, at least in its spoken language, it does not appear to be gaining further ground as it occurs equally frequently in all the three age groups included in the study.

A clear picture of stability thus emerges in the linguistic data and it seems equally clear that this stability can to no small degree be traced to the linguistic attitudes held by the informants. As seen in the previous section, they were generally quite negative towards the examined features and this conservative standpoint seems to translate into a high degree of stability as the data shows that speakers who are negative towards change are less likely than speakers holding a more lenient view to use non-standard forms. The high degree of conformity in the informers’ views also indicates that in this respect Icelanders can be regarded as a single speech community in Labov’s (1972) terms, i.e. as a group of speakers who share attitudes and values on language forms and language use.

The question remains, however, where these attitudes come from. In the search for an answer we can perhaps look back to the previous section where it was mentioned that when the informants were asked to elaborate on their views and indicate whether they saw any particular signs of change, they frequently identified English influences as the main threat. These English influences were predominantly negatively regarded and the informants' arguments for their standpoint ran more or less along the traditional nationalistic and language policy line found in Iceland. A quick look at the role of nationalism and language policy in maintaining the stability of Icelandic might thus be in place.

From the comments made by the informants it seems clear that the Icelandic language policy, with its strong emphasis on stability and purism, is generally accepted amongst the Icelandic nation, even though, at the time the study was conducted, it had not become official in any strict sense. The reasons for this general acceptance can probably be traced to a number of factors. One of these is that language planning has to a large extent been incorporated into the Icelandic educational system, not least through a report from 1986, written by an officially appointed committee, which presented suggestions on language cultivation and the teaching of pronunciation in elementary schools (Kristmundsson, Jónsson, Þráinsson & Gíslason, 1986). In doing so it largely reiterated the traditional core values of Icelandic language planning, i.e. preservation and reinforcement. Furthermore, case inflections are by tradition heavily emphasised in the teaching of Icelandic and teaching materials tend to make a special mention of 'dative sickness' where the stance towards it is clearly negative. Preserving the stability of Icelandic is, in other words, at least indirectly a prime concern in the teaching of Icelandic in schools. In fact, one can even argue that it was a requirement for educational advancement. Between 1977 and 2009 all Icelandic school pupils sat the so-called "samræmd próf", i.e. national standardized exams, towards the end of their tenth and final year of elementary school. Icelandic is one of the subjects in which the pupils were examined and in the grammar part of the exams, questions pertaining to case inflections, verb conjugation, parts of speech, and even 'dative sickness' abound, and differentiating between standard and non-standard forms is often a necessary part of providing the correct answer. Thus it becomes a means of academic progress, as the results from these exams were used by Icelandic high schools to determine which students to accept. Therefore, Icelandic schools appears to have directly transmitted the Icelandic language

policy to Icelandic school pupils over the last few decades and it seems to have become firmly rooted in them.

The lively and ongoing public debate on linguistic matters in Iceland probably also plays its part in transmitting the Icelandic language policy to the general public. Apart from a few dissidents, the tone in this debate runs along the traditional lines of the language policy and even though the participants in it are mainly academics and what can be termed the Icelandic cultural *élite* rather than the general public, the results of this study indicate that the debate is followed and accepted by a large portion of the general public. That is to say, many of the arguments heard in the public debate were repeated more or less verbatim in the responses of my informants.

As for the reasons for the Icelandic language policy being so widely accepted by the general public, it seems likely that this can to a large extent be traced to the fact that the language standard, formed as a part of the fight for Iceland's independence in the 19th century, was in many ways based on the language of the common people. Thus, the population is unlikely to have perceived the standard as superimposed as, broadly speaking, it simply mirrored their vernacular. This will have had the effect of there being only minor differences between the overt, or official, and covert, or public, language policy (cf. Schiffman, 1996), at the same time as overt and covert prestige (Milroy & Milroy, 1999) will have pointed more or less in the same direction. Since this initial acceptance of the language policy, it appears to have become more or less self-perpetuating due in no small measure to the effects of a strong linguistic nationalism, which has yet to show any clear signs of weakening, and the aforementioned incorporation of the policy's values into the educational system.

To turn, finally, to why nationalistic sentiments appear to be linked to the stability of Icelandic, the explanatory starting point is probably that for centuries Icelanders had, and to a large extent still have, precious little besides the Icelandic language on which to build their national identity. As hinted at above, the Icelandic language became, as it were, a national symbol on which the demands for independence were built in the mid-19th century. This was not least due to the language's function as a symbol of Iceland's original independence and literary golden age, but in this respect there was little else to be used; Iceland could not pride itself on any great war victories or heroes, and factors such as religion and ethnicity did not set them in any tangible way apart from neighbour-

ing nations. The role played by the language in defining the nation appears not to have waned to any extent in recent years and it seems clear from the present data that speaking Icelandic – according to the standard which, as seen above, is in essence the property of the Icelandic language community as a whole – largely equals being Icelandic in the minds of the general public. In this context it may also be worthwhile to consider the effects of globalization, which can, according to Oakes (2001, p. 149), serve to “emphasise differences and provoke ethnonational reactions to increased external pressures” by bringing disparate cultures into proximity. While Iceland was a highly isolated country for centuries this is no longer the case, as can be seen by a quick glance at most of its cultural and economic spheres, and therefore preserving the language in as intact a state as possible may be regarded as one of the few remaining ways in which to maintain some sense of separateness. This is not least indicated by the strong resistance to English influence evident in the results of this study.

The end result of this study should be quite clear by now: Icelandic can still be viewed as a highly stable language and this stability can to a large extent be traced to conservative language attitudes amongst the general public who appear to greatly value the purity and stability of Icelandic. These attitudes seem in turn to stem primarily from a conservative language policy, which is generally accepted amongst the general public, and the standing of the Icelandic language as a national symbol.

Bibliography

- Bernódusson, H. (1982). *Ópersónulegar setningar*. Cand.mag.-thesis, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (1997). *The Rise and Fall of Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eypórsson, Þ. (2000). Fall á fallanda fæti? Um breytingar á frumlagsfalli í íslensku. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 22, 185–204.
- Friðjónsson, J. G. (2003, July 14th & 16th). Íslenskt mál. *Morgunblaðið*.
- Friðriksson, F. (2008). *Language change vs. stability in conservative language communities: A case study of Icelandic*. Doctoral thesis, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden.
- Gíslason, B. (2003). Af þágufallssýki 11 ára barna. *Skíma* 8(1), 17–20.
- Halldórsson, H. (1982). Um méranir: Drög að samtímalegri og sögulegri athugun. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 4, 159–189.

- Jónsson, J. G. & Eypórsson, Þ. (2003). Breytingar á frumlagsfalli í íslensku. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 25, 7–40.
- Kjartansson, H. S. (1979). Eignarfallsflótti. Uppástunga um nýja málvillu. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 1, 88–95.
- Kjartansson, H. S. (1999). Orð í belg um eignarfallsflóttu. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 21, 151–160.
- Kristmundsson, G. B., Jónsson, B., Þráinsson, H. & Gíslason, I. (1986). *Álitsgerð um málvöndun og framburðarkennslu í grunnskólum. Samin af nefnd á vegum menntamálaráðherra 1985–1986*. Reykjavík: Kennaraháskóli Íslands.
- Labov, W. (1970). The study of language in its social context. *Studium Generale* 23, 30–87.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. L. (1989). Social network integration and language change in a rural alpine village. *Language in Society* 18, 213–234.
- Maling, J. & Sigurjónsdóttir, S. (1997). The “New Passive” in Icelandic. In E. Hughes, M. Hughes & A. Greenhill (eds.), *Proceedings of The 21st Boston University Conference on Language Development* (pp. 378–389). Somerville: Cascadilla Press.
- Milroy, J. & Milroy, L. (1985). Linguistic change, social network and speaker innovation. *Journal of Linguistics* 21, 339–384.
- Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and Social Networks*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Milroy, L. & Milroy, J. (1999). *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Nivre, J. (1999). *Modifierad standardortografi (MSO6)* (Version 6). Institutionen för lingvistik, Göteborgs universitet.
- Oakes, L. (2001). *Language and National Identity. Comparing France and Sweden*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Schiffman, H. F. (1996). *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Sigurjónsdóttir, S. & Maling, J. (2001). Það var hrint mér á leiðinni í skólann: Þolmynd eða ekki þolmynd? *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 23, 123–180.
- Sigurjónsdóttir, S. & Maling, J. (2002). Hin svokallaða “nýja þolmynd” í íslensku. *Skíma* 25(1), 5–11.
- Svavarsdóttir, Á. (1982). “Þágufallssýki”: Breytingar á fallnotkun í frumlagsseti ópersónulegra sagna. *Íslenskt mál og almenn málfræði* 4, 19–62.
- Svavarsdóttir, Á. (1994). Enn um eignarfallsflóttu. *Jónína hans Jóns G. Friðjónssonar fimmtugs* (pp. 7–13). Reykjavík.
- Trudgill, P. (1989). Contact and isolation in linguistic change. In L. E. Breivik & E. H. Jahr (eds.), *Language Change: Contributions to the Study of its Causes* (pp. 3–21). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Trudgill, P. (1992) Dialect typology and social structure. In E. H. Jahr (ed.), *Language Contact: Theoretical and Empirical Studies* (pp. 195–211). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Trudgill, P. (1996). Dialect Typology: Isolation, Social Network and Phonological Structure. In G. Guy, C. Feagin, D. Schiffman & J. Baugh (eds.), *Towards*

- a Social Science of Language. Papers in honor of William Labov. Volume 1. Variation and Change in Language and Society* (pp. 227–237). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Trudgill, P. (2002). Linguistic and Social Typology. In J. K. Chambers, P. Trudgill & N. Schilling-Estes (eds.), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (pp. 707–728). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wolfram, W. & Fasold, R. W. (1974). Field Methods in the Study of Social Dialects. In W. Wolfram & R. W. Fasold (eds.), *The Study of Social Dialects in American English* (pp. 36–72). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Wolfson, N. (1976). Speech Events and Natural Speech. Some Implications for Sociolinguistic Methodology. *Language in Society* 5(2), 189–209.

Summary

Icelandic is regarded by many as a prime example of a stable language which has remained relatively unchanged since its earliest stages. Claims have been made, however, that Icelandic is currently changing more quickly and extensively than before. This article relates the results of a study which examined the extent to which a number of alleged changes have become established in modern Icelandic, based primarily on recordings of informal group conversations amongst a total of 108 informants chosen on the basis of a set of social criteria. The results indicate that Icelandic can still be characterized as a stable language, as examples of the alleged changes appeared only infrequently in the data and the little variation found is generally not indicative of change in progress. There are also clear indications that the maintained high level of stability can be explained by the generally negative attitudes found amongst the informants towards the use of non-standard language. These attitudes do in turn seem to be strongly linked to factors such as the strong linguistic nationalism found in Iceland and a language policy aimed at stability.

Keywords: Language stability; attitudes to language; language policy; linguistic nationalism; Icelandic.

Finnur Friðriksson
Faculty of Education
University of Akureyri
Sólborg, Norðurlóð 2
IS-600 Akureyri, Iceland
finnurf@unak.is

The Icelandic calendar

SVANTE JANSON

1. Introduction

Iceland has a unique calendar which was used as the civil calendar by the general population from the 10th to the 18th century, and occasionally later; it is still included in the Icelandic Almanac [2]. The purpose of this paper is to give a detailed description (in English) of this calendar and its historical development, as well as some mathematical formulas used in calculating the calendar.

The Icelandic calendar ordinarily has a year of 364 days, i.e. exactly 52 weeks; some years are leap years with a *leap week* (Icel. *sumarauki* = ‘summer increase’), making the leap year 371 days = 53 weeks.¹ Every year is thus a whole number of weeks, and consequently every year begins on the same day of the week. The year is divided into 12 months, listed in Table 1.² Each month has 30 days, and there are 4 extra days (*aukanætur*), or in leap years 11 extra days (*aukanætur* + *sumarauki*), between the third and fourth summer months. Hence each month begins on the same day of the week (given in Table 1) every year. (See Section 7.1 for a different placement of the leap week for some years until 1928, and Section 7.2 for an alternative, but probably incorrect, description in some references.)

The leap weeks have been, since the 12th century, inserted whenever necessary for the beginnings of the months to fall in the periods given in Table 1 in the Julian (before 1700) or Gregorian (after 1700) calendar,

I thank Elísabet Andrésdóttir, Jesper Blid, Þorsteinn Sæmundsson, Þorsteinn Vilhjálmsson, Henrik Williams and two anonymous referees for their comments and other help.

¹ In this paper we use the English term “leap year” when referring to the Icelandic calendar, as well as the term “leap week”. Note, however, that in Icelandic literature, “leap year” (*hlaupár*) always means a leap year in the Julian or Gregorian calendar.

² In this paper we use old forms such as *Gói* when discussing medieval times and modern forms such as *Góa* for modern times.

see further Section 3 for the history and Sections 4–6 for calculations. (Note that the periods are seven days for some months and eight days for others, see Section 4.1.) Further formulas and comments are given in Appendices B–E.

The year is divided into two halves (semesters or seasons, Icel. *misseri*): summer (*sumar*) and winter (*vetur*). This was originally a fundamental division of the year, marked by the *First Day of Summer* (*sumardagurinn fyrsti*, always a Thursday) and the *First Day of Winter* (*fyrsti vetrardagur*, now always a Saturday, but earlier sometimes a Friday, see Section 2.1); months and weeks were counted from the beginning of the *misseri*, or backwards from their end. In the present paper, the months in Table 1 are therefore numbered as S1–S6 (summer months) and W1–W6 (winter months). Note that summer lasts 184 or 191 days and winter lasts 180. Thus summer is slightly longer, and none of the *misseri* is a whole number of weeks.³

There is no special numbering of the Icelandic years.

Table 1: The Icelandic months. See also Table for alternative names.

	Old Icelandic	Modern Icelandic	begins	Julian	Gregorian
S1	?	Harpa	Thursday	9–15 April	19–25 April
S2	?	Skerpla	Saturday	9–15 May	19–25 May
S3	?	Sólmánuður	Monday	8–14 June	18–24 June
S4	(Miðsumar)?	Heyannir	Sunday	13–20 July	23–30 July
S5	Tvímánuður	Tvímánuður	Tuesday	12–19 August	22–29 August
S6	?	Haustmánuður	Thursday	11–18 September	21–28 September
W1	Gormánuður	Gormánuður	Saturday	11–18 October	21–28 October
W2	Ýlir	Ýlir	Monday	10–17 November	20–27 November
W3	Jólmánuður	Mörsugur	Wednesday	10–17 December	20–27 December
W4	Þorri	Þorri	Friday	9–16 January	19–26 January
W5	Gói	Góa	Sunday	8–15 February	18–25 February
W6	Einmánuður	Einmánuður	Tuesday	10–16 March	20–26 March

³ As noted by Beckman [5, Tab. VIII], the fact that the summer *misseri* is longer than the winter is in accordance with the astronomical fact that the summer half-year between the equinoxes is longer than the winter half-year (about 186 vs. 179 days). However, there is no evidence that this was known in Iceland in the 12th century (or earlier). On the contrary, a 12th-century text attributed to Stjörnu-Oddi (“Star-Oddi”) Helgason seems to show that he assumed that the solstices and equinoxes were equally spaced [35]. Beckman [5, Tab. VIII] further notes that in the Middle Ages, the equinoxes were close to the beginnings of W6 and S6. Again this seems to be a coincidence, since as far as I am aware, there are no Old Icelandic texts or comments mentioning (or hinting at) any connection.

Table 2: Further Old Icelandic month names, many of them probably never used in practice.

	Snorri's <i>Edda</i> [32]	<i>Bókarbót</i> [1, p. 78]	Modern names
S1	Gaukmánuður, Sáðtíð		Harpa
S2	Eggtíð, Stekktíð		Skerpla
S3	Sólmánuður, Selmánuður		Sólmánuður
S4	Heyannir		Heyannir
S5	Kornskurðarmánuður	Tvímánuður	Tvímánuður
S6	Haustmánuður		Haustmánuður
W1	Gormánuður	Gormánuður	Gormánuður
W2	Frermánuður	Ýlir	Ýlir
W3	Hrútmánuður	Morsugr	Morsugur
W4	Þorri	Þorri	Þorri
W5	Gói	Gói	Góa
W6	Einmánuður	Einmánuður	Einmánuður

2. Subdivisions of the year

2.1 Misseri (semesters)

As stated above, the year is divided into two *misseri*: summer and winter.⁴ The importance of the *misseri* is shown by the fact that the Icelandic calendar is called *misseristal* in Icelandic. A further example of the importance of the *misseri* is that *Rím I* [1, pp. 3–64] (written in the late 12th century [5, p. 13–14]) begins a description of the Icelandic year with: “This is *misseri* reckoning, that 2 *misseri* are called a year, that is winter and summer”,⁵ and this is repeated in the later *Rím II* [1, pp. 83–178] (13th century [1, p. XCVIII]) as: “Two *misseri* are called a year, that is winter and summer”⁶; furthermore, *Íslendingabók* [3, 19] (a brief Icelandic history written by Ari hinn fróði, “Ari the Wise”, c. 1125) begins the story of the leap weeks with: “in two *misseri* 364 days”⁷ (although “year” is also used later in the story). Also, the standard way of expressing the ages of people or other periods of years was by using “winters” [17, p. 58 §229]. (Although sometimes, “summers” was used instead; for ex-

⁴ Spring and autumn existed as seasons, but they did not have any function in the calendar. They were not precisely defined, although Snorri attempts exact definitions in *Edda* [32, Skáldskaparmál 79, p. 179], see [5, p. 35] and [31, p. 307].

⁵ Það er misseris tal, ath ii missere heiter ár, þat er vetr ok sumar [1, p. 22 §26].

⁶ Tváv misseri heita ár, þat er vetr ok svmar [1, p. 83 §2].

⁷ itveim misserom fíora daga ens fíorþa hundraps [3, Ch. IV].

ample, [3] has several examples such as “130 winters” and “20 summers”.)

I have not found any clear evidence of whether the summer or winter *misseri* comes first in a year. (I do not even know if the question would have made sense to a medieval Icelander, since the years were not numbered. No day was celebrated as New Year [9, pp. 14, 83].) Usage may have varied, and both winter+summer and summer+winter may have been considered as a year.⁸ In the quotes above from *Rím I* and *Rím II* [1], winter is mentioned before summer. On the other hand, the following discussions of the year and its various holidays and other important dates in *Rím I* and *Rím II* start with the beginning of summer and continue until the end of winter. For this reason, I have (somewhat arbitrarily) chosen to define the year as starting with the summer half in this paper.⁹

Friday or Saturday?

While there is agreement that summer begins on a Thursday, there are two different traditions for the beginning of winter: Friday or Saturday. The learned medieval literature (for example the computistic texts in [1] and the laws in *Grágás* [18]) clearly specifies Saturday, see for example *Bókarbót*: “Winter and Gormánuðr come on a Saturday”¹⁰ and the quote from *Grágás* in Section 2.3 (footnote 18). This also follows if there are six months with $6 \cdot 30 + 4$ (or $6 \cdot 30 + 11$) days in the summer, and if there are six months of 30 days each in the winter. However, winter was reckoned from a Friday (one day before the beginning of winter as shown in Table 1) from the 16th century until the Icelandic Almanac began to be published in 1837, when the Saturday reckoning was revived, see [10], [31, p. 320 and p. 330], [5, p. 35]. (In particular, see [31, p. 320

⁸ Sæmundsson [30] mentions a third possibility that has been discussed, namely that the year began at Midsummer; *Rím II* discusses the months in this order at one place [1, pp. 138–139 §113], and this would put the extra days and the leap week at a natural place at the end of the year.

⁹ Today, when the First Day of Summer is celebrated as a public holiday in Iceland, but the First Day of Winter is not, it also seems natural to start with the summer. Björnsson [9] also regards the First Day of Summer as the beginning of the year. On the other hand, Schroeter [31, p. 308] finds it probable that summer came last, and Ginzel [17, p. 58] claims that the year began with winter. Moreover, the law from 1700 discussed in Section 3.4 primarily discusses the First Day of Winter; I do not know whether this indicates that it was at that time regarded as more important than the First Day of Summer.

¹⁰ Vetr oc gormanuðr kemr laugar dag [1, p. 78].

n. 3] for an account by Briem of popular opposition to the change to Saturday.) For example, the law made in 1700 [23, p. 1376] concerning the change to the Gregorian calendar explicitly reckons winter from a Friday, see Section 3.4.

The Friday beginning is first documented in 1508, and 16th-century use seems mixed [39]: A later 16th-century document says that winter begins on a Saturday except at *rímspillir* (see Section 4.1) when it begins on a Friday (this rule keeps the beginning of winter to the week 11–17 October, see Tables 1 and 5). Another document, from 1589, says that the farmers reckoned the winter from a Friday, but that the correct reckoning according to books is from a Saturday.

Björnsson [10] and Beckman [1] believe that Friday was the original day; Beckman [1, p. LXXII] suggests that it was moved to Saturday as part of a 12th-century calendar reform (to conform with 30 day months), but that it took some 700 years for this change to gain acceptance. However, Þorkelsson [39, pp. 59–63] finds no evidence of this and argues that the Friday reckoning was introduced around 1500; see also [22, Første vinterdag, sommerdag] where it is suggested that the change to Friday was due to a mistake.

2.2 Weeks

The standard way of reckoning time was by using weeks (and the dominance of the week is reflected in the construction of the calendar with a whole number of weeks every year). Weeks were used both to measure time intervals, and to specify dates by giving the week and day of the week. There are many examples in both the literature (for example, the Icelandic Sagas) and the medieval laws of *Grágás* [18] (written down c. 1250), as well as in later documents. Some medieval examples can be seen in Appendix D; further examples (from *Grágás*) are given by Björnsson [10, pp. 277–279] (although some of his conclusions seem to be unfounded, see Beckman [1, p. LXXIII–LXXIV]). See also Schroeter [31, pp. 327–331].

There is no single fixed day beginning the weeks. One method of calculation is to number the weeks in each *misseri* from the beginning of the *misseri*, with the first week starting on the first day of the *misseri*. Thus summer weeks begin on Thursdays, and are numbered from 1 to 26 (or 27 in leap years, and ignoring the last two days, which are called *veturnætur*), and winter weeks begin on Saturdays (or Fridays, see Sec-

tion 2.1) and are numbered from 1 to 26, with the last week incomplete. This is the modern method, as given in the Icelandic Almanac [2].

In earlier days, this method was used for the first half of each *misseri*. In the second half, that is after Midsummer or Midwinter, weeks were counted backwards from the end of the *misseri*, or the number of remaining weeks was given. (This keeps the numbers small, at most 13 or possibly 14.) An example is given in the rule on Ember days in Appendix D. According to Schroeter [31, p. 328], this was a firm rule in the early days. However, there were also other possibilities for counting. Weeks were sometimes counted from Midsummer or Midwinter, or from another day. Þorkelsson [39, p. 52] states that weeks in the second half of the winter, except the last three, were numbered using the months Þorri and Góí. (An example can be seen in the rule on Candlemas in Appendix D.)^{11 12}

There are also examples of reckoning weeks from Sundays, following the Christian Church (and in accordance with the names of the days of the week, see below); see for example the rules on Christmas, Candlemas and the First Day of Summer in Appendix D. In fact, *Rím II* says: “Sunday is first in the week in day reckoning and in *misseri* reckoning [the Icelandic calendar], but various days in month reckoning.”¹³ However this is, as seen above, usually not the rule for weeks reckoned with the Icelandic calendar.

¹¹ I do not know from which day of the week these weeks were reckoned; a possibility is that weeks could start on different days and that the rule stated above (and in for example [11, p. 23] and [28]) that summer weeks begin on Thursdays and winter weeks begin on Saturdays is valid only for weeks counted from the beginning of the *misseri*, and that conversely winter weeks counted backwards from the First Day of Summer begin on a Thursday and summer weeks counted backwards from the First Day of Winter begin on a Saturday. But my research has been incomplete and I have not found any specific reference or evidence for this.

¹² Schroeter [31, p. 331] also cites (with reference to *Vigfússon: Corpus Poeticum Boreale*) a version which starts at Christmas, reckoning with the first and second weeks of Þorri beginning on Fridays (that is 1–7 Þorri and 8–14 Þorri) but the third and fourth weeks of Þorri beginning on Saturdays, leaving *miðþorri* (15 Þorri) and *þorrapræll* (30 Þorri) outside the week reckoning; then four weeks of Góí are reckoned similarly; then weeks in Einmánuður, without exceptions for the middle and last days; then summer weeks numbered 1–26 (or 27); then nine winter weeks until Christmas. I cannot say whether this complicated method was really ever used in reality. If so, I suspect that it should be regarded as a combination showing that different methods coexisted (possibly with different versions dominating in different parts of the year), rather than a fixed rule.

¹³ *Drottins dagr er fystur í viku at daga tali ok misseris tali, en ymser dagar at manadar tali* [1, p. 128 §83].

The Icelandic names of the days of the week (used for both the Icelandic calendar and for the Julian and Gregorian) are given in Table 3.¹⁴ Note that in modern Icelandic, Tuesday and Thursday are simply numbered (“Third day” and “Fifth day”, counting in the biblical way with Sunday the first day of the week); the original names of Germanic gods that are used for Tuesday–Friday in other Scandinavian languages, as well as in English, were opposed on religious grounds by bishop Jón Ögmundsson of Hólar (1052–1121; bishop from 1106),¹⁵ who was successful in replacing them by neutral or Christian (Icel. *föstudagur* = “Fast-day”) names.¹⁶ He also introduced *drottinsdagur* (“The Lord’s day”) for Sunday and *annardagur* (“Second day”) for Monday; but these later disappeared again and the old names returned to favour.¹⁷

Table 3: Icelandic names for days of the week.

– c. 1200	Modern Icelandic	English
sunnudagr	sunnudagur	Sunday
mánadagr	mánudagur	Monday
týsdagr	þriðjudagur	Tuesday
óðinsdagr	miðvikudagur	Wednesday
þórsdagr	fimmtudagur	Thursday
frjádagr	föstudagur	Friday
laugardagr	laugardagur	Saturday
or þváttdagr		

2.3 Months

The months were originally of very little importance; as stated above, the standard way of reckoning time was by using weeks. The months are clearly defined (without names) in *Grágás* [18]: “The first day of summer is to be a Thursday; from then three months of 30 nights and 4 nights in addition are to be counted to Midsummer. From Midsummer there are

¹⁴ Old names after [31, pp. 307, 319–320]; see also [1, Register I].

¹⁵ Bishop Jón was declared a saint by the Althingi in 1200 [9]. Perhaps this was due mainly to other deeds.

¹⁶ *Rím I* and *Rím II* use the new names almost exclusively. Exceptions are [1, pp. 84 §6] (*frjádagr*) and the final paragraphs of *Rím II* [1, pp. 175–178 §§181–182] (where the old names are used in predictions of the next year’s weather based on the day of the week of Christmas Day). *Rím I* [1, p. 63 §79] also gives the connection between days of the week (using the new names) and the Germanic and Latin gods and planets.

¹⁷ *Drottinsdagur* and *annardagur* are used in, for example, *Rím I*, *Bókarbót* and (*drottinsdagur* only) *Rím II*, as can be seen in several of the quotes in this paper, for example in footnotes 13, 57 and 67.

to be 3 months of 30 nights to winter. The first day of winter is to be a Saturday and from then there shall be 6 months of 30 nights to summer.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, *Grágás* usually reckons in weeks. Similarly, *Rím I* [1, pp. 24–25 §§28–30] mentions Þorri and Góí, but generally uses weeks to describe various important days through the year. Beckman [5, p. 34] knows of only a single example in the Old Icelandic literature (apart from texts on time-reckoning) where a date is given using an Icelandic month: “That happened in the last day of Góí, then there were three weeks to Easter”¹⁹ in the *Sturlunga Saga* (but only in a couple of the existing manuscripts). Otherwise, when months are used at all, they refer to a period of time, and it is often not even clear whether they refer to a calendar month of 30 days or another period, perhaps not precisely defined. The months are mentioned mainly in learned discussions, and it has been suggested that the 30-day months were originally learned constructions lacking popular use, see Björnsson [10] and Beckman [5]; however, Þorkelsson [39] argues that there would be no reason to construct them unless the months were already in use, and views them as relics of older lunar months, see Section 3.1. See further Beckman [5] and Þorkelsson [39].

In fact, the months are used so little in the preserved medieval texts that even the original names of many of them are not known. Sometimes the months are numbered instead, and it is perhaps not clear that all even had names originally. The twelfth-century *Bókarbót* [1, p. 78] lists for all twelve months the days of the week they begin with (in accordance with Table 1), but most of the summer months are numbered and not named. The names that are given in *Bókarbót* are shown in Table 2; they agree with the names in Table 1 except for W3, and also with the modern names. A complete list of month names (sometimes with alternatives) is given by Snorri Sturluson in his *Edda* [32, *Skáldskaparmál* 79, p. 179], written c. 1220. These names too are given in Table 2, but it is doubtful whether they were actually used by the general population, see Beckman [5, p. 32].

The old names of the months in Table 1 are given after Beckman [1,

¹⁸ EN fimti dagr vikv scal vera fyrstr i svmri. þaþan scal telia .iiij. manvðr .xxx. náttu. oc nætr .iiij. til mið sumars. EN fra miþiv svmri scal .iiij. manvþr .xxx. natta til vetrar. Lavgar dagr scal fyrstr vera i vetri. enn þaþan fra scolo vera .vi. manvðr .xxx. natta til sumars. [18, §19 p. 37].

¹⁹ þat var tíðinda enn síðasta dag í góí, þá váru þriár vikur til páscha [5, p. 34].

5], who finds them “comparatively well documented”, with the addition of Gormánuður, which is also well documented (for example in *Bókarbót*) although omitted by Beckman for unknown reasons. Also, Þorkelsson [39] believes that the seven names given in Table 1 (excluding Miðsumar) are original; he also finds it possible that Harpa and Skerpla, documented from c. 1600, are old names. See also [22, Månadsnamn]. However, Beckman [1, p. CLXXXVI] and [5] gives Miðsumar for S4, which I have put in parentheses; I am not convinced that Miðsumar really meant a calendar month rather than simply a period of one or several days in the middle of summer. (It may have been used for both as Beckman [1, Index p. 275] suggests. See also [28, miðsumar].) In the quote from *Grágás* [18, §19] above, it seems to stand for a single day. *Rím I* and *Rím II* [1, pp. 22 §26 and 83–84 §3] say: “From it [First Day of Summer] there should be 13 weeks and 3 days to Midsummer (*Miðsumar*), and a Sunday is the first in Midsummer”,²⁰ which indicates a longer period, although not necessarily a month; however *Rím II* says somewhat later: “From Midsummer there are 12 Sundays to winter”²¹ which again seems to indicate a single day, and still later: “between Sanctorum in Selio [8 July] and Sunday at Midsummer”,²² which could perhaps be interpreted either way. Compare *miður vetur* (Midwinter) which is the first day in the 4th winter month Þorri, but according to Beckman [1, Index p. 275] also could mean the whole month; again I am not convinced. Some examples: *Rím I* says “Midwinter comes three days after the Octave of Epiphany, and is a Friday first in Þorri”²³ (when there is *rím-spillir*, see below) which could be interpreted either way, and *Rím II* says “Þorri begins at Midwinter”,²⁴ which seems to mean a single day.

Only the names of the last three winter months, and in particular Þorri and Góí, seem to have been used frequently. Examples from *Rím I* and *Rím II* with Þorri were just given. *Rím II* names Þorri, Góí and Einmánuður but no other months in a description of the year [1, p. 139 §116], and the same three, Tvímánuður and Jólmanuður in another list of nine of the months [1, pp. 168–170 §§160–162]. *Grágás* mentions Einmánuður:

²⁰ Þaðan skulo lida XIII vikur ogh III netr til miðsumars, ok er drottins dagur fyrstr ath midiu sumre. [1, p. 22 §26].

²¹ Fra midiu sumri ero XII drottins dagar til vetrar [1, p. 84 §5].

²² i millum Seliu mana mesu ok drottins dags at midiu sumri [1, p. 168 §160].

²³ Miðr vetur kemr efter enn atta dagh fra hinum þrettanda þrimur nottum, ok er faustu dagur fyrstur i þorra. [1, p. 24 §28].

²⁴ Þora manudr kemur i midian vetur [1, p. 139 §116].

“If a chieftain dies before Einmánuðr ... If he dies after Einmánuðr ...”.²⁵ Þorri and Góí appear prominently in the discussions of the beginning of Lent in *Rím I* [1, pp. 25–28 §§30–33] and *Rím II* [1, pp. 139–140 §§116–118], and in the 12th-century Easter table [1, pp. 69–70], where the beginning of Lent each year is given by giving the week of Þorri or Góí; see further Appendix C.1.²⁶ The popularity of the names Þorri and Góí is also shown by *Orkneyinga Saga* [26] (written c. 1200), which begins with a story about a mythical king Þorri, who held a sacrificial feast every Midwinter, and his daughter Góí, for whom he held a feast a month later; according to the story, the months got their names from these. See Beckman [5, pp. 32–34] for more details, including a few examples (Þorri, Góí, Einmánuðr, Tvímánuðr) from the Icelandic Sagas. (However, Beckman [5] mistakes the names of the last three summer months in *Edda* [32].)

Dating by giving the Icelandic month and day, for example 1 Harpa, has never been used in Iceland. (This is claimed very strongly in Björns-son [10, p. 276] and the comment by Briem [10, p. 303].) In the Icelandic Almanac (published from 1837 by the University of Copenhagen) there was until 1922 a column giving the days in this reckoning; this was removed when the almanac began being published in Iceland in 1923 [31, pp. 346–347]. We will nevertheless use this form of dates sometimes in the discussions when we find it convenient and helpful, but the reader should remember that it is not standard usage.

2.4 Further remarks

The day in Iceland in the Middle Ages was reckoned from sunrise during summer and from dawn during winter (when the sun rises late in Iceland) [31, p. 316]. That it begins in the morning is also shown by *Bókarbót*: “Day comes before night throughout the Icelandic calendar”²⁷ and *Grágás*: “Throughout the calendar a day precedes a night”.²⁸ I do not

²⁵ Nv andaz goði fyrir einmanað ... Nv andaz hann eptir einmanað ... [18, §84 p. 142].

²⁶ Lent always begins in Þorri or Góí. Note that only the beginning of Lent, and not for example the date of Easter Day, is given using Icelandic months in the Easter table [1, pp. 69–70]. I do not know whether the use of Þorri and Góí to specify the beginning of Lent is a reason for the more frequent use of these two month names, or whether, conversely, these two months had held a special position since earlier heathen times, and therefore were also used in learned discussions and Easter tables.

²⁷ Dagr kemr fyr en nott allz misseris tals islenzcs [1, p. 78].

²⁸ Dagr scal fyr koma allz misseris tals en nott [18, §19 p. 37].

know when this was replaced by the modern reckoning from midnight. In the medieval texts, periods of several days are often described as ‘nights’ (*nætur*) rather than ‘days’ (*dagur*); this is seen in several of the quotes in the present paper.

A year of exactly 52 weeks with intercalations of a leap week is a rather unique form of calendar, and seems to be an Icelandic invention, but there are some parallels. The Essenes, a Jewish group (sect) in Qumran (and perhaps elsewhere in Palestine) c. 200 BC – c. 70 AD (now famous for the remnants of their library found as the Dead Sea Scrolls) had likewise a calendar of 364 days, with the year always beginning on the same day of the week (a Wednesday in their case). They also had months of 30 days, but a different arrangement with three months followed by one extra day in each quarter, see further Beckwirth [6] and VanderKam [33]. There is no evidence that they used any intercalation at all. (Many intercalation schemes have been proposed by modern researchers, see for example VanderKam [33], but Beckwirth [6] concludes that the Essenes neither used nor wanted them.)

A kind of modern parallel to the Icelandic year is the method of specifying dates (in the standard Gregorian calendar) by day and number of the week, numbering the weeks by 1–52 or 53 from the beginning of the year. This is standardized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) [20], see also Dershowitz and Reingold [12, Chapter 5], and can be interpreted as a year beginning on the Monday closest to 1 January, with weeks beginning on Mondays.²⁹

Calendars with 12 months of 30 days each plus a few (5 or in a leap year 6) extra days have been used by several other people at various times, for example in ancient Egypt from the 3rd millennium BC until several centuries after the Roman conquest, and until today by the Coptic church and in Ethiopia [12, Section 1.5 and Chapter 4]. (A later, European, example is the French revolutionary calendar used 1793–1805.) It seems unlikely that any of these calendars inspired the Icelandic year with months of 30 days, which therefore seems to be an independent Icelandic reinvention.

²⁹ This method of specifying dates is very popular here in Sweden for diaries at for example school and work, although I have never seen the all-number ISO standard of the type 2009-W27-4 used.

3. History

3.1 The beginnings

The Icelandic calendar was probably introduced in connection with the establishment in 930 of the *Althingi* (Icel. *Alþingi*), the yearly national assembly that functioned as parliament and court in the Icelandic Commonwealth; see for example Brate [11, p. 20], Þorkelsson [39] and Vilhjálmsson [35].³⁰ According to Ari hinn fróði's *Íslendingabók* [3, 19], written c. 1125, the Icelandic calendar originally consisted of a year of 364 days (= 52 weeks) without intercalation: "The wisest men in this land had reckoned 364 days in two *misseri*, that is 52 weeks, or 12 months, each of 30 nights, and 4 days in addition. At that time it was, that men noticed by the course of the sun that summer was moving backwards into spring. But no one could tell them that there was one day more in two *misseri* than squared with the number of whole weeks, and that that was the cause."³¹

The year was thus seen to be too short, and on the suggestion of a man called Þorsteinn surtr "black", it was decided to try to add a week every seventh year. This reform happened c. 955–960.³² See further [37]. The central passage about Þorsteinn surtr's calendar reform in *Íslendingabók* [3] (also quoted in [1, pp. 65–66]) is: "he made the motion at the Law Rock that one week should be added every seventh summer, and a trial

³⁰ There are, as far as I know, no documents or any other contemporary evidence of the use of the Icelandic calendar before the 12th century. (There was essentially nothing at all written in Iceland earlier.) From the 12th century, on the other hand, there is, apart from other sources including the account in *Íslendingabók* [3, 19], a detailed Icelandic book *Rím I* [1, pp. 3–64] on time-reckoning. (Sometimes called *Rím begla* [1, p. 3], [5, Note 10].) This seems to be a text-book for priests [1, p. XXIII]. (The Icelandic calendar is only a minor part of it; it also treats the Julian calendar, the determination of Easter and astronomy.) There is also a similar work *Rím II* [1, pp. 83–178] from the 13th century, which repeats much of the material in the same or similar formulations. (Both books are edited in [1], together with some related works. We usually give references to only one of the parallel formulations in *Rím I* and *Rím II*.) *Rím I* and *Rím II* give a detailed description of the final version of the Icelandic calendar, see the next subsection, but do not mention its history or earlier versions.

³¹ (T)hat vas oc þa es ener Spocosto men a landi her hoþfo taliþ itveim misserom fiora daga ens fiorþa hundraþs. þat verþa vicur ii ens setta tegar en monoþr xii. þritogntattar oc dagar iiii. umbfram. þa merço þeir at Solargangi. at sumar et munafi aprt til vars ens en þat cunne eni segia þeim at degi einom vas fleira en heilom vicom gegndi i tveim misserom oc þat olli. [3, Ch. IV].

³² According to [3], which however does not give an exact year for this event. Þorsteinn surtr drowned in 960. See [31, p. 323], [5, p. 26], [39, p. 48].

made how that would answer ... all men were favourably impressed by it, and then it was at once made law".³³ The reform made the average year 365 days, which we know is still too short. Beckman [1, p. VIII] stresses that the reform is described as an experiment, so it would presumably have been modified when it was found to be wanting.

Ari hinn fróði also knew that 365 days were not enough, but his discussion in [3] seems partly confused when he writes: "By right reckoning there are 365 days in every year if it be not leap year; in that case there is one day more, but according to our counting there are 364 days. Now when by our count one week is added to every seventh year, but nothing added by the other count, then seven years will be of equal length by both counts. But if two leap years fall between the years which have to be added to, then the addition must be made to the sixth year."³⁴ This statement by Ari has been much discussed, in particular its end, which seems to describe a modification of Þorsteinn surtr's rule, with intervals of six or seven years between the leap weeks. The same rule is also given, in a slightly different formulation, in the somewhat later *Bókarbót*: "In this reckoning one has to add a week every seventh summer. But if there are two leap years in this period, one should increase the sixth."³⁵

It is difficult to take this rule literally. Intervals of six and seven years can never give the same average length of year as the Julian calendar, and as an improvement of the original rule with seven years intervals, such a rule would be worse than a simpler rule with regular six year intervals. Moreover, the final version of the calendar that we know from for example *Rím I* has intervals of five and six years with 5 leap weeks in 28 years, see Sections 3.2 and 5, in particular Table 5; it is not known if this version was used during Ari's time, but it was used a few decades later (probably by 1140, see footnote 38), and certainly when *Bókarbót* was written.

Most authors believe that the rule is a correct (but perhaps incomplete)

³³ þa leitáþi hann þes ráps at Logbergi at et siaunda hvert sumar scylldi auka vicu oc freista hve þa hlyddi. ... vqcnobo aller men vþ þat vel. oc vas þa þat þegar i Log leidd [3, Ch. IV].

³⁴ At retto tali (ero) i hverio are v. dagar ens fiorþa hunþraþs ef eigi es Hlaup ár. en þa einom fleira. Enn at qro tali verþa iiii. En þa es aycsc at qro tali et sia/nda hvert ár vico en øngo at hinu þa verþa vii. qr saman iamn loþ at hvorotveggia. En ef hlaupqor verþa ii. a miþli þeira es a/ka scal þa þarf a/ca et setta. [3, Ch. IV].

³⁵ I þvissa tali þarf a/ca et sia/nda hvert svmar vicu. En ef hla/par verþa tvæ a þeirri stund, þa scal a/ca it seta. [1, p. 78].

description of the calendar (either the final version or an earlier version), and that “seventh” and “sixth” here should be interpreted in the inclusive sense, that is, as “sixth” and “fifth” (this method of counting is common in Latin, but not in Icelandic), see for example Jónsson [21], Björnsson [10], Þorkelsson [38, 39], Einarsson [14, 15], Benediktsson [19], Vilhjálmsson [34, 35]. An exception is Beckman [5, pp. 22–28], who argues that Ari uses the expressions in the same sense as we do, and that the comment is incorrect. (Einarsson [14, 15] believes that Ari consistently used inclusive counting, also in the description of Þorsteinn surtr’s reform, which thus added a leap week every *sixth* year. This would give an average year of $365\frac{1}{6}$ days, only two hours less than the Julian year (one day in 12 years); the difference from the tropical year is slightly less, about one day in 13 years. However, there are other problems with this, and most authors assume that Ari used inclusive counting only in the last part of the chapter; see Vilhjálmsson [34] for a discussion.)

Even with the assumption of inclusive counting, the rule is not crystal clear, and several attempts at interpretation have been made. Björnsson [10] tries to use the rule to reconstruct a version “Aratal” of the calendar used in Ari’s time, slightly different from the later version, but Þorkelsson [38] points out that Björnsson’s reconstruction is inconsistent; see Beckman [5] for further criticism.

Þorkelsson [39] proposes an interpretation that fits the final version of the calendar (see Table 5). His interpretation is as follows, starting with a year with *sumarauki*, which we number as year 1: It does not matter whether year 1 is a Julian leap year or not, since the leap day (24 or 25 February according to medieval reckoning) comes before the *sumarauki*. If there is only one leap year in years 2–7, then the next *sumarauki* is in year 7. If there are two leap years in years 2–7, then the next *sumarauki* is in year 6; this includes the case when the leap years are years 3 and 7, and in this case year 7, which thus is the year after the next *sumarauki*, is regarded as used and not counted when finding the following *sumarauki*. See also [22, Interkalation].

Note that any leap week rule that yields the same average length of the year as the Julian calendar must have 5 leap weeks in 28 years (on the average, at least); the natural arrangement has three gaps of six years and two of five years in a pattern that is repeated cyclically. However, with a rule of Ari’s type, the distance from one leap week to the next depends only on the number of years until the next Julian leap year; since there are only four possibilities, the rule leads to a pattern that repeats after at

most four leap weeks – in other words, the desired cycle with five leap weeks is impossible. The proposal by Þorkelsson [39] just described avoids this problem with the added rule that the next leap year may be “used”; this effectively introduces a fifth possibility (one year before a Julian leap year that is used), and enables a cycle of five leap weeks.

Further reforms (one or several) of the intercalation rule must have occurred after 960, both in order to follow the seasons (that is, the tropical year), and because Iceland became Christian in 1000 (or 999 [13]) and then the Catholic church arrived using the Julian calendar. Nothing is known about the detailed operation of the Icelandic calendar in this period; presumably leap weeks were inserted when needed, but we do not know according to which rules, if any. (The Althingi was moved from nine weeks after the First Day of Summer to ten weeks after it in 999 [3, Ch. VII], which may indicate that the intercalations so far had been insufficient. As many have observed, this fits well with the fact that if leap weeks had been added every seventh year since the reform c. 960, then the calendar would have drifted about 10 days during these 40 years.) The law *Grágás* [18] (written down in the 13th century but presumably showing older practice) says, in the section on the duties of the Lawspeaker: “The Lawspeaker has to announce ... and the calendar, and also if men are to come to the Althingi before 10 weeks of summer have passed, and rehearse the observance of Ember days and the beginning of Lent, and he is to say all this at the close of the Althingi.”³⁶ This does not exclude the possibility that the Lawspeaker used some fixed rules for the intercalation, but it also allows the possibility that intercalation was done on an ad hoc basis. See also Vilhjálmsón [35] for a discussion of Icelandic astronomical knowledge at this time.

The Icelandic calendar was presumably rooted in earlier Scandinavian time-reckoning, see Brate [11], Ginzler [17, §§228–230] and Schroeter [31, pp. 300–315]. However, only a little is known about the details of earlier time-reckoning, so it is difficult to say how much of the Icelandic calendar really was common Scandinavian. Some features, such as the year of 364 days, seem to be uniquely Icelandic. The partition of the year into summer and winter half-years was old Germanic [17, p. 58]. (For example, it existed some centuries earlier in the Anglo-Saxon calendar

³⁶ Lögsogo maðr a up at segia ... oc misseris tal. oc sva þat ef menn scolo coma fyrr til alþingis en x. vicor ero af sumre. oc tina imbro daga halld. oc fösto iganga. oc skal hann þetta allt mæla at þinglavsnom. [18, §116 p. 209].

according to Bede [7, §15], written c. 725 but here reporting on an earlier time.) This division into summer and winter existed in Norway and Sweden too, but there the beginnings were fixed to 14 April and 14 October and not to a specific day of the week, at least as far back as there is any documentation [11, pp. 26, 28], [5, pp. 20–21, 38]; this is for example shown in *Rím II*: “On Calixtus [14 October] comes winter according to Norwegian reckoning, and on Tiburtius [14 April] comes summer.”³⁷ Beckman [1, pp. CXLVII–CLVI] points out that the Lapps also used a time-reckoning based on weeks (with 13 months of 4 weeks each), which presumably had the same origins.

It seems clear that the Icelanders originally, like other Scandinavians, used lunar months, but not much is known about the details [11, 17, 5]. Note that the Icelandic month names Þorri and Góí also existed in the other Scandinavian countries [11, pp. 26–27], and are certainly from before the Christian era. (The Anglo-Saxon names for their old lunar months, given by Bede [7, §15] c. 725, are quite different from the Icelandic, however.) As a relic of this, the Icelandic Almanac [2, 28] gives traditional names for the Moon for six lunar months (reckoned from the New Moon) each year: *jólatungl*, *þorratungl*, *góutungl*, *páskatungl*, *sumartungl*, *vetrartungl*. Of these, *páskatungl* is the Paschal Moon (central for the determination of Easter in the Christian calendar, although these calculations do not use the actual, astronomical Moon), and *þorratungl* and *góutungl* are the names for the two preceding lunar months. See further [28] and [31, p. 336].

Porkelsson [39, pp. 53–55] suggests that use of the lunar months was impractical during the summer in Iceland because then there is no real night and the full moon is very low in the sky at these latitudes; hence a reckoning of weeks replaced the lunar months during the summer, while the winter months were kept and only later, and not completely, were replaced by the week reckoning. This would explain why the names of the winter months are used much more than the summer months as discussed in Section 2.3. At some time during this process (probably c. 930 as stated above), the calendar was reorganized and the months were fixed to 30 days and defined by the week reckoning instead of the moon.

³⁷ Calixtus messa kemur vetur at norðnu tali. enn Tiburcius messo sumar. [1, p. 156 §136].

3.2 Icelandic calendar linked to the Julian calendar

At some time during the 11th or 12th century the calendar was linked to the Julian calendar by adopting its mean length of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days per year; this was effected by the intercalation of 5 leap weeks in 28 years, and the calendars were linked so that the First Day of Summer always fell in the week 9–15 April.^{38 39} This is the version described in *Rím I* [1] from the late 12th century, and a century later in *Rím II* [1]. (See also the comments by Beckman [1, Inledning] and [5], Björnsson [10], Þorkelsson [36, 39], Schroeter [31].)

The church used the Julian calendar, but the Icelandic calendar, combined with Christian holidays and saints' days (as determined by the Julian calendar), continued to be the main calendar for civil use for centuries. Dates were usually given using holidays and saints' days, but also often using the Icelandic calendar and its counting of weeks; see further Beckman [5, pp. 36–38].

In fact, *Rím I* [1] says: “Summer shall not begin before 14 days after the Annunciation of Virgin Mary and not later than 21 days after, and the first day is a Thursday.”⁴⁰ Since the Annunciation is 25 March, this specifies the period 8–15 April for the First Day of Summer. However, it is clear from other evidence that the period was really 9–15 April. This is explicitly stated in *Rím II* [1] (13th century): “Summer shall not come closer to the Annunciation of Virgin Mary than 15 days after it and not

³⁸ The 12th century Easter table [1, pp. 69–70] covering the years 1140–1195 (two solar cycles, see Appendix A.3), shows (apart from standard international information) the week in Þorri or Góí in the Icelandic calendar when Lent begins (see Appendix C.1), and it marks the years with *sumarauki*. All is in accordance with the rules described in this paper (apart from an error for Lent 1193, where G[óí] is written instead of Þ[orri]; this must be a typo, medieval or in [1]), which is strong evidence that the rules were in effect at the latest in the middle of the 12th century.

³⁹ The comment on the intercalation in *Íslendingabók* [3] (c. 1125), see Section 3.1 above, is taken as evidence by for example Björnsson [10] and Beckman [1, p. VIII–IX] that Ari hinn fróði did not know the later rules, and thus the final reform linking the calendar to the Julian one was made later; this gives a dating in the middle of the 12th century. (Beckman [5, p. 28] guesses between 1140 and 1173.) However, since Beckman [5] dismisses Ari's comment as inaccurate, it seems inconsistent of him to draw this conclusion from it. On the other hand, if for example the interpretation by Þorkelsson [39] (see again Section 3.1) is correct, then the rules are probably older than *Íslendingabók* (although as discussed by Þorkelsson [39], a later final adjustment is also possible).

⁴⁰ Skál sumar koma eigi nær Mariu messo um fostu helldr enn xiiii nottum efter ok eigi firr enn enne nott ok xx, ok skal enn fimte dagr viko vera fyrstur i sumri. [1, p. 22 §26].

later than 21, and a Thursday shall be the first day in the summer”.⁴¹ Moreover, a First Day of Summer on 8 April is incompatible with other statements in *Rím I*: the preceding winter or summer would not be in accordance with the discussion of the beginning of Lent in *Rím I* [1, pp. 25–28 §§30–34] (at least assuming the explicit rule on *rímspillir* in *Rím I*), see Appendix C.1, as well as one or several of the claims quoted in Appendix D. See further Beckman [1, p. LXXI] and [5, p. 27]. It is, as suggested by Beckman [1, p. LXXI], possible that the statement in *Rím I* [1, p. 22 §26] giving the range 8–15 April is an earlier rule (either an informal rule or a formal law) which was used during a particular period but did not specify the calendar completely.

Note that the medieval texts *Rím I* and *Rím II* do not relate the Icelandic calendar directly to the Julian; as in the quotes given above, the Icelandic calendar is defined using the ecclesiastical calendar with saints’ days. Similarly, *Rím II* [1, pp. 168–170 §§160–162] gives the first day of nine of the months, in complete agreement with Table 1 but stated using saints’ days. (A partial exception is the following, where a double dating is used for clarity: “There shall be one Tuesday between the Tuesday that is first in Einmánuður, and that day that is 6 days after St Matthias [24 February], but 7 days if it is a leap year, and that is the second of March.”⁴²) It is interesting to note that *Rím I* begins by defining the Julian months in terms of the ecclesiastical calendar: “September ... comes a week before the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary ... October ... comes 2 days after Michaelmas ... November ... comes on All Saints’ Day ...”,⁴³ and not the other way round as would be done today; this too shows that the saints’ days were more well-known than the Julian months.

3.3 Icelandic calendar linked to the Gregorian calendar

When the Julian calendar was replaced by the Gregorian in 1700, the Icelandic calendar was instead adapted to the Gregorian one, and the First

⁴¹ Sumar skal eigi nær koma Mariu mesu of faustu enn 15 nottum epter ok eigi fyr enn 21, ok skal v. dagr vera fystur i sumri [1, p. 83 §3].

⁴² Þridiu dagr ein skal vera i milli þess þridiu dags, er fystur er i ein manadi, ok þess dags, er vi nottum er epter Mattias, en vii, ef hlaupar er, en sa er anar i marcio. [1, pp. 169–170 §162].

⁴³ September ... kemr viku fyrer burdar dagh Mariu, ... october ... kemr ii nottum efter Michaels messo, ... November ... kemur allra heilagra messo ... [1, pp. 7–8 §4].

Day of Summer was fixed as the Thursday in the period 19–25 April [28, 31], which has remained the rule until the present. See Section 3.4 for details of the transition.

The general population continued to use the Icelandic calendar until the late 18th century, when it was replaced by the Gregorian calendar for general use [9, pp. 8, 14], [28, *tímatal*, *forníslenskt*]. (The Icelanders, of course, observed the Christian holidays, which always followed the Julian or Gregorian calendar; however, only the clergy was concerned with the calendar behind the holidays and the calculation of the correct dates for them.) The Icelandic calendar was occasionally used until the early 20th century [9, p. 8].

The First Day of Summer has always been celebrated in Iceland. Although not a Christian holiday, it was even celebrated with mass until 1744, as was (at least in the northern episcopate of Hólar) the First Day of Winter [9, pp. 16, 60–61].

3.4 The calendar change in 1700

Iceland changed from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in November 1700, when Saturday 16 November (Jul.) was followed by Sunday 28 November (Greg.) [23, pp. 1375–1376], [31, p. 333].⁴⁴ The change to the Gregorian calendar, however, did not affect the Icelandic year, since the date for the First Day of Summer was simultaneously changed by 10 days, from 9–15 to 19–25 April as stated above. In particular, there was no discontinuity in 1700 (or in any neighbouring year); the First Day of Summer 1700 was Thursday 11 April (Jul.), which equals Thursday 22 April (Greg.) as it would have been with the Gregorian rule. Neither were any days skipped in the Icelandic calendar that year; the Icelandic year was a regular year with 364 days, and the next First Day of Summer came on Thursday 21 April 1701.

Note that the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars was ten days during the 16th and 17th centuries, and still when Denmark

⁴⁴ Iceland belonged at that time to Denmark, which changed to the Gregorian calendar in February 1700, when Sunday 18 February (Jul.) was followed by Monday 1 March (Greg.) [17, p. 274]. It seems that the royal ordinance on 28 November 1699 [17], [31, p. 334 n. 1] was made too late to reach Iceland in time since there were no communications during the winter; therefore a separate royal ordinance for Iceland (and the Faroe Islands) was issued by the (Danish) king on 10 April 1700 specifying the transition in November [23, pp. 1375–1376].

switched in February 1700, but from March 1700 it increased to 11 days since 1700 was a Julian leap year but not a Gregorian. Thus 1700 was a leap year in Iceland, and the difference had increased to 11 days when the Gregorian calendar was adopted in November. Nevertheless, the dates of the First Day of Summer were shifted by only 10 days and not 11. This made no difference in 1700, or in 1701, but in 1702 it meant the difference between *sumarauki* or not.

The adaption of the Icelandic calendar to the Gregorian was decided by the Althingi on 1 July 1700 [23, p. 1376].⁴⁵ The decision actually states the dates of the First Day of Winter, which at that time was a Friday, see Section 2.1: “The beginning of winter, which until now has been on that Friday that is between the 9th and 18th October, will from now on be on that Friday that is between the 19th and 28th October ... and then is easily reckoned Midwinter, the beginning of Þorri, as is the beginning of summer, after 26 weeks of winter”.^{46 47} Note that this formulation does not really specify the First Day of Winter completely, since the range is the 8 days 20–27 October (“between” is taken in the strict sense here), so in some years (when both 20 and 27 October are Fridays) there is an ambiguity. (The stated rule for the Julian calendar, with the range 10–17 October, is similarly incomplete. The ranges in the law for the First Day of Winter in the Julian and Gregorian versions do not agree with the dates in Table 1 since the First Day of Winter here is a Friday, and thus the day before the first of W1 (Gormánuður) in Table 1.)

⁴⁵ The king was apparently not interested in the Icelandic calendar, so this was left to the Icelanders themselves.

⁴⁶ Um vetrarkomu, sem hingað til hefir verið á þann föstudag, sem inn hefir fallið millum þess 9da og 18da októbris, vill nú tilreiknast að inn falli hér eftir á þeim föstudegi, sem er á milli þess 19da og 28da októbris ... og er þá sjálfreiknað um miðsvetrar þorrakomu, svo og um sumarkomu, þá 26 vikur eru af vetri [23, p. 1376].

⁴⁷ According to Schroeter [31, p. 334], the original decision by the Althingi made on 1 July 1700 was to shift the dates of the First Day of Winter by 11 days to 21–28 October (“between the 20th and 29th October”); this made no difference in 1701, but it would in 1702 when, however, the First Day of Winter in most places was taken to be Friday 20 October (instead of 27 October as the new rule would give); the Althingi followed this and by a new decision in 1703 adjusted the shift to the formulation quoted above with a shift of 10 days. (The reason is not known for shifting 10 days instead of 11, which meant that there was *sumarauki* in 1703 and not in 1702. Note that the Julian version would have had *sumarauki* in 1702, so the reason cannot be that a conservative population resisted changes – the result was the opposite.) This is discussed in detail by Sæmundsson [30]. He finds the description by Schroeter [31] partly inaccurate and concludes that probably the Althingi had decided on a 10 day shift by 1700, but that there was disagreement leading to confusion in 1702 and 1703.

Nevertheless it seems clear that the intended meaning, and the actual implementation, was to shift the dates by 10 but otherwise keep the same rules for leap weeks and *rímspillir*; in particular, the First Day of Summer, which according to the law above comes 26 weeks (minus a day, since it is a Thursday) after the First Day of Winter, is restricted to the range 19–25 April of 7 days (see Table 1), which determines the First Day of Summer and thus the year completely as discussed in Section 4.⁴⁸

The shift of 10 days means that the First Day of Summer (and thus every other day in the Icelandic calendar) on the average falls on the same day in the Gregorian calendar (and thus in the tropical year) as it did in the 16th and 17th centuries. (This is about three days later in the tropical year than it was during the 12th and 13th centuries.)

The first time after 1700 that the Julian and Gregorian versions of the Icelandic calendar differed was at Midsummer 1702, when there would have been *sumarauki* in the Julian version, but not in the Gregorian; nine months later, the First Day of Summer was on Thursday 19 April 1703 (Greg.), but would have fallen one week later (on 15 April Jul. = 26 April Greg.) according to the Julian rule. The two versions coincide during the 16th and 17th centuries, when the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendar was 10 days. Going backwards in time, with the proleptic Gregorian calendar, the last year before 1700 with a difference would have been 1495 (long before the construction of the Gregorian calendar).

3.5 Present use

The Icelandic calendar is preserved as part of the cultural heritage, and the First Day of Summer (*sumardagurinn fyrsti*) is still a public holiday [25] (and a flag day) in Iceland. The Icelandic Almanac [2] shows beside the standard Gregorian calendar, including the modern numbering of weeks (beginning on Mondays [20]), also the Icelandic months (more precisely, the beginning of each month) and the numbering of summer weeks and winter weeks (beginning on Thursdays and Saturdays) according to the Icelandic calendar.

Some other traditions are also still connected to the Icelandic calen-

⁴⁸ I do not know why the law is stated in terms of the First Day of Winter instead of the First Day of Summer, which would have made the rule unambiguous. Note that a rule for the First Day of Summer implicitly determines whether there is a *sumarauki*, by looking also at the next First Day of Summer. Sæmundsson [30] gives some suggestions for the choice of the First Day of Winter in the law.

dar: for example, the first day of Þorri is called *bóndadagur* (Husband's day) and the last *þorraþræll*. The first day of Góa is called *konudagur* (Wife's Day) and the last *góuþræll* [2, 28]. A modern custom (from the 1980's and 1950's) is that wives give their husband flowers on *bóndadagur*, and the reverse occurs on *konudagur* [9, pp. 92, 96]. Another tradition is the feast *þorrablót* in Þorri. This is mentioned in the Saga literature, and was revived around 1870 [9, pp. 88–92]. *Réttir*, the annual round-up of sheep, begins Thursday in the 21th week of summer [28, 9]. It is interesting that among the months, Þorri and Góa seem to have retained the special position in the general population today that they held 1000 years ago, see Sections 2.3 and 3.1.

4. Calculations and calendar conversions

To convert dates between the Icelandic calendar and another calendar such as the Julian or Gregorian, it suffices to know the dates in the other calendar of the First Day of Summer each year; knowing the First Day of Summer for a given year and the next one, we know the length of the year and thus whether there is a leap week (*sumarauki*) or not, and thus all dates can be translated. For calculations involving Icelandic months, especially with computer programs, it may be convenient to count forward from the First Day of Summer for the first three months of the summer (S1–S3 in our notation), including *aukanætur* and *sumarauki*, and backwards from the First Day of Summer next year for the remaining nine months S4–W6; in this way the fact that only some years have *sumarauki* is taken care of automatically. In particular, the First Day of Winter is always 180 days before the next First Day of Summer.

In the following two sections we give some details on calculations of the First Day of Summer for the versions of the Icelandic calendar tied to the Julian and Gregorian respectively, and in Appendix B we give further formulas; the interested reader can easily construct complete conversion algorithms based on the formulas given here and algorithms for the Julian and Gregorian calendar in, for example, Dershowitz and Reingold [12] (which is an excellent source of many details on calculations and conversions for many different calendars). The details can, of course, be varied, and we give several

versions, while other variants are left to the reader. Some similar formulas can be found in [10].^{49 50} We give also several tables showing the results of the calculations; similar tables can be found in for example Bilfinger [8], Beckman [1, Inledning], Björnsson [10] and Schroeter [31].

4.1 *Rímspillir*

The date in the Julian or Gregorian calendar of the start of the months S4–W6 can, as stated above, be found by counting backwards from the First Day of Summer of the following year, with 30 days per month. Note that for S4–W5, the result depends not only on the date of the First Day of Summer of the following year, but also on whether it falls in a Julian or Gregorian leap year (having 29 February) or not. Hence the dates for the beginning of one of these months vary over a range of eight days, as shown in Table 1, see also Tables 5 and 7, while the beginning of one of the months S1–S3 and W6 varies only over seven days. In particular, this means that the beginning of one of the latter four months in a given year can be determined as the unique day with the correct day of the week in the period given in Table 1, while more information is sometimes needed for the months S4–W5.

It is easy to see that, for any of the months S4–W5, the last of the eight possible days occurs only when the First Day of Summer of the following year is on the latest possible date (15 April or 25 April), and further falls in a (Julian or Gregorian) leap year. This exceptional case is called *rímspillir* (= “calendar destroyer”) or *varnaðarár* = “warning year”. (So already in the 12th century manuscript *Rím I* [1].) *Rím II* is very precise: “*Varnaðarár* begins at Midsummer the 8th year in the solar cycle and ends at the leap day the 9th year in the solar cycle.”⁵¹

It can easily be seen that when *rímspillir* occurs, the First Day of Summer is on the *second* possible date (10 April [Jul.] or 20 April [Greg.]); conversely *rímspillir* occurs every time the First Day of Summer is on this date and the next Julian or Gregorian year is a leap year. Note that

⁴⁹ Computer programs are given in *Almanak Háskólans* 1986 and 1991.

⁵⁰ A traditional method to calculate the calendar (both Gregorian and Icelandic) was to count on the fingers. This was described by bishop Jón Árnason [4] in 1739; for a modern version see [29].

⁵¹ *Varnaðar ár hefst at midiu sumri hin attu vetr í solar ölld ok lykz æ hla[u]pars deigi hin 9. vetur í solar ölld* [1, p. 136 §104].

the other (non-*rímspillir*) instances of *sumarauki* occur precisely in the years where the First Day of Summer is on the earliest possible date (9 April [Jul.] or 19 April [Greg.]). When *rímspillir* occurs, the First Day of Winter and the winter months come a week later than in another year with the same dominical letter. The medieval Icelanders viewed this the other way round, seeing the Icelandic calendar as the fixed reference point: “and all mass days are a week earlier in the calendar than if there were no *rímspillir*”.⁵²

4.2 Notation

In some formulas it will be convenient to code days of the week by numbers. We choose to use the numbering 1 (Sunday) to 7 (Saturday), in accordance with the Icelandic names of some of the days of the week (and the traditional Judaeo-Christian reckoning that the names are based on), see Section 2.2 and Table 3. Note that [12] uses a different convention, and ISO [20] yet another; the reader who desires one of these numberings can easily modify our formulas.

We let $m \bmod n$ denote the remainder when m is divided by n ; this is an integer in the range $0, \dots, n - 1$. (Here m and n are integers. We only consider $n > 0$, but m may be of any sign; care has to be taken with this in computer implementations.)

Similarly (following [12]), we let $m \text{ amod } n$ denote the remainder adjusted to the range $1, \dots, n$. This means that $m \text{ amod } n = m \bmod n$ except when m is a multiple of n ; then $m \bmod n = 0$ and $m \text{ amod } n = n$. Equivalently, $m \text{ amod } n = ((m - 1) \bmod n) + 1$.

We use the standard notation $\lfloor x \rfloor$ for the integer satisfying $x - 1 < \lfloor x \rfloor \leq x$, i.e. x rounded down to an integer.

5. The Julian version (12th c. – 1700)

During the time the Icelandic calendar was tied to the Julian (12th century – 1700), the First Day of Summer was the Thursday falling in the period 9–15 April, i.e. the first Thursday on or after 9 April.

The Julian calendar has a cycle of 28 years (known as the *solar*

⁵² ok verða aller messo daghar viko fyrr i misseris taleno, helldr enn þa ef eigi vére rim-spillerenn [1, *Rím I* p. 24 §28].

cycle) for the days of the week, see Appendix A.3. Hence the date of the First Day of Summer has a cycle of 28 years, and consequently so has the complete Icelandic calendar (Julian version). In 28 Julian years there are

$$28 \cdot 365 + \text{days} = 10227 \text{ days} = 1461 \text{ weeks} = 28 \cdot 52 + 5 \text{ weeks.}$$

Hence, in each period of 28 Icelandic years, there are 5 leap weeks (*sum-araaukar*); in other words, there are 23 ordinary Icelandic years of 364 days (52 weeks) and 5 Icelandic leap years of 371 days (53 weeks). The leap years are evenly spread out with distances of 5 or 6 years (i.e. 4 or 5 ordinary years in between); the average gap is $28/5 = 5.6$ years, with two gaps of 5 years and three gaps of 6 years in each cycle. The entire cycle will be given in Table 5.

We give some ways to calculate the First Day of Summer (Julian version) for a given year.

5.1 Using a day-of-the-week function

Assume that $\mathbf{dowJ}(d, m, y)$ is a function giving the day of the week (as a number 1–7, see above) of day d , month m , year y in the Julian calendar. (As stated above, see for example [12] for the construction of such a function.) Thursday is day 5, and thus the date, in April, of the First Day of Summer in Julian year y can be written

$$9 + ((5 - \mathbf{dowJ}(9, 4, y)) \bmod 7) = 9 + ((12 - \mathbf{dowJ}(9, 4, y)) \bmod 7) \quad (5.1)$$

(where the second version avoids negative numbers in the calculation).

5.2 Using dominical letters

Since the First Day of Summer is a Thursday, the day three days later (4 Harpa) is a Sunday in the period 12–18 April. These days have calendar letters (see Appendix A.1) DEFGABC respectively, which gives the following table connecting the dominical letter and the First Day of Summer of a Julian year. A Julian leap year has two dominical letters; it is the second one (valid for March–December) that is used here.

Table 4: Dominical letters and First Day of Summer in the Julian version of the Icelandic calendar.

Dominical letter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
First Day of Summer	13	14	15	9	10	11	12

To express this relation in a formula, let δ be the number corresponding to the dominical letter (A=1, B=2, ..., G=7); then the First Day of Summer is

$$((\delta + 3) \bmod 7) + 9 \text{ April.} \quad (5.2)$$

From the discussion in Section 4.1 and Table 4, the Icelandic year is a leap year, i.e. a leap week (*sumarauki*) is added, in the following cases [31]:

- The First Day of Summer is on 9 April. Equivalently, the dominical letter is D (or ED).
- The First Day of Summer is on 10 April and the next year is a Julian leap year. Equivalently, the dominical letter is E and the next year has dominical letters DC. (*Rímspillir*.)

This rule is stated already in *Rím II* [1, p. 144 §133], in the formulation that a week is added if the dominical letter is D, and *Jónsmessa* (St John Baptist, 24 June) is on a Wednesday, and also in year 8 of the solar cycle when the dominical letter is E and *Jónsmessa* is on a Tuesday. (The conditions on St John Baptist are equivalent to the conditions on the dominical letter, since 24 June has calendar letter G, cf. Appendix A.1.)

5.3 Using concurrents

The concurrent is an alternative to dominical letters, see Appendix A.2. By (A.1), we can translate (5.2): If κ is the concurrent of a given year, then the First Day of Summer is

$$((10 - \kappa) \bmod 7) + 9 \text{ April.} \quad (5.3)$$

(This also follows easily from (5.1).)

Using (A.2), it follows that the First Day of Summer year y AD is

$$15 - ((y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor) \bmod 7) \text{ April.} \quad (5.4)$$

Table 5: Solar cycle and beginning of months in the Julian version of the Icelandic calendar. The second column shows the dominical letter(s). (These columns are valid only until Dec. 31, and therefore not for the months W4–W6, which are in the next Julian year.) A * in the third column marks Icelandic leap years with *sumarauki*. The first days of summer and winter are marked by boldface, and *rímspillir* is marked by italics (line 8).

Sol. cyc.			S1 Apr	S2 May	S3 Jun	S4 Jul	S5 Aug	S6 Sep	W1 Oct	W2 Nov	W3 Dec	W4 Jan	W5 Feb	W6 Mar
1	GF		11	11	10	14	13	12	12	11	11	10	9	11
2	E		10	10	9	13	12	11	11	10	10	9	8	10
3	D	*	9	9	8	19	18	17	17	16	16	15	14	16
4	C		15	15	14	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	14
5	BA		13	13	12	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	13
6	G		12	12	11	15	14	13	13	12	12	11	10	12
7	F		11	11	10	14	13	12	12	11	11	10	9	11
8	E	*	10	10	9	<i>20</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>18</i>	18	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>15</i>	16
9	DC		15	15	14	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	15
10	B		14	14	13	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	14
11	A		13	13	12	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	13
12	G		12	12	11	15	14	13	13	12	12	11	10	11
13	FE		10	10	9	13	12	11	11	10	10	9	8	10
14	D	*	9	9	8	19	18	17	17	16	16	15	14	16
15	C		15	15	14	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	15
16	B		14	14	13	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	13
17	AG		12	12	11	15	14	13	13	12	12	11	10	12
18	F		11	11	10	14	13	12	12	11	11	10	9	11
19	E		10	10	9	13	12	11	11	10	10	9	8	10
20	D	*	9	9	8	19	18	17	17	16	16	15	14	15
21	CB		14	14	13	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	14
22	A		13	13	12	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	13
23	G		12	12	11	15	14	13	13	12	12	11	10	12
24	F		11	11	10	14	13	12	12	11	11	10	9	10
25	ED	*	9	9	8	19	18	17	17	16	16	15	14	16
26	C		15	15	14	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	15
27	B		14	14	13	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	14
28	A		13	13	12	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	12

5.4 Using Julian day numbers

Assume that $\mathbf{JDJ}(d, m, y)$ is a function giving the Julian day number (see Appendix A.5) of day d , month m , year y in the Julian calendar. (See for example [12] or [16] for the construction of such a function.) By (A.6),

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{dowJ}(d, m, y) &= (2 + \mathbf{JDJ}(d, m, y)) \bmod 7 \\ \mathbf{dowJ}(d, m, y) &= ((1 + \mathbf{JDJ}(d, m, y)) \bmod 7) + 1, \end{aligned} \tag{5.5}$$

and thus, by (5.1), the Julian day number of the First Day of Summer in Julian year y can be written

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{JDJ}(9,4, y) + ((3 - \mathbf{JDJ}(9,4, y)) \bmod 7) \\ &= \mathbf{JDJ}(15,4, y) - ((3 + \mathbf{JDJ}(9,4, y)) \bmod 7) \\ &= \left\lfloor \frac{\mathbf{JDJ}(12,4, y)}{7} \right\rfloor \cdot 7 + 3. \end{aligned} \tag{5.6}$$

See further Appendix B.

5.5 The solar cycle

As stated above, and in more detail in Appendix A.3, the solar cycle is a cycle of 28 years in the Julian calendar for the days of the week, and thus of the dominical letters. The place of a year in the solar cycle thus determines the dominical letter and hence the First Day of Summer; since the solar cycle also determines the dominical letter and the First Day of Summer of the following year, the entire Icelandic year is determined by the place in the solar cycle. A list of the 28 years in the cycle is easily made, for example using Table 4 or (5.1); the result is given in Table 5. The position of a given year is found by (A.4); for example, the last Julian year on Iceland, 1699, has number 28 in the solar cycle.

From Table 5 we can immediately see that the Icelandic leap years are the years 3, 8, 14, 20, 25 in the solar cycle, with *rímspillir* year 8. (This has been noted from the early days of the calendar. These years are marked with *wipl* (*wip lagning* = “addition” = *sumarauki*) already in the Easter table [1, pp. 69–70] for the two solar cycles 1140–1195. *Rím II* says: “shall be added to the summer 5 times in the solar cycle; the first time when the dominical letter is D, the second time when it is E, and then three times when it is D”.⁵³ *Rím I* says: “... *rímspillir*, which is that year that is eighth in the solar cycle”⁵⁴.)

Rímspillir thus occurs once every 28 years, in year 8 in the solar cycle. From (A.4) follows that the years with *rímspillir* begin in the Julian years that give the remainder 27 when divided by 28. In the 12th–17th centu-

⁵³ ok skal við sumar leggja 5 sinnum i solar aulld; hit fysta sin, er drottins dagur er a d, anat sin, er han er a e, þa þryssvar sinum þadan af, er hann er a d [1, p. 128 §86].

⁵⁴ ... rímspillirenn, er sa vetur enn atte i concurrentes aulld hverre [1, p. 24 §28].

ries, these are the years 1119, 1147, 1175, 1203, 1231, 1259, 1287, 1315, 1343, 1371, 1399, 1427, 1455, 1483, 1511, 1539, 1567, 1595, 1623, 1651, 1679. (But recall that we do not know exactly when the final version of the Icelandic leap year rule was introduced.) As Beckman [1, 5] points out, a simple rule is that *rímspillir* ends in the Julian years that are divisible by 28.

6. The Gregorian version (1700 – present)

Since the Icelandic calendar was tied to the Gregorian in 1700, the First Day of Summer has been the Thursday falling in the period 19–25 April, i.e. the first Thursday on or after 19 April.

The Gregorian calendar has a cycle of 400 years for the leap years; this cycle contains 97 leap years and thus $400 \cdot 365 + 97 = 146097$ days, which happens to be divisible by 7 and thus a whole number of weeks. The leap year cycle of 400 years is thus also a cycle for the days of the week, and hence for the Icelandic calendar (Gregorian version). In 400 Gregorian years there are

$$400 \cdot 365 + 97 \text{ days} = 146097 \text{ days} = 20871 \text{ weeks} = 400 \cdot 52 + 71 \text{ weeks.}$$

Hence in each period of 400 Icelandic years, there are 71 leap weeks (*sumaraukar*); in other words, there are 329 ordinary Icelandic years of 364 days (52 weeks) and 71 Icelandic leap years of 371 days (53 weeks). The leap years are rather evenly spread out with intervals of 5 or 6 years (i.e. 4 or 5 ordinary years in between); except that (because of the Gregorian leap rule exceptions for years divisible by 100), once in the cycle there is an interval of 7 years. (This happened 1696–1703, straddling the introduction of the Gregorian version of the Icelandic calendar, and will next occur 2096–2103.) The average gap is $400/71 \approx 5.6338$ years, with 27 gaps of 5 years, 43 gaps of 6 years and 1 gap of 7 years in each cycle.

We give some ways to calculate the First Day of Summer (Gregorian version) for a given year. The full pattern is given in Table 7. (Table 7 gives also the beginning of each month. We ignore in this section, including the table, the different placement of the leap week in the almanacs until 1928, see Section 7.1, which affects S4–S6 in Icelandic leap

years. We also ignore the beginning of winter on a Friday before 1837, see Section 2.1.)

6.1 Using a day-of-the-week function

Assume that $\mathbf{dowG}(d, m, y)$ is a function giving the day of the week (as a number 1–7, see above) of day d , month m , year y in the Gregorian calendar. (Again, see [12] for the construction of such a function.) Thursday is day 5, and thus the date, in April, of the First Day of Summer in Gregorian year y can be written

$$19 + ((5 - \mathbf{dowG}(19,4, y)) \bmod 7) = 19 + ((12 - \mathbf{dowG}(19,4, y)) \bmod 7). \quad (6.1)$$

6.2 Using dominical letters

Since the First Day of Summer is a Thursday, the day three days later (4 Harpa) is a Sunday in the period 22–28 April. These days have calendar letters (see Appendix A.1) GABCDEF respectively, which gives the following table connecting the dominical letter and the First Day of Summer of a Gregorian year. A Gregorian leap year has two dominical letters; it is the second one (valid for March–December) that is used here.

Table 6: Dominical letters and First Day of Summer in the Gregorian version of the Icelandic calendar.

Dominical letter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
First Day of Summer	20	21	22	23	24	25	19

To express this relationship in a formula, let δ be the number corresponding to the dominical letter (A=1, B=2, ..., G=7); then the First Day of Summer is

$$(\delta \bmod 7) + 19 \text{ April}. \quad (6.2)$$

From the discussion in Section 4.1 and Table 6, the Icelandic year is a leap year, i.e. a leap week (*sumarauki*) is added in the following cases [31]:

- The First Day of Summer is on 19 April. Equivalently, the dominical letter is G (or AG).
- The First Day of Summer is on 20 April and the next year is a Gregorian leap year. Equivalently, the dominical letter is A and the next year has the dominical letters GF.

This rule is stated in [28] in the equivalent form that there is a *sumarauki* each year that ends on a Monday, or ends on a Sunday and is followed by a leap year. (The conditions are equivalent because 31 December has calendar letter A, see Appendix A.1. The use of the last day of the year, instead of for example the first day, avoids problems with the leap day in leap years.)

6.3 Using concurrents

By (A.1), we can translate (6.2): If κ is the concurrent of a given year, then the First Day of Summer is

$$26 - \kappa \text{ April.} \quad (6.3)$$

(This also follows easily from (6.1).)

Using (A.3), it follows that the First Day of Summer year y AD is⁵⁵

$$25 - ((y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor - \lfloor y/100 \rfloor + \lfloor y/400 \rfloor + 5) \bmod 7) \text{ April.} \quad (6.4)$$

6.4 Using Julian day numbers

Assume that $\mathbf{JDG}(d, m, y)$ is a function giving the Julian day number (see Appendix A.5) of day d , month m , year y in the Gregorian calendar. (See for example [12] or [16] for the construction of such a function.) By (A.6),

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{dowG}(d, m, y) &= (2 + \mathbf{JDG}(d, m, y)) \bmod 7 \\ \mathbf{dowG}(d, m, y) &= ((1 + \mathbf{JDG}(d, m, y)) \bmod 7) + 1, \end{aligned} \quad (6.5)$$

⁵⁵ Árnason [4] gives 1739, in words, the equivalent formula

$$18 + 8 - ((y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor - (\lfloor y/100 \rfloor - (\lfloor y/400 \rfloor + 6))) \bmod 7) \text{ April.}$$

and thus, by (6.1), the Julian day number of the First Day of Summer in Gregorian year y can be written

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbf{JDG}(19,4, y) + ((3 - \mathbf{JDG}(19,4, y)) \bmod 7) \\ &= \mathbf{JDG}(25,4, y) - ((3 + \mathbf{JDG}(19,4, y)) \bmod 7). \\ &= \left\lfloor \frac{\mathbf{JDG}(22,4, y)}{7} \right\rfloor \cdot 7 + 3. \end{aligned} \tag{6.6}$$

See further Appendix B.

*Table 7: Years, dominical letters and beginning of months in the Gregorian version of the Icelandic calendar. The second column shows the dominical letter(s); brackets indicate dominical letters that are missing in 1700, 1800, 1900, 2100, ..., which are not leap years, but present in other years on these lines such as 1728. (These columns are valid only until Dec. 31, and therefore not for the months W4–W6, which are in the next Gregorian year.) A * in the third column marks Icelandic leap years with sumarauki. The first days of summer and winter are marked by boldface, and rímspillir is marked by italics.*

Year			S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6
			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1999	GF		25	25	24	28	27	26	26	25	25	24	23	25
	E		24	24	23	27	26	25	25	24	24	23	22	24
	D		23	23	22	26	25	24	24	23	23	22	21	23
	C		22	22	21	25	24	23	23	22	22	21	20	21
2000	BA		20	20	19	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	18	20
	G	*	19	19	18	29	28	27	27	26	26	25	24	26
	F		25	25	24	28	27	26	26	25	25	24	23	25
1700	E		24	24	23	27	26	25	25	24	24	23	22	23
	(D)C		22	22	21	25	24	23	23	22	22	21	20	22
	B		21	21	20	24	23	22	22	21	21	20	19	21
	A		20	20	19	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	18	20
1800	G	*	19	19	18	29	28	27	27	26	26	25	24	25
	(F)E		24	24	23	27	26	25	25	24	24	23	22	24
	D		23	23	22	26	25	24	24	23	23	22	21	23

	C		22	22	21	25	24	23	23	22	22	21	20	22
	B		21	21	20	24	23	22	22	21	21	20	19	20
1900	(A)G	*	19	19	18	29	28	27	27	26	26	25	24	26
	F		25	25	24	28	27	26	26	25	25	24	23	25
	E		24	24	23	27	26	25	25	24	24	23	22	24
2099	D		23	23	22	26	25	24	24	23	23	22	21	22
	CB		21	21	20	24	23	22	22	21	21	20	19	21
	A		20	20	19	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	18	20
	G	*	19	19	18	29	28	27	27	26	26	25	24	26
1799	F		25	25	24	28	27	26	26	25	25	24	23	24
	ED		23	23	22	26	25	24	24	23	23	22	21	23
	C		22	22	21	25	24	23	23	22	22	21	20	22
1898	B		21	21	20	24	23	22	22	21	21	20	19	21
	A	*	20	20	19	30	29	28	28	27	27	26	25	26

6.5 The solar cycle and the Gregorian 400 year cycle

The solar cycle is disrupted in the Gregorian calendar. In each century, the dominical letters change in the same sequence as in the Julian calendar; but at the turn of the century, three times out of four, a leap day is skipped, which means a jump to a new place in the cycle of dominical letters. It can easily be verified that this jump is 16 steps forwards (or, equivalently, 12 steps backwards) plus the usual step forward.

The first two columns in Table 7 show this. For reasons of space we have entered only a few years in the first column, but the reader should envision all intermediate years in each century added in sequence after the first (wrapping around from the last line to the first); moreover, there is a period of 400 years, so 2100 is in the same place as 1700, and so on. For example, since 2000 is on line 5, we have 2001 on line 6, ..., 2099 on line 20 (as shown). Then there is a jump, and 2100 is on line 9 (where 1700 is shown), and the sequence continues from there with 2101 on line 10, and so on. In particular, 2009 is thus on line 14, with dominical letter D and First Day of Summer 23 April. As another example, the years in 1700–2100 that are on the first line are 1720, 1748, 1776, 1816, 1844, 1872, 1912, 1940, 1968, 1996, 2024, 2052, 2080.

The First Day of Summer each year is given by Table 6, and the Icelandic years are thus easily calculated for each line. There is one excep-

tion. The year 1899 (as well as 2299, 2699 ...) has dominical letter A, as given by Table 7 and the discussion above, but the following year (1900) is *not* a Gregorian leap year, and therefore the Icelandic year beginning in 1899 does *not* have a leap week. We thus cannot enter 1899 on the last line (where it would belong, after 1898), and we have instead entered 1898 on the line before. (Year 1899 follows the other years with dominical letter A that are not followed by a Gregorian leap year: lines 5, 11 and 22 in Table 7.)

Rímspillir occurs on the last line of Table 7, that is, as found in Section 6.2 when the next Gregorian year has dominical letters GF. In other words, *rímspillir* ends in Gregorian years with dominical letters GF.

Rímspillir usually occurs with gaps of 28 years (as in the Julian calendar), but because of the 12 step jump backwards in the cycle of dominical letters at the century years that are not leap years, the gap is 40 years for the gaps containing these years. (It can easily be verified that the gaps are 40 and not 12, which also would have been conceivable.) It follows that *rímspillir* occurs 13 times in each 400 year period, with intervals of 28 years (10 times) or 40 years (3 times, across the century years that are not Gregorian leap years). The years from 1700–2100 when *rímspillir* begins are 1719, 1747, 1775, 1815, 1843, 1871, 1911, 1939, 1967, 1995, 2023, 2051, 2079.

7. Variations

The preceding sections describe the standard version of the Icelandic calendar, but there have been some variations. The earliest forms of the calendar are discussed in Section 3, and the two different traditions for beginning the winter (on a Friday or a Saturday) are discussed in Section 2.1.

7.1 Deviations in the printed Icelandic Almanac

In the printed Icelandic Almanac, which has been published since 1837, the leap week was inserted last in the summer until 1928 [28], [31, p. 346]. (I do not know whether this was based on a tradition also existing before 1837.) This means that the Gregorian dates in Table 1 for S4–S6 were shifted to 22–28 July, 21–27 August and 20–26 September, and the

dates given for S4–S6 in Table 7 were shifted by a week for the five lines with Icelandic leap years. Note that this affects only the last three summer months, which in any case were not much used; the reckoning by weeks was not affected.

The Icelandic Almanac for 1888 forgot to insert the leap week (*sumarauki*); this was corrected the following year [10].

7.2 A different description

The Icelandic year is described in this paper as consisting of 12 months with 30 days each, plus 4 extra days (*aukanætur*), and in leap years also the 7 days *sumarauki* between the third and fourth summer months; this is in agreement with most descriptions, for example the explanations of the Icelandic Almanac [28] and Schroeter [31]. However, some authors (for example Bilfinger [8], Beckman [1] and Ginzel [17]) give an alternative description where the extra days are included in the third summer month, Sólmánuður, which thus has 34 days in an ordinary year and 41 in a leap year.

I have not found any support for this alternative description in Icelandic sources, neither modern nor medieval. For example, *Íslendingabók* [3] writes about the earliest year (before leap weeks were introduced): “that is 52 weeks, or 12 months, each of 30 nights, and 4 days in addition”,⁵⁶ and *Bókarbót* [1, p. 78] is even more explicit: it lists all months and the days of the week on which they begin: “... And the third month comes on a Monday. Then follow four days which are the days the summer is longer than the winter. And the fourth month comes on a Sunday ...”⁵⁷. Further, this is the natural interpretation of the law in *Grágás* [18] quoted in Section 2.3 (footnote 18).

In practice, it usually makes no difference whether the last days (*aukanætur* and, in leap years, *sumarauki*) before Midsummer are regarded as part of month S3 or not. (Especially since months were only very rarely used for dating.) For example, in the modern Icelandic Almanac [2], only the beginning of each Icelandic month is shown, but the explanations [28] state that *aukanætur* comes after Sólmánuður.

⁵⁶ þat verða vicur ii ens setta tegar en monoþr xii. þritøgnattar oc dagar iiii. umbfram. [3, Ch. IV].

⁵⁷ ... En þriþi manøðr cemmr annan dag viku. Þeim fylgia fíorar netr þær er sumar er lengra en vetr. En fíorþi manoðr cemr drottins dag ... [1, p. 78].

Appendix A. Some standard calendrical concepts

A.1 Dominical letters

This is a device to calculate the day of the week of any day in the Julian or Gregorian calendar. (It has been used since the Middle Ages, and is standard in medieval perpetual calendars.) The device consists of two parts, with letters being assigned to both days (without year) and to years.

1. Each day in a calendar year (except 29 February) is given a *calendar letter* A–G; these letters are assigned in order, with A on 1 January, B on 2 January ... G on 7 January, and then repeated throughout the year with A on 8 January ... G on 30 December, A on 31 December. Note that this means that in any given year (except leap years), all Sundays have the same letter, all Mondays the next, and so on. (Here and below we count cyclically, with G followed by A.)
2. Every year is given a *dominical letter*, which is the calendar letter assigned to the Sundays that year. A leap year is given two dominical letters; the first valid in January and February and the second in March–December. (The second letter is always the one coming before the first.)

Since 365 days is one day more than 52 weeks, the dominical letter of the following year is the letter before the present one. For example, 2009 begins on a Thursday. Hence, A=Thursday, B=Friday, C=Saturday, D=Sunday, E=Monday, F=Tuesday, G=Wednesday, and the dominical letter of 2009 is D. (This is given in many almanacs for 2009, for example [2].) The dominical letters of 2008 (a leap year) are FE, and 2010 has C.

The traditional method to calculate the dominical letter for a given year is to use the solar cycle, Section A.3. An alternative, suited to computer calculations, is to use an algorithm to calculate the day of the week of 1 January for the given year, from which the dominical letter is easily found. See for example [27] for detailed algorithms (or see (A.1)–(A.3) below). The use of the letters A ... G as symbols is traditional but of course arbitrary. Numbers (as in our calculations above) were occasionally used, and the first seven runes were sometimes used in other parts of Scandinavia, in particular on the Swedish rune staffs, see [24].

A.2 Concurrent

An alternative to the dominical letter is the *concurrent*, which for each year is a number 1–7. (The concurrent was also a standard tool in medieval time-reckoning.) The concurrent of a year signifies the day of the week of 24 March, with 1 = Sunday, 2 = Monday ... 7 = Saturday. Since 24 March has dominical letter F, there is a one-to-one correspondence between dominical letters and concurrents, with dominical letter F corresponding to concurrent 1, and so on. (For leap years, it is the second dominical letter that is used.) In formulas, it can easily be shown that if we denote the concurrent by κ , and let δ be the number corresponding to the dominical letter of the year (the second one for a leap year), then the sum $\kappa + \delta$ equals 7 or 14, and is thus divisible by 7; this can be written

$$\kappa + \delta \equiv 0 \pmod{7}. \quad (\text{A.1})$$

The concurrent κ of year y AD in the Julian calendar is given by

$$\kappa = (y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor + 4) \text{ mod } 7. \quad (\text{A.2})$$

In the Gregorian calendar, the corresponding formula is

$$\kappa = (y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor - \lfloor y/100 \rfloor + \lfloor y/400 \rfloor + 6) \text{ mod } 7. \quad (\text{A.3})$$

A.3 Solar cycle

The Julian calendar has a well-known cycle of 28 years for the days of the week (and thus of the dominical letters), known as the *solar cycle*. The years in the cycle are numbered 1–28, and year y AD has number $(y + 9) \text{ mod } 28$ in the cycle. The first year in each cycle is a leap year, with 1 January on a Monday, so its dominical letters are GF. Hence year 2 in each cycle begins on a Wednesday and has dominical letter E, and so on. The full cycle of dominical letters is given in Table 5.

Year AD 1 is number 10 in the solar cycle. Thus (by coincidence) AD 1000 is number 1. Hence, the number in the solar cycle of year AD y is

$$(y + 9) \text{ mod } 28 = ((y - 1000) \text{ mod } 28) + 1. \quad (\text{A.4})$$

The solar cycle was disrupted by the Gregorian calendar reform. Although the number in the solar cycle is still calculated by the same rule, and given in many almanacs (for example [2]), the relationship between

the number in the solar cycle and the dominical letters changes from century to century, and the solar cycle has little practical use in the Gregorian calendar.

A.4 Lunar cycle

The *lunar cycle* is a 19 year cycle for the phases of the moon. This is in reality approximate only, but is treated as an exact cycle in the ecclesiastical calculation of Easter in the Julian calendar, see for example [27, Chapter 29]. (The Gregorian calendar uses the same basic cycle, but introduces certain corrections.) The number of a year in the lunar cycle is called the *golden number*, usually written with Roman numerals (in the range I–XIX). Year AD 1 has golden number II; thus year AD y has golden number

$$(y + 1) \bmod 19. \quad (\text{A.5})$$

The lunar cycle is not relevant to the Icelandic calendar as such, but it is important for the date of Easter, see Appendix C.1.

A.5 Julian day number

The Julian day number (which we abbreviate as JD) is a continuous count of days, beginning with JD 0 on 1 January 4713 BC (Julian).⁵⁸ Such a numbering is very convenient for many purposes, including conversions between calendars where it is often convenient to calculate the Julian day number as an intermediary result. The choice of epoch for the day numbers is arbitrary and for most purposes unimportant; the conventional date of 1 January 4713 BC Julian (–4712 with astronomical numbering of years) was originally chosen by Scalinger in 1583 as the origin of the Julian period, a (cyclic) numbering of years, and was later adapted into a numbering of days. See further [16, Section 12.7].⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Astronomers use a slightly different version [16, Section 12.7]. Their Julian day numbers change at noon UT (GMT); moreover, they add a fractional part to show the exact time thus obtaining the *Julian date*, which is a real number that defines the time of a particular instance. In calendrical calculations, however, the Julian day number is assigned to calendar days, regardless of when the days begin and end in that calendar, and what the time then is at Greenwich.

⁵⁹ Dershowitz and Reingold [12] use another day number, denoted by RD, with another epoch: RD 1 is 1 January AD 1 (Gregorian) which is JD 1721426. Consequently, the two day numbers are related by $\text{JD} = \text{RD} + 1721425$.

For example, 28 November 1700, the first day the Gregorian calendar was used in Iceland, has JD 2342304, and the day before (16 November 1700 Julian) JD 2342303; the Icelandic First Day of Summer 2009, 23 April 2009, has JD 2454945.

Since JD 0 was a Monday, i.e. day-of-the-week number 2 in our numbering, the day with Julian day number JD has day-of-the-week number

$$(2 + \text{JD}) \bmod 7 = ((1 + \text{JD}) \bmod 7) + 1. \quad (\text{A.6})$$

Appendix B. Some formulas for calendar conversions

To convert Icelandic dates to or from dates in any other calendar, it is as noted above convenient to first convert to Julian day numbers. We give some mathematical formulas for conversions between the Icelandic calendar and Julian day number. As in the rest of this paper, we regard the Icelandic year as starting with the First Day of Summer; hence Harpa is month 1. Icelandic years are usually not numbered, but for the formulas we number the year by the standard numbering AD of the Julian or Gregorian year where the First Day of Summer falls (and with it the larger part of the Icelandic year).

It is in principle straightforward to calculate the Julian day number of a given day in a given month and year in the Julian or Gregorian calendar, but the formulas are complicated a little because of the somewhat irregular lengths of the months and the varying length of February; see for example [12, Chapters 2 and 3] or [16] for explicit formulas. In the calculations in Sections 5 and 6, we only need the Julian day number for days in April, and for this case we have simple formulas: the Julian day number of day d , month 4 (April), year y , is for the Julian calendar

$$\mathbf{JDJ}(d,4,y) = 1721148 + d + 365 \cdot y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor, \quad (\text{B.1})$$

and for the Gregorian calendar

$$\mathbf{JDG}(d,4,y) = 1721150 + d + 365 \cdot y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor - \lfloor y/100 \rfloor + \lfloor y/400 \rfloor. \quad (\text{B.2})$$

Using (5.6) and (6.6), we thus find formulas for the Julian day number

of the First Day of Summer in (the Julian or Gregorian) year y , in the Julian or Gregorian version of the Icelandic calendar:

$$\mathbf{FDSJ}(y) = \left\lfloor \frac{1721160 + 365 \cdot y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor}{7} \right\rfloor \cdot 7 + 3 \quad (\text{B.3})$$

$$= \left\lfloor \frac{1461 \cdot y}{28} \right\rfloor \cdot 7 + 1721163, \quad (\text{B.4})$$

$$\mathbf{FDSG}(y) = \left\lfloor \frac{1721172 + 365 \cdot y + \lfloor y/4 \rfloor - \lfloor y/100 \rfloor + \lfloor y/400 \rfloor}{7} \right\rfloor \cdot 7 + 3 \quad (\text{B.5})$$

Let **FDS** denote the appropriate one of these (**FDSJ** if $y < 1700$, otherwise **FDSG**). Using this function we can then calculate the Julian day number of day d , month m , year y (with the conventions above) as

$$\text{JD} = \begin{cases} \mathbf{FDS}(y) + d - 1 + 30 \cdot (m - 1) & \text{if } m \leq 3, \\ \mathbf{FDS}(y + 1) + d - 1 - 30 \cdot (13 - m) & \text{if } m \geq 4. \end{cases} \quad (\text{B.6})$$

(Thus counting backwards from the next First Day of Summer for $m \geq 4$.) This also applies to *aukanætur* and *sumarauki* if we, artificially, regard them as days 31–34 and 35–41 of month 3 (see Section 7.2).

In particular, the First Day of Winter is given by

$$\mathbf{FDW}(y) = \mathbf{FDS}(y + 1) - 180. \quad (\text{B.7})$$

As another example, *bóndadagur* (the first day of Þorri, *miður vetur*) in the Julian or Gregorian year y has Julian day number $\mathbf{FDS}(y) - 90$. (Note that this is in January, and thus in Icelandic year $y - 1$ with our numbering.)

For the more common reckoning with weeks, we number as above the days of the week with 1 = Sunday. Then day of week d in week w in the summer or winter of year y has Julian day number

$$JD = \begin{cases} \mathbf{FDS}(y) + 7 \cdot (w-1) + ((d+2) \bmod 7) & \text{if summer week,} \\ \mathbf{FDW}(y) + 7 \cdot (w-1) + (d \bmod 7) & \text{if winter week.} \end{cases} \quad (\text{B.8})$$

Conversely, to convert a day number JD to an Icelandic date, we first determine the year y . There is no simple formula, so we first find an approximate year y_0 , for example by

$$y_0 = \left\lfloor \frac{JD - 1721000}{365.25} \right\rfloor. \quad (\text{B.9})$$

This will (for the next 20 000 years) give either the correct year y or $y + 1$, so we calculate $\mathbf{FDS}(y_0)$; if $\mathbf{FDS}(y_0) \leq JD$, we have $y = y_0$, otherwise $y = y_0 - 1$.

To find the number w of the week, we first calculate $\mathbf{FDW}(y)$ by (B.7); if $JD < \mathbf{FDW}(y)$ we are in the summer, and otherwise in the winter *misseri*. Then

$$w = \begin{cases} \lfloor (JD - \mathbf{FDS}(y))/7 \rfloor + 1 & \text{if summer,} \\ \lfloor (JD - \mathbf{FDW}(y))/7 \rfloor + 1 & \text{if winter.} \end{cases} \quad (\text{B.10})$$

To find the month m , we compare with Midsummer ($\mathbf{FDW}(y) - 90$):

$$m = \begin{cases} \lfloor (JD - \mathbf{FDS}(y))/30 \rfloor + 1 & \text{if } JD < \mathbf{FDS}(y) + 90, \\ 3 \text{ (aukanætur)} & \text{if } \mathbf{FDS}(y) + 90 \leq JD < \mathbf{FDS}(y) + 94, \\ 3 \text{ (sumarauki)} & \text{if } \mathbf{FDS}(y) + 94 \leq JD < \mathbf{FDW}(y) - 90, \\ \lfloor (JD - \mathbf{FDW}(y) + 210)/30 \rfloor & \text{if } JD \geq \mathbf{FDW}(y) - 90. \end{cases} \quad (\text{B.11})$$

The day d of the month is 1 + the remainder in the division; alternatively, it is $JD + 1 - JD_1$, where JD_1 is the Julian day number of the first day in the month, calculated as above. (We again for mathematical convenience treat *aukanætur* and *sumarauki* as parts of month 3; they can easily be treated separately.)

Appendix C. Easter

C.1 Position of Easter in the Julian version (12th c. – 1700)

In the Julian (and Gregorian) calendar, Easter Day is a Sunday in the period 22 March – 25 April. This is a range of 35 days, i.e. exactly five weeks.

To translate the dates to the Icelandic calendar, it is convenient to first consider a day with the same day of the week as the First Day of Summer. We choose Maundy Thursday, which is three days before Easter Day; thus a Thursday in the period 19 March – 22 April. Again, this is a range of 35 days, which can be divided into five possible weeks for Maundy Thursday: 1: 19–25 March; 2: 26 March – 1 April; 3: 2–8 April; 4: 9–15 April; 5: 16–22 April. Note that the fourth possible week is exactly the range 9–15 April containing the First Day of Summer in the Julian version. Hence if Easter Day is in the fourth possible week, then the First Day of Summer coincides with Maundy Thursday. In this case, Easter Day is three days after the First Day of Summer (that is, 4 Harpa). For the four other weeks, we find that the First Day of Summer is exactly three, two or one week(s) after, or one week before Maundy Thursday. Consequently, the five possibilities for the First Day of Summer are, as stated in *Rím II* [1, p. 170 §§163–164], the 3rd week after Easter, the 2nd week after Easter, the 1st week after Easter, Maundy Thursday, or the week before Palm Sunday.

Conversely, this yields the five possibilities in Table 8 for the position of Easter in the Icelandic year. We can also state that Easter Day is the third last Sunday in the winter, the second last, the last, the first Sunday in Summer, and the second Sunday in Summer respectively.

Table 8: The five possible positions of Easter in the Icelandic calendar (Julian version). (FDS = First Day of Summer.)

	Maundy Thursday	Easter Day
1	3 weeks before FDS	24th week of winter (13 Einm.)
2	2 weeks before FDS	25th week of winter (20 Einm.)
3	1 week before FDS	26th week of winter (27 Einm.)
4	FDS	1st week of summer (4 Harpa)
5	1 week after FDS	2nd week of summer (11 Harpa)

All other holidays (and other special days) that are governed by Easter can now be placed in the Icelandic calendar by counting backwards or forwards from Easter Day. Note that this yields only five possibilities for

each day, as a consequence of the fact that each day in the Icelandic calendar has a fixed day of the week. (Neither Julian leap days, Icelandic leap weeks nor *rímspillir* affect the calculations.)

These five possibilities are discussed in *Rím I* [1, pp. 25 §30]; the discussion there centers on Shrove Sunday (*Quinquagesima*) at the beginning of Lent (seven weeks before Easter Day, and three days before Lent starts on Ash Wednesday), and the possibilities are called first – fifth *føstugangar* (“Lent entrance”). We therefore give a table for Shrove Sunday too, which is easily derived from Table 8; cf. the similar table by Beckman [1, Tab. VII] and [5, Tab. V]. (When considering Shrove Sunday, as in *Rím I*, it is convenient that Góí begin on a Sunday.) We also give the Old Icelandic expressions from [1, *Rím I* p. 25 §30] and the Easter table [1, pp. 69–70] for the five weeks. *Rím II* [1, pp. 139–140 §118] gives the Latin abbreviations QP, PG, SG, TG, QG (*quarta dominica Þorra, prima dominica Góí, secunda dominica Góí, tertia dominica Góí, quarta dominica Góí*).

Table 9: The five possible positions of Shrove Sunday in the Icelandic calendar (Julian version).

	Shrove Sunday	Old Icelandic [1]	
1	last Sunday in Þorri (24 Þorri)	<i>vika lifer þorra</i>	one week left of Þorri
2	first Sunday in Góí (1 Góí)	<i>i aundverða goe</i>	beginning of Góí
3	second Sunday in Góí (8 Góí)	<i>vika af goe</i>	one week into Góí
4	third Sunday in Góí (15 Góí)	<i>i midia goe</i>	middle of Góí
5	fourth Sunday in Góí (22 Góí)	<i>vika lifer goe</i>	one week left of Góí

Rím I summarizes as follows: “There are five *føstugangar* according to week reckoning, but 35 according to day reckoning, but the people use only the week reckoning.”^{60 61}

⁶⁰ Fimm ero fõstu gangar ath vikna tale, enn halfur fiorde togr ath dagha tali, enn vikna tal eitt þarf til alþydu tals. [1, p. 25, §30].

⁶¹ While Easter Day can fall on 35 days in the Julian calendar, Shrove Sunday can actually fall on 36 days: 1–29 February and 1–7 March; this further variation is caused by the leap day that some years is inserted between Shrove Sunday and Easter Day. Thus the range is more than 5 weeks, and there is no corresponding set of 5 *føstugangar* in the Julian calendar. (The same applies for example to Ash Wednesday and Septuagesima.) Beckman [1, p. CXC] discusses this and explains the simpler situation in the Icelandic calendar by saying that the exceptions caused by the leap day in the Julian calendar are cancelled by the exceptions caused by *rímspillir*. While this is correct, it is simpler to observe that the Julian leap day does not appear in the Icelandic calendar, and (as above) count backwards from Easter Day in the Icelandic calendar instead of counting in the Julian calendar and then converting the dates to the Icelandic calendar as Beckman [1] does.

Rím I [1, pp. 25–28 §§31–33] and *Rím II* [1, pp. 163–166 §§151–154] give the *føstugangar* for each year in the 19-year lunar cycle (i.e. for each golden number); usually there are two possibilities depending on the dominical letter of the year, and this is fully described. For example, for the first year in the lunar cycle (golden number I, see Appendix A.4), the ecclesiastical calendar reckons a new moon 23 March, and thus a full moon 5 April (always 13 days later). Easter Day is the next Sunday, which thus is in the period 6–12 April. Of these dates, 6–11 April are in the 3rd *føstugangar*, and 12 April in the 4th. Since 12 April has calendar letter D, the result (stated in *Rím I* [1]) is that the *føstugangar* is “*vika er af goe*”, unless the dominical letter is D when it is “*i midia goe*”, cf. Table 9. Repeating this argument for each golden number yields the result in Table 10, where the *føstugangar* for a year is found by looking at the row for the golden number and finding the column containing the dominical letter (the second dominical letter for a leap year) if it exists, and otherwise the column with X. This table is in accordance with the lists in *Rím I* [1, pp. 25–28 §§31–33] and *Rím II* [1, pp. 163–166 §§151–154], although for convenience we have added Julian dates for the new and full moon and for Easter Day.

Table 10: The føstugangar according to the golden number (lunar cycle) and dominical letter. X means all other dominical letters. (Julian version.)

	New moon	Full moon	Easter Day	1 <i>lif. Þ</i>	2 <i>au. G</i>	3 <i>vik. G</i>	4 <i>mid. G</i>	5 <i>lif. G</i>
I	23/3	5/4	6–12/4			X	D	
II	12/3	25/3	26/3–1/4	ABC	X			
III	31/3	13/4	14–20/4				X	DE
IV	20/3	2/4	3–9/4		BC	X		
V	9/3	22/3	23–29/3	X	D			
VI	28/3	10/4	11–17/4			C	X	
VII	17/3	30/3	31/3–6/4		X	DE		
VIII	5/4	18/4	19–25/4					X
IX	25/3	7/4	8–14/4			X	DEF	
X	14/3	27/3	28/3–3/4	C	X			
XI	2/4	15/4	16–22/4				ABC	X
XII	22/3	4/4	5–11/4			X		
XIII	11/3	24/3	25–31/3	X	DEF			
XIV	30/3	12/4	13–19/4				X	D
XV	19/3	1/4	2–8/4		ABC	X		
XVI	8/3	21/3	22–28/3	X				
XVII	27/3	9/4	10–16/4			BC	X	
XVIII	16/3	29/3	30/3–5/4		X	D		
XIX	4/4	17/4	18–24/4				C	X

The Icelandic calendar seems well adapted to the ecclesiastical calendar and the varying position of Easter. The fact that Easter Day (and other days dependent upon it) can fall on only five different days in the Icelandic calendar (and not six) is, as follows from the discussion above, due to two facts, apart from the central property that each day has a fixed day of the week:

1. The First Day of Summer is constrained to a period of seven days. (An alternative would have been to constrain the First Day of Winter to seven days in the Julian calendar; this would have given *rím-spillir* in months W6–S3 instead, and a range of eight days for the First Day of Summer. See Beckman [5, p. 29], where this is discussed in terms of choosing between the years 8 and 9 in the solar cycle for *sumarauki*, see Table 5.)
2. The seven-day period for the First Day of Summer is one of the five weeks that the range for Maundy Thursday can be divided into (or shifted from by a number of whole weeks). Again, see Beckman [5, pp. 30–31], where this is discussed in terms of choosing the dominical letter associated with *sumarauki*.

Beckman [1, p. CXC] and [5, pp. 30–31] believes that this best possible adaption of the Icelandic calendar to the position of Easter is not a coincidence, and that the Icelandic calendar was tied to the Julian calendar in a skillfully chosen way in order to achieve this system of five *fstugangar*.

C.2 Position of Easter in the Gregorian version (1700 – present)

The Icelandic Almanac [2] has a section on the position of Easter among the Icelandic months. Usually, Easter is in Einmánuður, but occasionally Easter is in Góa or in Harpa (that is, after the First Day of Summer and in the summer *misseri*). This is called *góupáskar* and *sumarpáskar* respectively. In the Gregorian calendar, Easter Day is always a Sunday in the period 22 March – 25 April. It is seen in Table 1 that *góupáskar* occurs when Easter Day is on March 22, 23 or 24 (then Einmánuður begins two days later, so Easter Day is on 29 Góa), and that *sumarpáskar* occurs when Easter Day is on April 22, 23, 24 or 25 (then Harpa begins three days earlier, so the First Day of Summer coincides with Maundy Thursday, and Easter Day is on 4 Harpa).

As noted in [2], *góupáskar* occurs on the average only about one year in 35, but rather irregularly with gaps ranging from 11 to 152 years; the last time was in 2008 and the next is in 2160. Similarly, *sumarpáskar* occurs on the average almost once in 15 years, with gaps ranging from 3 to 41 years; the last time was in 2000 and the next is in 2011.

Appendix D. Some rules from *Rím I* and *Rím II*

Rím I and *Rím II* give several rules on the position in the Icelandic calendar (Julian version) of holidays and other days in the ecclesiastical calendar. We quote and comment on some of them here, as examples both of the calendar and of how it was described. (Most rules are given in both *Rím I* and *Rím II*, and sometimes more than once in *Rím II*, in identical or similar formulations. We do not give references to all places.)

Christmas

“Christmas Day shall be in the 11th week of winter, whatever day of the week it is, except when it is a Friday or a Saturday, then it is in the 10th week, and so also when it is *rímspillir*.”⁶² Counting backwards 10 weeks (70 days) from Christmas Day (25 December), we see that this is equivalent to saying that 16 October is in the first week of winter, unless it is a Friday or Saturday or it is *rímspillir*. This is largely correct; according to Table 1, winter begins on a Saturday in the period 11–18 October, so 16 October is in the first week unless winter begins on 17 October (then 16 October is a Friday) or 18 October (*rímspillir*). However, the quoted rule also makes an exception when Christmas Day is on a Saturday. This can be explained by assuming that the weeks here are reckoned as starting on Sundays.

This rule has been discussed by Björnsson [10] and Beckman [1]; Björnsson [10, p. 290] interprets it differently, based partly on a different formulation in some manuscripts, but Beckman’s [1, p. LXXII] refutation of this seems well founded.

Rím II has an essentially identical formulation [1, p. 85 §7], but also a version without the exception for Saturday: “Christmas Day is always in

⁶² Iola dagur skal vera í enne XI viko vetrar, hvernge dagh sem hann er í viko, nema hann se fostu dagh eda þvat dagh, þa er hann í tiundu viko, ok sva þa er rimspillir er. [1, *Rím I* p. 24 §29].

the 11th week of winter, except when it is on a Friday, then it is in the 10th week, or on a Thursday if a leap year comes after”⁶³ (the last case is *rímspillir*). This version is correct if the weeks are reckoned as starting on Saturdays (as winter weeks usually are).

End of Christmas

“There should always be one Wednesday between Christmas and Midwinter, except in *rímspillir*, then there are two Wednesdays.”⁶⁴ The end of Christmas is Epiphany, 6 January. Since Midwinter (1 Þorri) is on a Friday, this rule means that it should be on the first Friday after 8 January (i.e. 9–15 January), except in *rímspillir*, which is in agreement with Table 1.

This rule is also stated several times in *Rím II* [1, p. 85 §7; p. 129 §88; p. 156 §137; p. 169 §162], with minor variations such as: “There should always be one Wednesday between Epiphany and Þorri, except when Epiphany is on a Tuesday and a leap year follows, then there should be two.”⁶⁵ A related rule is found in *Rím II*: “That Friday [Midwinter] is the second from the 8th day of Christmas [1 January], except in the 9th year of the solar cycle, then it is the third.”⁶⁶ Beckman [1, p. 84 n. 7] comments that “9th year” is correct (although some manuscripts have “8th”): *rímspillir* begins in the 8th year, but a new Julian year began on 1 January.

Candlemas

“Candlemas is in the 4th week of Þorri if it is on a Sunday or Monday, and it is not *rímspillir*, but in the 3rd week of Þorri otherwise”⁶⁷ Since Þorri begins on a Friday in the period 9–16 January, Candlemas (2 February) is 18–25 Þorri (18 Þorri only at *rímspillir*); of these dates, only 24 Þorri is a Sunday and 18 and 25 Þorri are Mondays. Hence it seems that

⁶³ er iola dagur á elliptu viku vetrar íafnan, nema hann sé á faustu dag, þá er hann á tíundu viku vetrar eða fimtu dag, ef hlaupar ferr eptir. [1, p. 129 §88].

⁶⁴ Einn skal midviku dagur avallt á milli iola ok mids vetrar, nema í rímspille, þá verða íí midviku dagar. [1, *Rím I* p. 24 §29].

⁶⁵ Einn midvikudagr skal verða milli þrettanda dags iola ok þorra íafnan, nema hinn þrettandi dagur sé á þrídu degi viku ok komi hlaupar eptir um vorit, þá skulu tveir. [1, p. 156 §137].

⁶⁶ Sá fría dagur er anar frá 8. degi iola, nema hin 9. vetur solar alldar, þá verður sa hin 3. [1, p. 84 §6].

⁶⁷ Á fjórðu viku þorra er kyndil messa, ef hun er drottins dagh eða annann dagh viku, svo ath eíge sé rímspiller, en á þrídu viku þorra hvernge dagh annarra [1, *Rím I* p. 24 §29].

this rule reckons the “4th week of Þorri” as beginning on Sunday 24 Þorri, so it seems that we here have an instance of reckoning weeks beginning on Sundays.

First Day of Winter

“Winter comes on the Saturday that is next before St Luke [18 October], but on it if a leap year comes after.”⁶⁸ The exception evidently applies only when St Luke is on a Saturday; if this happens and the next year is a (Julian) leap year, then we have *rímspillir*. (Otherwise, if winter begins on 11 October, the next summer would start too early on 8 April. Alternatively, St Luke is on a Saturday when the dominical letter of the year is E, which together with the next year being a leap year is the condition for *rímspillir*, see Section 5.2.) Hence this rule is in agreement with Table 1.

First Day of Summer

“Summer must not come earlier than before Palm Sunday, and not later than in the second week after the Easter week.”⁶⁹ Easter week is the week beginning on Easter Day, so this gives the range from the Thursday before Palm Sunday, i.e. in the second week before Easter, to the third week after Easter Day, in agreement with Appendix C.1. (Since Easter week begins on a Sunday, the weeks here are obviously reckoned from Sunday.)

Ember Days

“The Ember days in the autumn shall always be held in the fifth week, whatever day of the week Exaltation of the Cross [14 September] is, except if it is on a Saturday or Sunday, then the Ember Days shall be held in the fourth week. But if that happens, that Exaltation of the Cross is on a Sunday, and also one should add [a week] to that summer, then the Ember Days are in the fifth week, and not in the fourth, and that winter is called *rímspillir*.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Vetur kemur laugar dag, er næstur er fyri Lukas messu, en hana sialfa, ef hlaupar ferr epter. [1, *Rím II* pp. 128–129 §87].

⁶⁹ Sumar ma eigi koma fyrr enn fyri palma dagh, ok eigi sidar enn a annarre viko efter pascha viko. [1, *Rím I* p. 22 §26].

⁷⁰ Imbro dagha um haust skal halda avallt a fimto viko, hvernge dagh sem crucis messa verdr i viko, nema hun se þvatt dagh eda drottins dagh, þa skal halda imbro dagha a fiordu viko. Enn ef þat berr saman, ath cross messa er drottins dagh, enda skule þa vid sumar leggia þat sumar, þa ero ymbro dagarner a fimtu viku, enn eighi a fiordu, ok heiter sa vetur rimspiller. [1, *Rím I* p. 23 §27].

Since these Ember Days are close to the Exaltation of the Cross in the middle of September, the weeks here are evidently reckoned backwards from the end of summer; thus the fifth week comes before the fourth. The Ember Days are always a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; they thus begin on the Wednesday in the fifth or fourth week before the First Day of Winter, which means 31 or 24 days before the First Day of Winter (which is a Saturday), and thus one day before or six days after the beginning of the last summer month. (This holds for any reasonable reckoning of the weeks.) To translate the rule to the Julian calendar, we refer to Table 1. Since the last summer month S6 begins on a Thursday in the period 11–18 September (with 18 September in *rímspillir*), it can easily be verified that 14 September is a Saturday or Sunday if and only if the month begins on 11, 12 or 18 September, and that it begins on 18 September if and only if 14 September is on a Sunday and there has been a leap week in the summer, i.e. the exception given in the rule. It follows that the rule gives the Wednesday in the period 12–18 September; see Beckman [1, Tab. III p. CLXXXVI]. (Beckman [1, p. 23 n. 2] remarks that this differs slightly from the standard rule, which is the first Wednesday after 14 September, but that it seems to reflect actual Icelandic usage during the 12th century.)

Rímspillir

“*Rímspillir* is that at Althingi, St John Baptist [24 June] is on a Tuesday and a leap year comes in the spring after, and then [a week] shall be added in the summer. Then Exaltation of the Cross [14 September] is on a Sunday in the fifth week before winter. Winter comes on St Luke [18 October] and that is a Saturday. Christmas Day [25 December] is a Thursday in the tenth week. Midwinter comes three days after the Octave of Epiphany [13 January], and is a Friday first in Þorri. Candlemas [2 February] is a Monday in the third week.”⁷¹ This is all easily verified. In the last sentence, “third week” evidently means in Þorri, or equivalently, after Midwinter.

⁷¹ rímspillir er, ath um þingh skal Ions messa vera þridia dagh viko, ok skal vid sumar leggia, þviat hlaup ar kemur efter um vorit. Þa er crucis messa um haust drottins dagh a fimtu viku fyrer vetur, enn vetur kemr Lucas messo, ok er hun þvott dagh. Iola dagur er fimta dagh viku i tiundo viko. Midr vetur kemr efter enn atta dagh fra hinum þrettanda þrimur nottum, ok er faustu dagur fyrstur i þorra. Er kyndil messa annan dag viko i þridiu viko [1, *Rím I* pp. 23–24 §§27–28].

Appendix E. Special days

We here give a list of some days, or short periods of several days, with special names in the Icelandic calendar. (Some of these have already been mentioned above. Days determined by the Julian or Gregorian calendar are not included.) Almost all are described in the explanation of the Icelandic Almanac [28] (where sometimes further information is given), and many are given in the almanac [2]; some exist already in *Rím I* [1]. Traditions connected to some of them are described by Björnsson [9]. For convenience, for most of the days we also give (in parentheses) the date by Icelandic month and day (for example 1 Harpa), although this form of dating has never been used in Iceland, see Section 2.3.

aukanætur: Four extra days inserted after (or at the end of, see Section 7.2) the third summer month Sólmánuður. They thus begin on the Wednesday in the 13th week of summer (90 days after the First Day of Summer). In the Gregorian version, the beginning is on the Wednesday in the period 18–24 July.

bóndadagur (Husband's day): The first day of Þorri (1 Þorri). (The same as *miður vetur*.) In the Gregorian version, a Friday in the period 19–26 January.

fardagar (Flitting Days): The first four days (Thursday-Sunday) of the seventh week of summer [1, *Rím I* pp. 22–23 §26] (13–16 Skerpla). These were the days when tenant farmers could move from one farm to another [9, p. 29]. In the Julian version, the first day is the Thursday in the period 21–27 May. In the Gregorian version, the first day is the Thursday in the period 31 May – 6 June.

fyrsti vetrardagur (First Day of Winter): The first day in the winter *misseri*. Equivalently, the first day in the first winter month Gormánuður (1 Gormánuður). In the Gregorian version, a Saturday in the period 21–28 October. (Another tradition begins winter on a Friday, see Section 2.1.)

góuþræll: The last day of Góa (30 Góa). In the Gregorian version, a Monday in the period 19–25 March.

konudagur (Wife's Day): The first day of Góa (1 Góa). In the Gregorian version, a Sunday in the period 18–25 February.

miðgóa: Third Sunday in Góa (15 Góa).

miðsumar (Midsummer): First day in the fourth summer month, Heyannir (1 Heyannir). (In the Middle Ages, perhaps also a name for this month, or for the beginning of it, see Section 2.3.) Equivalently, Sun-

day in the 14th week of summer, except in (Icelandic) leap years, when *sumarauki* is inserted just before *miðsumar*, which then is Sunday in the 15th week of Summer. In the Gregorian version, a Sunday in the period 23–30 July.

miður vetur (Midwinter): First day in the fourth winter month, Þorri (1 Þorri). Equivalently, Friday in the 13th week of winter (i.e. 90 days after the First Day of Winter). In the Julian version, a Friday in the period 9–16 January. In the Gregorian version, a Friday in the period 19–26 January.

miðþorri: Third Friday in Þorri (15 Þorri).

sumarauki (leap week): A leap week inserted after *aukanætur* just before *miðsumar*.⁷² In the Gregorian version, it begins on 22 July when that day is a Sunday, or on 23 July when that day is a Sunday and the next Gregorian year is a leap year.

sumardagurinn fyrsti (First Day of Summer): The first day in the summer *misseri*. Equivalently, the first day in the first summer month Harpa (1 Harpa). In the Gregorian version, the Thursday in the period 19–25 April. (This is a public holiday in Iceland.)

sumarmál: The last five days (Saturday–Wednesday) of the winter *misseri*, just before the First Day of Summer. Equivalently, the incomplete 26th week of winter (26–30 Einmánuður). In the Gregorian version, *sumarmál* begins on the Saturday in the period 14–20 April. (The term was earlier used for the beginning of summer; no precise definition is known [22, Første vinterdag, sommerdag], perhaps at least sometimes the first day [21] or the first four days [39, p. 59].)

vápnatak: In the Middle Ages, the Thursday the Althingi ended, i.e. two weeks after the beginning of *þingvikur* [31, p. 329].

vetrarkoma (Winter beginning): The First Day of Winter (the same as *fyrsti vetrardagur*). (1 Gormánuður.)

veturnætur (Winter Nights): The last two days (Thursday and Friday) of the summer *misseri*, just before the First Day of Winter (29–30 Haustmánuður). (Also used less specifically for the period around the beginning of winter.) Since the summer *misseri* is 26 weeks + 2 days in an ordinary year, and 27 weeks + 2 days in a leap year, this could be regarded as the last, incomplete week of the summer *misseri*. In the Gregorian version, *veturnætur* fall in the period 19–27 October.

⁷² This is the original position, and is the position today, but in Icelandic almanacs until 1928 it was inserted just before the First Day of Winter instead, see Section 7.1.

þingvikur (Thing Weeks): In the Middle Ages, the dates for the Althingi (which lasted two weeks). Until 999 (or perhaps 998 [13]), the Althingi began in the 10th week of summer (i.e. it started on the Thursday nine weeks after the First Day of Summer), but was then moved by a week to the 11th week (starting ten weeks after the First Day of Summer) [3, Ch. VII], [1, p. 23 §26], [5, p. 26]; when the calendar had become fixed to the Julian, this was the Thursday in the period 18–24 June. In 1262, when Iceland became a Norwegian dependency, the day was changed to the day before SS Peter and Paul (i.e. 28 June in the Julian Calendar), and the connection with the Icelandic calendar was broken [1, *Rím II* p. 84 §4], [31, p. 322 n. 2].

There were also other, regional, things. [1, *Rím II* p. 84 §4] states that *vorþing* (“Spring thing”) begins five weeks and two days after the First Day of Summer (8 Skerpla). In the Julian version, this is the Saturday in the period 16–22 May. *Grágás* [18, §56 p. 96] is less specific and allows the period of the 4–6th week of summer for the *vorþing*.

þorraþráll: The last day of Þorri (30 Þorri). In the Gregorian version, a Saturday in the period 17–24 February.

References

- [1] *Alfræði íslenzk: ísländsk encyklopædisk litteratur. II, Rímtöl*, N. Beckman and Kr. Kålund, eds., Møllers bogtr., København, 1914–1916. <http://www.septentrionalia.net/etexts/alfraedi2.pdf> <http://books.google.com/books?id=MdIYAAAAAYAAJ>
- [2] *Almanak um árið 2009*, Þorsteinn Sæmundsson ed., Háskóli Íslands, Reykjavík, 2008. (See also [28].)
- [3] Ari Þorgilsson hinn fróði, *Íslendingabók*, Anne Holtsmark ed., Dreyers forlag, Oslo, 1952. English translation: *The Book of the Icelanders*, edited and translated by Halldór Hermannsson, *Islandica XX*, Cornell Uni Library, Ithaca, NY, 1930.
- [4] Jón Árnason, *Dactylismus ecclesiasticus edur Fíngra-Rím*. 1739, Reprinted S.L. Møller, Kaupmannahöfn, 1838.
- [5] N. Beckman, *Isländsk och medeltida skandinavisk tideräkning. Nordisk kultur 21, Tideräkningen*, Martin P:n Nilsson ed., Bonnier, Stockholm, 1934, pp. 5–76.
- [6] Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian*. E. J. Brill, Leiden 1996.
- [7] Bede, *De temporum ratione*. English translation: *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, translated by Faith Wallis, Liverpool Uni Press, Liverpool, 1999.
- [8] Gustav Bilfinger, *Untersuchungen über die Zeitrechnung der alten Germa-*

- nen, I: *Das altnordische Jahr*. K. Hofbuchdruckerei Carl Liebich, Stuttgart, 1899.
- [9] Árni Björnsson, *High Days and Holidays in Iceland*. Mál og menning, Reykjavík, 1995.
- [10] G. Björnsson, Um íslenzka tímatalið. *Skírnir* **89** (1915), 263–302.
- [11] Erik Brate, Nordens äldre tideräkning. *Södermalms h. allm. läroverks i Stockholm årsredogörelse 1908*. Ivar Hæggströms boktryckeri, Stockholm, 1908, pp. 1–28.
- [12] Nachum Dershowitz & Edward M. Reingold, *Calendrical Calculations*. 3rd edition, Cambridge Uni Press, Cambridge, 2008.
- [13] Ólafía Einarasdóttir, *Studier i kronologisk metode i tidlig islandsk historiskrivning*, Ph. D. thesis, Bibliotheca historica Lundensis 13, Lund University, Lund, 1964.
- [14] Trausti Einarsson, Nokkur orð um sumaraukagreinina í Íslendingabók. *Skírnir* **135** (1961), 171–174.
- [15] Trausti Einarsson, Hvernig fann Þorsteinn surtur lengd ársins? *Saga* **6** (1968), 139–142.
- [16] *Explanatory Supplement to the Astronomical Almanac*. P.K. Seidelmann ed., University Science Books, Sausalito, CA, 1992.
- [17] F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der Mathematischen und Technischen Chronologie, III*. J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1914.
- [18] Grágás, Vilhjálmur Finsen ed., Brødrene Berlings Bogtrykkeri, Kjøbenhavn, 1852. Reprinted Odense universitetsforlag, Odense, 1974. <http://www.septentrionalia.net/etexts/gragas.pdf> <http://books.google.se/books?id=O78EAAAQAAJ>
English translation: *Laws of Early Iceland, Grágás I*, translated by Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote and Richard Perkins, Uni of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 1980.
- [19] *Íslendingabók Landnámabók*. Jakob Benediktsson ed. Íslenzk fornrit 1, Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, Reykjavík, 1968.
- [20] *ISO 8601. Data elements and interchange formats – Information interchange – Representation of dates and times*. 3rd edition 2004, International Organization for Standardization.
- [21] Finnur Jónsson, Review of G. Bilfinger, Untersuchungen über die Zeitrechnung der alten Germanen, I: Das altnordische Jahr. *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* **26** (1900), 270–274.
- [22] *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid från vikingatid till reformationstid*. Allhem, Malmö, 1956–1978.
- [23] *Lagasafn 1990*. (The Icelandic Code of Law.) Dóms- og kirkjumálaráðuneytið, Reykjavík, 1991.
- [24] Nils Lithberg, *Computus med särskild hänsyn till Runstaven och den Borgerliga kalendern*. Nordiska Museets Handl. 29, Stockholm, 1953.
- [25] *Lög um 40 stunda vinnuviku*. Icelandic law 1971 nr. 88, Alþingi, Reykjavík, 1971. <http://www.althingi.is/lagas/126a/1971088.html>
- [26] *Orkneyinga saga*, Sigurður Nordal ed., Samfund til udg. af gammel nordisk litteratur, København, 1913–1916. English translation by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Geoffrey Edwards, Penguin Classic, London, 1981.

- [27] E. G. Richards, *Mapping Time. The Calendar and its History*. Oxford Uni Press, Oxford, 1998.
- [28] Þorsteinn Sæmundsson, *Almanaksskýringar*. (Explanations of [2].) <http://www.almanak.hi.is/rim.html>
- [29] Þorsteinn Sæmundsson, *Fingrarím*. <http://www.almanak.hi.is/fingra.html>
- [30] Þorsteinn Sæmundsson, “*The Icelandic calendar*” – *umsögn og athugasemdir*. (Review of a previous version of the present paper, 2010.) <http://www.simnet.is/halo/umsogn.html>
- [31] J. Fr. Schroeter, *Haandbog i kronologi, Vol. 2*. Cammermeyers boghandel, Oslo, 1926.
- [32] Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, Finnur Jónsson ed., Gyldendalske boghandel, København, 1931. http://gtcserver.com/alaric/septentrionalia/finnur_SnE.pdf
- [33] James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Routledge, London, 1998.
- [34] Þorsteinn Vilhjálmsson, Af Surti og sól, *Tímarit Háskola Íslands* **4** (1989), 87–97.
- [35] Þorsteinn Vilhjálmsson, Time-reckoning in Iceland before literacy. *Archaeoastronomy in the 1990s*, C.L.N. Ruggles ed., Group D Publications, Loughborough, UK, 1991, pp. 69–76.
- [36] Þorkell Þorkelsson, Bemærkinger til de komputistiske afhandlinger: Rímtöl i Alfræði íslenzk II. *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie 1923*, Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-selskab, Kjøbenhavn, 1923, pp. 153–178.
- [37] Þorkell Þorkelsson, Alþingi árið 955. *Skírnir* **104** (1930), 49–67.
- [38] Þorkell Þorkelsson, Ari fróði og sumaraukareglan. *Skírnir* **106** (1932), 204–210.
- [39] Þorkell Þorkelsson, Den islanske tidsregnings udvikling. *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie 1936*, Kongelige Nordiske Oldskrift-selskab, Kjøbenhavn, 1936, pp. 46–70.

Summary

The Icelandic calendar, which for centuries was the civil calendar used in Iceland, has a year of 52 weeks, i.e. 364 days; this is kept in line with the tropical year, and thus with the seasons, by the intercalation of a leap week some years. The basic subunit is the week; dates were traditionally given by the day of the week and a counting of the number of weeks. There is also a division of the year into 12 months of 30 days each plus 4 extra days.

Keywords: calendar; weeks; months.

Svante Janson
Department of Mathematics
Uppsala University
PO Box 480, SE-751 06 Uppsala, Sweden
svante.janson@math.uu.se
<http://www.math.uu.se/~svante/>

Recensioner

Kormaks saga. Historik och översättning av Ingegerd Fries. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Filologiskt arkiv 48. 78 s. Stockholm 2008. ISBN: 978-91-7402-378-7.

”Trollvinden i mig tog nu, häxa, häftig kärlek fatt, då vristen jag såg skymta, du viste.” Så inleds *Kormaks saga*, eller rättare sagt den första visan i sagan – och det är i visorna det händer i *Kormaks saga*. Sagens huvudperson är Kormak Ögmundarson (ca 935–970), en av de tidigaste skalden som man känner till namnet. Kärnan i *Kormaks saga* är 85 visor, framförallt de 64 visor som antas vara Kormaks egna. Runt visorna har fogats en prosadel där kringhändelser, personer och omgivningen sparsamt skildras.

Visorna antas allmänt vara primära, medan prosan bedöms vara yngre och sekundär. På vissa platser i sagan råder diskrepans mellan prosan och visorna, vilket tyder på att visorna och prosan har olika upphovsmän. Fries presenterar en pragmatisk och tilltalande förklaring till diskrepansen: visorna har traderats muntligt i sin fasta form medan de förklarande prosadelarna har varierats från berättare till berättare.

Ämnet för sagan är Kormaks kärlek till Stengerd, och som enda islänningasaga handlar den, från början till slut, om en mans kärlek till en kvinna. Sagan anses vara torftigt och inte alls lika romantisk som t.ex. de senare *Gunnlaug Ormstungas saga* eller *Laxdalingarnas saga*. Men att *Kormaks saga* verkligen innehåller uttryck för stark kärlek visar det inledande citatet ur sagans första visa, där Kormak drabbas av den plötsliga förälskelsen till Stengerd som skulle följa honom livet ut. Sagans visor innehåller en mängd kärleksuttryck och ett antal kärleksdialoger, t.ex. i visa 20 där Kormak diktar till Stengerd:

Vem, du under lindok,
väljer du att dela
ibland män ditt öde?
Lyser ej ditt öga?

På detta svarar Stengerd i visa 21:

Vore Frodes broder [Frode: Kormaks äldre bror som dött i Norge]
 blind, jag skulle gärna
 välja honom ändå.
 Då blir gott mitt öde.

Kormak visar också sin kärlek till Stengerd genom visornas bildspråk. Kenningarnas grundord, *heiti*, representerar ögonblickets känslor: passion, besvikelse, vrede, sorg, längtan. Kormaks *heiti* betecknar alltid en mytisk kvinnogestalt som varierar efter hans sinnesstämning, t.ex. *Frigg* 'den högsta asynjan' och *Gevn* 'den bortgivna'. I bokens slut har Fries ställt upp en förteckning över Kormaks *heiti* med hänvisningar till visornas nummer och förklaringar ur Snorres Edda.

En anledning till att sagan trots alla kärleksuttryck kan verka oromantisk är att den är tidig. Kormaks saga är en av de tidigaste isländska sagorna och den antas ha nedtecknats i början av 1200-talet, då sagastilen inte var fullt utvecklad och goda förebilder saknades. Sagens handskrifter är emellertid yngre. Fries berättar inget om sagans handskrifter i sin i övrigt mycket insiktsfulla och intressanta inledande historik, men om detta kan man läsa i Einar Ól. Sveinssons inledning till Fries förlaga, *Íslensk fornrit 8* (Vatnsdæla saga, Hallfreðar saga, Kormáks saga). Einar Ól. låter oss veta att Kormaks saga endast finns bevarad i två handskrifter, i *Möðruvallabók* (AM 132 fol.) från 1330–1370 och i fragmentet AM 162 F fol. från slutet av 1300-talet. I *Möðruvallabók* finns hela sagan med alla visor bevarade, men på vissa ställen saknas ord och visorna anses ha förvanskats över tid. AM 162 F fol. innehåller bara några sidor av sagan, men de delar som bevaras tillskrivs samma källvärde som *Möðruvallabók*.

Samtliga visor i Kormaks saga är avfattade på det strängt reglerade, snåriga och svårtolkade fornisländska versmåttet dróttkvætt. För att överföra detta till svenska har Fries gjort avkall på rimtekniken men behållit rytmen. Fries har lyckats väl med överföringen av den svårgenomträngliga fornisländskan till smidig svenska, och till visorna har hon fogat förklaringar där så behövs. Med tanke på antalet visor som Kormaks saga rymmer, är Fries översättning inget annat än en bragd.

Kormaks saga har tidigare översatts till svenska av A. U. Bååth (*Kärlek i hedna dagar* 1895) och Åke Ohlmarks (*De isländska sagorna*, band 3, *Nordvästislands sagor* 1963). Båda översättningarna

är föråldrade och är snarast att betrakta som romantiserade tolkningar av originalet. Genom Fries professionella och moderna översättning blir Kormaks saga här för första gången tillgänglig för en svensk publik.

Susanne Haugen
Institutionen för språkstudier
Umeå universitet
SE-901 87 Umeå
susanne.haugen@nord.umu.se

Recensioner

Úlfar Bragason, *Ætt og saga: Um frásagnarfræði Sturlungu eða Íslendinga sögu hinnar miklu*. 321 s. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan 2010. ISBN 978-9979-54-892-8.

I sin mycket använda lärobok *Den isländska sagan* skrev Peter Hallberg (1956, s. 15–16):

Nu ligger det så väl till, att man kan läsa om sturlungatiden i ett enastående utförligt samtida verk. Det är *Sturlunga saga*, eller kortare *Sturlunga*, ett samlingsarbete som skildrar Islands historia under elva- och tolvhundratalet. Den består av flera, ganska löst hopfogade partier. [Kort presentation av Sturla Þórðarson och hans del av boken] [...] Men i själva verket är ljus och skugga häpnadsväckande jämnt fördelade på de stridande parterna, trots att det är ett så vilt och upprört skede som skildras. De gamla isländska historieskrivarnas respekt för kalla fakta var grundmurad alltifrån Sæmundr fróðis och Ari fróðis dagar (*fróði* 'den lärde').

Man kan läsa Úlfar Bragasons nya bok som en polemik mot denna vanliga inställning, eftersom han visar att det är en mycket medveten redaktör som klippt ihop de många självständiga sagor han hade tillgång till och att det är utomordentligt viktigt att analysera berättarsätt och berättelsestruktur innan man börjar använda *Sturlunga* som källa för isländsk historia och samhälle under 1200-talet.

Úlfar Bragason inleder med ett ovanligt språkpolitiskt ställningstagande: ”Íslenska er eina málið sem ég kann til einhverrar hlítar. Þess vegna tel ég einboðið fyrir mig að skrifa um íslenskar fornbókmenntir á íslensku. Enda tel ég það skyldu mína að rita á móðurmálinu um íslensk fræði. Ef hérlendir fræðimenn hunsa íslensku verður málið fátækara en ella.” (s. 8). [Isländska är det enda språk jag kan någorlunda fullt ut. Därför tycker jag det är självklart för mig att skriva om äldre isländsk litteratur på isländska. Dessutom ser jag det som min plikt att skriva på modersmålet om isländsk filologi. Om isländska vetenskapsmän ignorerar isländskan blir språket fattigare än annars.] Självklart inser Úlfar att

detta innebär färre utländska läsare, men fler isländska. För dem som inte kan isländska kan det påpekas att Úlfar skrev om *Sturlunga* i *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* ed. Rory McTurk, 2005. Hans doktorsavhandling skrevs på engelska (*On the Poetics of Sturlunga*) eftersom han då läste i Berkeley, men den har aldrig kommit i tryck. I källförtäckningen visar det sig också att Úlfar har tryckt nio artiklar på engelska, varav sex under 2000-talet. Hans ställningstagande för modersmålet kan av somliga tyckas vara gammalmodigt, när ett- och etthaltvspråkiga vetenskapsmän i hela Norden tror sig kunna engelska så bra att de kan uttrycka sig flytande.

Úlfar bygger sin bok på över trettio års forskning (hans första artikel om en saga ur *Sturlunga* kom på tryck 1981). *Ætt og saga* bär vissa spår av att vara en kompilation, precis som *Sturlunga*. Detta ser man först och främst i upprepningar och vissa brister på överensstämmelse. Bröllopet i Reykjahólar 1119 heter sålunda Reykhólalabruðkaupið på sidan 49 men Reykjahólalabruðkaupið sidan 67. Båda är korrekta eftersom gården Reykjahólar har ändrat namn till Reykhólar, men man skulle önska konsekvens. Sådana misstag är dock få.

Full konsekvens är det däremot i rubrikerna för vart och ett av bokens tio kapitel: Alla rubriker är citat från *Sturlunga* eller *Edda* med under-rubriker av författaren. Det första kapitlet har rubriken *Flestar allar sögur voru ritaðar* hämtat från den så kallade *Sturlunguformáli* och underrubriken *Inngangur*. Det är en traditionell inledning, presentation av *Sturlunga*, handskrifterna och diverse tolkningar, d.v.s. forskningsöversikt. Underrubrikerna är beskrivande: *Sturlungas* handskrifter och de viktigaste utgåvorna. *Sturlungas* sammansättning. *Sturlunga* som objekt för litteraturforskning.

När det gäller handskrifterna och *Sturlungas* sammansättning handlar det om mycket komplicerade och redan länge diskuterade ämnen. Det kommer inte att behandlas här, men den viktigaste punkten i Úlfars behandling av ämnet är att det är lika önskvärt att man uppmärksammar verkets utveckling under medeltiden som att man binder forskningen vid mer eller mindre desperata försök på att hitta originaltexten, men att man samtidigt måste vara medveten om att de sekulära samtidssagorna inte har kommit till utan författar- eller redaktörsintentioner och att berättelsestrukturen spelar en stor roll. Úlfar citerar W.P. Ker på flera ställen och påpekar att man inte tillräckligt uppskattat hans *Epic and Romance* (först utgiven 1897, men reviderad 1908), där det bl.a. heter om *Sturlunga*:

Sturlunga is something more than a bare diary, or a series of pieces of evidence. It has an author, and the author understands and appreciates the matter in hand, because it is illuminated for him by the example of the heroic literature. He carries an imaginative narrative design in his head, and things as they happen fall into the general scheme of his story as if he had invented them. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 29.)

Redan i detta kapitel påpekar författaren det som senare blir huvudsak: Samtidssagorna följer mer eller mindre samma berättarlagar som islänningasagorna. Man bör därför vara mycket försiktig när man stämplar de förra som historiska källor, de senare som romaner. Detta tycks vara viktigt, inte minst för oss som vuxit upp med den isländska skolan. Men samtidigt behöver det inte betyda att samtidssagorna är falska källor även om man inser att konstnärliga lagar har påverkat dem. Úlfar skriver:

Veraldlegar samtíðarsögur byggjast [...] ekki á raunveruleikanum sjálfum eða eru beinar eftirmyndir af honum, jafnvel þótt sagnaritararnir hafi ef til vill ímyndað sér það, heldur á frásögnum um og viðhorfum til raunveruleikans. Það er þetta eðli heimildanna frekar en veruleikinn sjálfur sem takmarkar frá hverju sögum segja. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 31.)

[Sekulära samtidssagor bygger inte på själva verkligheten eller ger direkta bilder av den, även om sagoskrivarna kanske har inbillat sig det, utan de bygger på berättelser om och inställningar till verkligheten. Det är denna källornas natur mera än själva verkligheten som begränsar vad sagorna berättar om.]

Andra kapitlet har som huvudrubrik *Menn kunna að telja ættir sínar* och underrubriken *Viðhorf til frásagnarhefðar og sagnaritunar*, d.v.s. Folk kan föra sin släkt bakåt: Syn på berättartradition och historieskrivning. Mindre rubriker är *Sagnaskemmtun*, där författaren diskuterar berättelsen om underhållningen i bröllopet på Reykjahólar 1119 och framlägger ganska övertygande argument för en otraditionell tolkning. *Ættvísi*, släktkunskap, diskuteras med tolkningsförslag på den släktkunskap som visar sig i *Sturlunga*. Kapitlet *Jarðlegur skilningur*, jordisk förståelse (ett citat från Eddaprologen) beskriver hur berättaren tar ställning för den realistiska och jordnära beskrivningen av tillvaron.

Berättelsen i *Porgils saga ok Hafliða* om *sagnaskemmtun* har ofta diskuterats. För Hermann Pálsson var den ett bevis på att man skrivit forntidssagor mycket tidigt (se hans *Sagnaskemmtun Íslendinga*, 1962). Kristian Kålund skrev år 1901:

Beretningen om, hvem der ved dette gilde morede folk med sagafortælling og digtning, gives med søgt højtidelighed, i vendinger der forudsætter tvil

angående meddelelsens troværdighed, og som minder om indledningen til forskellige æventyrsagaer, så at man fristes til at tro, at det efterfølgende ikke er så ganske pålideligt, ja snarest redaktørens egen spøgfulde opfindelse. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 43.)

Sigurður Nordal verkar vara halvt om halvt enig med Kålund när han skriver i *Sagalitteraturen* (Nordisk Kultur VIII B, 1953):

To fortællere og to sagaer nævnes. Det siges udtrykkeligt om den ene af disse sagaer (Hrómundar saga Gripssonar, som ikke synes at være skriftlig udformet førend i det 14. aarh., medens vi ikke ved om den anden nogensinde er blevet skrevet), at fortælleren selv havde »sammensat» den og der indskydes den bemærkning, at denne saga blev fortalt for at underholde kong Sverre, der erklærede, at saadanne løgnehistorier (lygisögur) var de morsomste. Endvidere omtales »mange vers med» denne saga og en flokk, digtet af fortælleren, ved slutningen af den anden. Hvor tidligt denne beretning først er nedskrevet, er usikkert, og dens paalidelighed faar staa ved sit værd. (*Sagalitteraturen*, s. 229.)

Úlfar väljer en strikt motsatt inställning. Han argumenterar på ett övertygande sätt för att just denna sagostund har en funktion i samlingsverket, nämligen att öka trovärdigheten och dessutom passade den bra till redaktörens intentioner:

Greininni hefur hann haldið af því að hún samræmðist áformum hans. Hún hefur átt að efla sannleiksgildi *Geirmundar þáttar heljarskinns* og jafnvel ýmiss annars efnis sem ritstjórinn bætti inn í samsteypuna. Enda er í þættinum vitnað til **Hróks sögu svarta* en bæði Geirmundur og Hrómundur Gripsson voru taldir afkomendur Hróks [...] Athugagreinin á að færa sönnur á að þess konar sögur voru svo gamlar að þær voru sagðar í brúðkaupinu 1119 eða í sömu mund og elstu rit voru færð í letur hér á landi á tímum Sæmundar og Ara. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 51.)

[Kommentaren har han [redaktören] behållit därför att den passar till hans planer. Den skall styrka sanningsvärdet i *Geirmund heljarskinns tåt* och eventuellt annat material som redaktören lade till i samlingsverket. I tåten hänvisar man dessutom till *Hrókr den svartes saga*, och både Geirmundur och Hrómundr räknades bland Hrókrs efterträdare. Kommentaren skall bevisa att den typen av sagor var så gamla att man berättade dem vid bröllopet 1119, ungefär samtidigt som man skrev de första böckerna här i landet under Sæmunds och Aris tid.]

Slakten är mycket viktig i samtidssagorna och Úlfar påpekar med rätta att det inte är vilka släkter som helst det gäller. Även om namnet *Sturlunga* ger en känsla av att det först och främst handlar om en enda släkt, familjerna kring Sturla Þórðarson den äldre och hans söner, så är detta

bara halva sanningen. Redaktören för samlingsverket var förmodligen Þórðr Narfason, en av historieskrivaren Sturla Þórðarsons lärjungar och med Úlfar Bragasons egna ord:

Í frásögnum þeirra fóstura sjáum við hvernig ættir þróast, tengjast, stríða, hrörna. Jafnframt koma fram í þeim breytt viðhorf höfðingjanna til ættarinnar. Það má færa rök að því að ættakningar í samsteypunni beri vitni um þær breytingar sem voru að verða á valdakerfinu í íslensku þjóðfélagi á 12. og 13. öld. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 36.)

[I Sturlas och Þórðrs berättelser ser vi hur släkterna utvecklas, knyts till varandra, krigar, förfaller. Samtidigt visar de hövdingarnas ändrade inställning till släkten. Det kan argumenteras för tolkningen av släktförteckningarna i samlingsverket att de vittnar om samhällsförändringarna under 1100- och 1200-talen.]

Sanning eller inte, det viktiga är enligt Úlfar att läsa sig fram till berättarnas och inte minst redaktörens syfte:

Ritstjóri *Sturlungu* lítur á samsteypuna sem sanna frásögn af stórtíðindum sem höfðu gerst. Raunveruleiki þeirra birtist í því að hann leitast við að rekja þau í tímaröð eftir bestu heimildum. Trú hans á heimildir sínar og skortur á heimildarýni leiddi þó til þess að hann hafði frásagnir um löngu liðna atburði fyrir satt. Og traust hans á sannindi frásagnanna verður til þess að það skiptir hann meira máli að segja frá því sem var séð og heyrt heldur en að gera grein fyrir því hvers vegna það gerðist. Frásögnin af rás atburðanna nær yfirhöndinni á kostnað skýringa á framvindunni [...]. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 61.)

[*Sturlungas* redaktör betraktar samlingsverket som en sann berättelse om viktiga verkliga händelser. Deras verklighet visar sig i hans strävan till att placera dem på en tidsaxel efter de bästa källorna. Hans tro på sina källor parallellt med hans brist på källkritik ledde ändå till att han tog berättelser om händelser som ägt rum för länge sedan för sanning. Och hans tillit till berättelsernas sanning leder till att han tycker att det är viktigare att förtälja vad som hände, än att förklara varför det hände. Händelseförloppet tar över på bekostnad av förklaringar av utvecklingen.]

Tredje kapitlet har rubriken *Það er í frásögn haft*: Atburðir og frásögn, d.v.s. Därom berättas det: Händelser och berättelser. Underrubriker är *Frásagnarliðir* och *Frásagnarmynstur*, Berättelsemoment och Berättelsestruktur. Detta kapitel bygger mycket på Joseph Harris och Theodore M. Anderssons beskrivningar av berättelsestrukturen i islänningasagor och tåtar och författaren visar att samma lagar verkar gälla i historieskrivningen. Speciellt intressant är hans behandling av strukturen i *Svínfellinga saga* och *Guðmundar saga dýra*.

Genom åren har flera forskare haft möjlighet att diskutera Úlfar

Bragasons strukturalistiska teorier. En av de främsta Sturlungakännarna på Island är historieprofessorn Gunnar Karlsson. I sin bok *Inngangur að miðöldum* (2007) skrev han med anledning av Úlfars artiklar Frásagnarmynstur í Þorgils sögu skarða (1981) och Sturlunga saga: Atburðir og frásögn (1990) och särskilt hans behandling av två mönster, rese-mönstret och stridsmönstret:

Nú er ég engan veginn sannfærður um að frásagnarmynstur séu öllu algengari í skáldskap en í veruleika. Ef menn fara í veruleikanum utan til að leita sér frama þá tekur sú ferð óhjákvæmilega á sig ferðamynstur: utanför, prófraun og oftast heimkomu. Ef menn eiga í ófriði er nánast óhjákvæmilega hægt að sjá hann og segja frá honum í ófriðarmynstri: segja deili á aðilum, síðan deiluefni, aðgerðum aðila, höfuðátökum og loks hefnd og/eða sætt. Engu að síður er grein Úlfars þörf hugvekja um að hafa jafnan í minni þann möguleika að Sturlunguhöfundur hafi látið skáldskapinn taka völdin. Annars staðar bendir Úlfar á það sem hér skiptir líka máli að frásagnarmynstur eða frásagnarlögmál spilla ekki endilega heimildargildi því þau eru sprottin af áhugamálum fólks í heimi sagnanna og bera því vitni um hver þau voru. (*Inngangur að miðöldum*, s. 204.)

[Jag är för min del inte alls övertygad om att berättelsemönster är så mycket vanligare i diktning än i verklighet. Om man i verkligheten åker till utlandet för att söka berömmelse då får resan oundvikligen ett rese-mönster: resan ut, en prövning och som regel en hemresa. Om män ligger i strid så är det närmast omöjligt att se och beskriva detta utom i stridsmönster: parterna presenteras, sedan stridsäpplet, parternas agerande, huvudkonfrontation och slutligen hämnd och/eller förlikning. Icke desto mindre är Úlfars artikel en välbehövlig påminnelse om att man alltid bör tänka på den möjligheten att Sturlungas författare har låtit diktargåvan ta makten. I ett annat sammanhang påpekar Úlfar det som här spelar en roll, att berättelsemönster eller berättelseslag inte automatiskt försämrar källvärdet, för de har sina rötter i saganpersonernas intressen och vittnar om vilka de var.]

Att strukturalisternas mönster passar till verkligheten gör dem självklart inte mindre värda, minst av allt när det gäller historieskrivning av den typ vi har i verk som *Sturlunga*.

Fjärde kapitlet har som rubrik *Nú hefir fleira orðið senn en einn hlutur*: Samsetning veraldlegra samtíðarsagna, Nu har flera händelser ägt rum samtidigt: Skapandet av sekulära samtids sagor. Guðmundar saga dýra blir här ett viktigt exempel som jämförs med Þórðar saga kakala. Författaren redogör noga för de berättelser där tidsaxeln bestämmer och många forskare har klagat över att mindre betydande småsaker döljer de stora linjerna, man ser inte skogen för bara träd. Men författarens avslutningsord i detta kapitel är mycket välgrundade:

Höfundar samtíðarsagna skildu vel smáatriðin og samhengið milli mikilla og örlagaríkra atburða hafa þeir talið sig sýna með því að segja frá eins mörgu og þeir þóttust vita réttast um þessa atburði. Skilningur þeirra var bundinn því valdakerfi, sem þeir bjuggu við, þar sem skipti máli hverrar ættar menn voru, hverjum þeir tengdust og hverja þeir áttu að vinum. Og til að lýsa valdastreitunni milli höfðingjanna notuðu þeir það frásagnarmynstur sem var runnið þeim í blóð, ófriðarmynstrið. Í því frásagnarferli tóku menn þátt eftir þeim hlutverkum, sem í boði voru, stöðu sinni, innræti því, sem þeim var skapað, og vilja sínum. (*Ætt og saga*, s. 104.)

[Samtidssagornas författare förstod detaljerna mycket väl, och de trodde sig kunna visa sammanhangen mellan viktiga händelser genom att berätta om så mycket som de trodde sig veta kring dessa. Deras förståelse var begränsad av den maktstruktur de levde i, där det var av betydelse vilken släkt man tillhörde, vilka man var förbunden med och vilka som var ens vänner. Och för att beskriva maktkampen hövdingarna emellan använde de det berättelsemönster de hade i blodet: stridsmönstret. I den berättelseprocessen fyllde individerna de roller som fanns, utifrån sin ställning, sin medfödda karaktär och sin vilja.]

Femte kapitlet har rubriken *Þeim er sögurnar eru frá*: Persónulýsingar, De det berättas om: Personbeskrivningar och delas i avsnitten *Ættartölur*, *Mannlýsingar* och *Bragðarefurinn Sturla*, d.v.s. Släktsregister, Personbeskrivningar och Trickstern Sturla. Med utgångspunkt i Lesley Cootes beskrivning av släktregistren som minnen: "These memories, including their 'forgettings', were in part formed by groups of people – families, friends, acquaintances, neighbours, patrons – sitting around a genealogical tree" behandlar författaren först och främst Sturlungarnas släktsregister och deras namn. Här skulle det ha varit roligt att jämföra hur släkten beskrivs i *Sturlunga* med det häftiga släktregistret i Uppsala-Eddan, där man har gjort ett helt annat val – eller om vi vill helt andra 'forgettings'. Intressant i detta kapitel är författarens beskrivningar av Snorri Sturluson och hans far, Sturla Þórðarson (the trickster). Snorris karaktärsbeskrivning samt berättelserna kring nidstrofen kan visserligen göras annorlunda (se Heimir Pálsson: *Fyrstu leirskáldin, Són 9/2010*), men beskrivningen av Snorris bröder och deras död är mycket betydande. Trickstern Sturla får en mycket övertygande behandling och i sin helhet visar detta kapitel som de övriga en mycket respektfull betraktning av samtidssagorna.

Sjätte kapitlet har rubriken *Sturla Þórðarson sagði fyrir Íslendinga sögur*: Frásagnarháttur, Sturla Þórðarson dikterade islänningasagor: Berättarmetod. Huvudrubriken är ett citat från Sturlunguformáli, ett

inledande kapitel där redaktören informerar om att Sturla har dikterat 'islänningasagor'. Det är inte alls den genren texten syftar till, utan att redaktören kallar det stora verket Sturla har skrivit för sagor i plural, i st. f. det nu vanliga *Íslendinga saga*. Pluralen har förklarats med att det går att se *Íslendinga saga* som en samling biografier, *sögur*, om islänningar. I kapitlet gör Úlfar Bragason ett mycket intressant försök på att särskilja berättaren Sturla och aktören Sturla, för just i denna centrala del av samlingen är Sturla Þórðarson en av huvudaktörerna.

Sjunde kapitlet har rubriken *Hann vissa eg alvitrastan og hófsamastan: Frásagnarviðhorf*. Återigen gäller det ett citat från Sturlunguformálinn, redaktörens ord om Sturla Þórðarson som den mest kunniga och mest måttfulla av alla. Úlfar Bragason ger här en mycket intressant bild av historikern och diktaren Sturla och hans *frásagnarviðhorf*, 'point of view', inte minst genom att se honom i ljuset av sina släktingar, fadern och farbröderna. Den bild Úlfar utläser ur Sturlas berättelse om fadern Þórðr är inte bara vacker utan också mycket övertygande. Eftersom det i detta kapitel också handlar om branden i Flugumýri och Sturlas beskrivning av denna, blir det en av bokens absoluta höjdpunkter. Författarens strukturalistiska syn på berättelserna kan visserligen diskuteras, men han visar kapitel för kapitel att han behärskar metoden och har en mycket trovärdig analytisk ställning till sitt material.

Åttonde kapitlet har ännu en rubrik som är hämtad från Sturlunguformáli: *Saga Hrafns er samtíða sögu Guðmundar ins góða*: Samsetning samsteypu, d.v.s. Hrafns saga går parallellt med den gode Guðmundurs saga: Sammansättningen av ett samlingsverk. Nu handlar det inte längre om författaren Sturla utan om redaktören Þórðr Narfason, den som styrde eller satte samman det samlingsverk vi har i *Sturlunga*. Därmed handlar det om problemen som uppstår när man skapar en *samsteypa*, ett samlingsverk. Genom att granska Prästsagan (Guðmundr Arasons prästsaga) och Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar kastar författaren ett mycket viktigt och spännande ljus över omarbetningen av självständiga sagor, förkortningar och förlängningar. Varje redaktör har ett syfte och ingenting är fullständigt ogenomtänkt. Författaren gör ett betydande försök på att analysera redaktörens planer och syften med omarbetningarna. Om det nu är korrekt att *Sturlungas* redaktör var Þórðr Narfason, så gällde det en lärjunge till Sturla Þórðarson, och Úlfar Bragasons beskrivning av de två personerna blir rätt trovärdig.

Nionde kapitlet har som rubrik *Hann gerðist höfðingi mikill*: Túlkun ritstjóra. Detta är ett viktigt kapitel och behandlar idén om hövdingen på

ett betydande sätt. Hövding och goði (gode) är enligt Úlfars tolkning inte synonymter, utan hövding är ett steg på vägen: ”Sumir goðar voru taldir höfðingjar (en. *aristocracy*), aðrir ekki.” (s. 244). Detta passar rätt bra med författarens tolkning av *Sturlunga*, men inte med min egen tolkning av *Njáls saga*. Där har jag funnit det vara en huvudregel att höfðingi är ett ord man använder om godar, utom i ett fall, nämligen när Njáll placerar sig själv bland hövdingar (se Heimir Pálsson: Getting Rid of the Rebels, *Nordistica Tartuensia* 14/2005).

I detta kapitel (s. 230) behandlar Úlfar en episod som han senare (s. 264) tar som exempel på att redaktören själv kunde iscensätta händelser. Det gäller systrarna Þóras samtal när de tvättar sitt linne på Þingvellir. Båda två har fått namn efter sin morfarsmor (inte *amma* som det står i *Ætt og saga*) Þóra, dotter till norske kungen Magnús berfœttr. Det är ett mycket bra exempel på en iscensättning, men man kan undra om det inte också visar redaktörens litteraturkunskap: Förebilden kan mycket väl vara de kungliga personerna Guðrún och Brynhildr i Völsungasagan när de tvättar sitt hår och talar om ödesdigra händelser!

Úlfar Bragasons tolkning av Geirmundar þáttur och hans sätt att läsa in tåten i sammanhanget är litteraturvetenskapligt mycket övertygande.

Tionde och avslutande kapitlet är som sig bör en uppsummering och slutsatser. Här argumenterar författaren mycket övertygande för den tes han har framfört i boken: Först måste man ha klart för sig berättelsestrukturen och syftet innan man kan börja använda *Sturlunga* som källa om samtiden. Och en viktig slutsats blir: ”Bæði formgerð Íslendingasagna og veraldlegra samtíðarsagna og viðhorf til þeirra á miðöldum benda til þess að ekki sé rétt að skoða þær sem ólíka sagnaflokka, frekar sem ólíka undirflokka í sama sagnakerfi.” (s. 268). [Både islänningasagornas och de sekulära samtidssagornas struktur samt hur man såg på dem under medeltiden tyder på att man inte skall betrakta dem som olika genrer utan som olika avdelningar i samma sagasystem.]

I sista kapitlet (s. 264–5) summerar Úlfar Bragason det han tycker är viktigt att observera i det samlingsverk vi har framför oss, genom att konstatera i sju punkter vad han tycker är kännetecknande för redaktörens arbete och hur vi kan analysera honom. Summeringen kan grovt refereras så:

1. Redaktören ansåg sig ha rätt att ändra källtexterna.
2. Redaktionen är i högsta grad medveten och visar god förståelse av ämnet samt av berättelsens möjligheter.
3. Redaktörens egna inskott visar hans förmåga att iscensätta.

4. Redaktören var medveten om hurdan ett samlingsverk skulle vara. Han väljer medvetet sagor som handlar om konflikter under 1100- och 1200-talen och sätter in dem i ett berättelsesystem.
5. Tideräkning och genealogier är grunden till den polyfona berättelsen.
6. Redaktören vill främst uppmärksamma två händelser: slaget på Örlygsstaðir og branden i Flugumýri.
7. Man kan betrakta *Sturlunga* som ett tudelat system av konflikter där den sista delen handlar om hämnd för den första.
8. Det finns ett påtagligt samband mellan de olika sagorna i *Sturlunga*. Samlingsverket favoriserar kloka och fredälskande hövdingar som Geirmundur heljarskinn, Jón Loftsson och Þórðr Sturluson men tar avstånd från häftiga män som inte tänkte sig för.

Úlfar Bragason har inte sagt sista ordet om *Sturlunga*. Men de som tar till orda om detta oerhört perplexa och spännande polyfona verk i framtiden får ta hänsyn till hans åsikter och hans mycket lärda behandling av verket. Man kan bara tacka.

Och för att sluta en recension med petitesser, så hade det varit en tjänst för läsare och framtidens debattörer om man följt upp källförteckningen (som är imponerande i sig själv) med hänvisningar om vilket kapitel i boken som står närmast vilken av Úlfar Bragasons tidigare uppsatser.

Heimir Pálsson
Institutionen för nordiska språk
Uppsala universitet
Box 527, SE-751 20 Uppsala
heimir.palsson@nordiska.uu.se

Recensioner

Rikke Malmros, *Vikingernes syn på militær og samfund: Belyst gennem skjaldenes fyrstedigtning*. 384 pp. Århus and Copenhagen: Aarhus universitetsforlag 2010. ISBN: 9788779344976.

Although it modestly fails to mention the fact, Rikke Malmros's book is a Danish PhD thesis, defended at Aarhus University just before its publication in April 2010. Basically it is a collection of papers. What in the table of contents looks like eleven chapters actually consists of four previously published papers, two new chapters and separate English summaries of the four papers and the main introductory chapter.

The backbone of the work is its longest and oldest article: "Leding og skjaldekvad" (pp. 55–161), submitted as Malmros's "hovedfagsspeciale" (master's thesis) back in 1982 and published, in a lightly revised version, in the venerable *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* in 1985. This was a bold and sustained exercise in using the notoriously difficult evidence of skaldic court poetry to elucidate Danish/Norwegian military organisation in the 11th century. (Although the sources mostly concern Norway, the author was more interested in Denmark; the system was probably universal enough for the mismatch not to matter.) "Military organisation" at that time (the end of the Viking Age, including the reigns of Canute the Great of Denmark and England and Harald Hardrada of Norway) refers primarily to the institution of naval levy (Danish "leding", Old Norse "leiðangr"), best known from 12th and 13th-century law. In projecting its history back to the Viking Age, Malmros very effectively links the poetic evidence with fresh results of naval archaeology to refute as anachronistic the naval tactics described in 13th-century sagas. This allows her not only to assume an early origin for the naval levy as described in later legal sources – as well as clarifying a number of technical details – but to draw fundamental conclusions as to the very nature of Viking society. Those conclusions are derived not only

from the skaldic and archaeological evidence but inspired by the concepts and findings of social anthropology. The result essentially plays down the role of the independent yeomanry who controlled land as private property and instead emphasises a more political control of land, wealth and people by hereditary elites ruling the traditional chiefdoms which developed into the “early states” of Christian kings.

Malmros extended the scope of her study in two papers originally published in 1999 and 2005 respectively, both in the Danish *Historisk Tidsskrift*. The first, entitled “Den hedenske fyrstedigtningens samfundssyn” (pp. 163–209 in the present book), goes back to the poetry composed in praise of the rulers of pre-Christian Norway, analysing its social and political ideology in support of the author’s view of Viking society. The second, “Kongemagt og leding i Norge og Danmark omkring 1100: Belyst ud fra den tidlige kristne fyrstedigtning” (pp. 211–288), revisits the poetic corpus of the first study to draw wider conclusions about ideology and social structures.

The latter paper provoked a critical response in the same journal the following year. Malmros was given the opportunity of an immediate reply which is also included in the present volume (“Fyrstedigtningens kildeverdi: En diskussion med Niels Lund”, pp. 289–303). While the argument in the first instance concerns the admissibility of skaldic verse as historical evidence, the reply also gives Malmros the opportunity to summarise some central arguments of her earlier papers.

The new introductory chapter (“Den danske ledingsforsknings historie”, pp. 15–47) is no summary of the book (and tellingly, it has only two references to the subsequent papers). Rather, it concentrates on historiography (almost exclusively Danish): how sixteen Danish historians since the mid-18th century have treated the naval levy in the context of their general view of Danish society in the Viking Age. Introducing herself as the sixteenth historian, Malmros has the opportunity to explain the background of her ideas and methods.

The historiography is followed by a separate introduction to the oldest article (“Indledende bemærkninger til Leding og skjaldakvad”, pp. 49–53, the only chapter not covered by the English summary), following up on developments in naval archaeology and admitting to some weaknesses in the use of poetic sources.

Apart from a common bibliography (actually three separate ones, pp. 333–365) and indices (pp. 367–384), the articles are published as independent texts, the previously published ones apparently unchanged (an

error on p. 161 is even pointed out, but not corrected). Cross-references are added only when Malmros refers to her earlier papers which are included in the book; thus there are no cross-references at all from the first article to show where the same subjects are taken up in the more recent papers. A good index can, to some extent, replace cross-references. Unfortunately there is no subject index, only an index of poets and poems and an “Index of Names” which leaves out place names (when I came to the interesting mention of “Vorbasse” on p. 299 and could not recall if it had been more thoroughly discussed earlier, there was no index to assist me) but covers persons and texts. I was able to use it, for instance, to find references to early Icelandic law (because this is a text with a name: “Grágás”) in the three more recent papers (pp. 179 (1999), 236 (2005), 298–299 (2006)), always in connection with an explanation of the term “þegn” which occurs in the court poetry. But no index could tell me that the same term is also explained in the first paper (p. 144 (1985)).

Presenting a book-length study as a collection of essays, as opposed to a monograph, inevitably raises the double question of unity and repetition. However, unity is a virtue which Malmros’s book does not lack. The different papers, written over a period of thirty years and ranging widely in detail, share a unifying purpose in investigating the political arrangements of the late Viking Age, primarily in Denmark. They also have a strong common focus in the use of the skaldic corpus as historical evidence.

In the latter respect Malmros may be seen as following a trend launched by the late Peter Foote back in 1978 and represented by scholars like Judith Jesch or Edith Marold. Unlike them, however, Malmros is herself neither a trained philologist nor (as revealed by the rather erratic spelling of names) a highly competent reader of Old Norse. Instead, she has to approach her material through translations and commentary, aided by the published research and private advice of specialists in the field. This is a situation familiar to many medieval historians from their work with the unavoidable Latin sources: we do (to a sadly varying degree) read the language but not to the extent of independently tackling crucial interpretations. In her approach to this limitation, Malmros is explicit, methodical and realistic. Her book might serve as an inspiration to historians who feel linguistically challenged vis-à-vis their sources.

The consistent focus of Malmros’s papers invites repetition far beyond the level we would consider normal in a monograph. Returning to

material or ideas does serve a purpose, however, as long as it represents development. This is the case with the most important aspects of Malmros's study. Her general idea of Viking Age society finds further support in each new paper. Her approach to the difficult skaldic corpus gains in sophistication from the first paper – citing mainly the simplified translations of Finnur Jónsson (1912–1915) checked against the criticism of E. A. Koch (1923–1944) – to the recent ones benefitting from much closer contact with contemporary skaldic scholarship. Malmros's use of naval archaeology is largely restricted to the earliest paper, yet it is followed up in the new introduction to that paper (and honoured with a separate bibliography).

Repetition without development is striking, on the other hand, in Malmros's use of social anthropology (pp. 46 (2010), 156 (1985), 205 (1999), 213, 219, 261–262 (2005)). It is a crucial ingredient in the first paper, supported by references to authorities, of whom the most recent were published in 1978. It is then reiterated (most importantly in the 2005 paper) with exactly the same references and no indication that Malmros has followed developments in the field. I have no reason to doubt that modern scholarship would still support the argument but given its importance for the whole study it surely deserved at least the same attention as that bestowed upon naval archaeology. A less striking case is a single study repeatedly cited (pp. 11, 167, 289–291) as almost the only evidence that the bulk of skaldic court poetry must be approximately as old as claimed by the saga writers. This is a fine study (although published in 1983) and highly pertinent, demonstrating stylistic developments between periods. Since, however, the argument is central to Malmros's method, the reader ought to know that the conclusion is supported by a whole body of observations, especially on the development of metrics.

To include an example of the more marginal subjects of Malmros's study, I return to the previously mentioned treatment of the term “þegn” in four different papers. Its (uncertain) etymology is mentioned in 1985. Its Anglo-Saxon cognates are mentioned in 1999 and more fully in 2005. Its occurrence in Danish legal language is mentioned in 1985. Its main sense in Norwegian legal language is stated in 1985, 1999 and 2005 and a special meaning (short for “þegngildi”) added in 2006. Its use in Icelandic legal language is introduced in 1999 and correctly said to be the same as in Norwegian. In 2005 and 2006 the Icelandic term is given a different sense, almost certainly incorrect (the two cited instances (chap-

ters 20 and 45) may be ambivalent but the third one (ch. 48) does not fit). Furthermore, the references to the Danish translation of Grágás as “Volume III” do not fit the dubious four-volume structure imposed upon the 19th-century Grágás edition in the bibliography (p. 338; it was published under three different titles, the first one in four parts). Apart from my disagreement, the reader would obviously be better served by a single treatment of the issue with cross-references as required.

Here I was trying to fault Malmros on a point central to my interest (cf. my article in *Scripta Islandica* 2009) while very peripheral to her study. Perhaps others can peck similarly tiny holes in some of her other arguments. It should not matter much. Hers is not a single chain of thought where the failure of a link lets the whole load drop. Rather, her study is a web where different arguments pull in the same direction. It may be likened to the great Titanic: not in principle unsinkable but to bring it down would require a massive flooding of several compartments. I would be surprised if it does not stay afloat as an acknowledged and important contribution to the history of Viking Age Scandinavia as well as a remarkable achievement in the use of skaldic poetry as historical evidence.

Helgi Skúli Kjartansson
University of Iceland
School of Education
Stakkahlíð
IS-105 Reykjavík, Iceland
helgisk@hi.is
<https://uni.hi.is/helgisk/>

Recensioner

Vår eldste bok. Skrift, miljø og biletbruk i den norske homilieboka. Bibliotheca Nordica 3. Red. Odd Einar Haugen och Åslaug Ommundsen. 315 s. Oslo: Novus forlag 2010. ISSN: 1891-1315, ISBN: 978-82-7099-589-9.

Den nyutkomna volymen *Vår eldste bok* består av en samling uppsatser om olika aspekter av den berömda Norska homilieboken (AM 619 4to; hädanefter N). Ursprunget till den aktuella boken är ett seminarium om N, hållet vid Oslo universitet den 8 maj 2006. Ett antal av de bidrag som då presenterades har publicerats som volym nr 3 i serien Bibliotheca Nordica, med Odd Einar Haugen och Åslaug Ommundsen som redaktörer. Som namnet på den recenserade volymen antyder är N den äldsta bevarade norska boken, och den brukar dateras till tiden strax efter 1200. (Äldre fragment finns dock, t.ex. AM 655 IX 4to, tre blad ur en legendöversättning.) N är en mycket viktig källa till kunskapen om bl.a. det norska språket, den medeltida norska skrift- och handskriftskulturen och predikoverksamheten i det medeltida Norge. I *Vår eldste bok* tas i princip samtliga dessa aspekter upp till förnyad behandling, undantaget språket. Trots att det är fråga om en volym med separata artiklar, och inte en monografi, omfattas därmed de flesta intressesfärer; såväl den som är intresserad av själva handskriften, dess skrift och sammansättning, som den som är intresserad av det teologiska innehållet i homilierna har något att hämta.

Rent allmänt är det mycket glädjande att N på nytt uppmärksammas. Den har, trots ett relativt stort antal undersökningar i det förgångna, inte getts lika stor uppmärksamhet som dess isländska motsvarighet, Isländska homilieboken, förvarad vid Kungliga biblioteket i Stockholm (Holm. perg. nr 15 4to).

Innehållet i *Vår eldste bok* ser ut enligt följande. Efter ett kort förord följer en allmän introduktion till N (Nye blick på homilieboka), skriven

av Odd Einar Haugen och Åslaug Ommundsen, med upplysningar om handskriftens fysiska utformning, dess historia (så långt bak vi känner den), dess innehåll, dess förhållande till andra handskrifter med homilier o.s.v. Här beskrivs i korthet de aspekter som behandlas mer utförligt i de uppsatser som sedan följer. Dessa har följande upphovsmän: Kirsten M. Berg (*Homilieboka – for hvem og til hva?*), Michael Gullick (*Skriveren og kunstneren bak homiliebogen*), Bas Vlam (*En kalligrafisk analyse av skriften i homiliebogen*), Ranveig Stokkeland (*Skrivarproblemet i homilieboka*), Åslaug Ommundsen (*Homilieboka og dei liturgiske fragmenta*), Gisela Attinger (*Musikknotasjonen i antifonariefragmenter i Riksarkivet*), Aidan Conti (*Gammelt og nytt i homiliebokens prekenunivers*), Olav Tveito (*Wulfstan av York og norrøne homilier*), Kristin B. Aavitsland (*Visualisert didaktikk? Det talte og det malte ord i norsk middelalder*) och slutligen Kirsten M. Berg och Michael Gullick (*Innhold og oppbygging av AM 619 4^o*). Boken innehåller dessutom en ordlista över sådana facktermer som inte kan förutsättas vara allmänt kända, samt engelska sammanfattningar av uppsatserna.

Det märks att man har försökt att göra boken tillgänglig för en större brukarkrets än enbart specialiserade medeltidsforskare. Den inledande översiktsartikeln av Haugen och Ommundsen introducerar på ett lättillgängligt sätt bokens olika teman, och läsaren är därmed förberedd på det som följer. Den ovan nämnda ordlistan över fackord ökar också tillgängligheten avsevärt.

En av bokens längsta uppsatser är den av Kirsten M. Berg: *Homilieboka – for hvem og til hva?* Här diskuteras i vilket syfte handskriften ursprungligen kan ha framställts, och vilken funktion den har haft. Författaren konstaterar att handskriften inte innehåller tillräckligt många homilier, i synnerhet för fastetiden och påsken, för att ha kunnat fungera som ett heltäckande predikoförråd för en församling. Berg föreslår att den har fungerat som en "homiletisk handbok", med ett antal homilier som skall tjäna som mönsterpredikningar, tillsammans med ett antal andra texter som är av intresse i homiletisk verksamhet.

Berg analyserar också handskriftens fysiska utformning för att se vad den kan avslöja om den ursprungliga funktionen. Hon konstaterar att N utmärker sig gentemot de flesta övriga norröna predikohandskrifter genom att dels ha särskilt rikt utsmyckade initialer, dels ha särskilt utförligt markerade majuskler vid t.ex. inledningen till en ny mening. Parallellt till såväl initialerna som de markerade majusklerna står att finna i engelska handskrifter, och dessa företeelser kan därmed läggas till de

övriga drag av engelsk påverkan som man tidigare har iakttagit i den äldsta norska skriftkulturen (till skillnad från den isländska). Bergs artikel belyser på ett mycket intressant sätt den kulturella bakgrunden till N.

Ett av de områden som får utförlig behandling är skrift och skrivare i N. Frågan om antalet skrivarhänder i handskriften behandlas framför allt i Stokkelands bidrag, men även Gullicks och Vlams uppsatser kommer in på detta tema. Gullick analyserar i första hand utsmyckningen av initialerna i handskriften, och detta gör han på ett mycket förtjänstfullt sätt. Han slår också fast att N har skrivits av en hand, med en mycket kortfattad motivering. Att han inte motiverar denna ståndpunkt utförligare beror naturligtvis på att ämnet diskuteras i detalj av Stokkeland, men man hade gärna sett att han hade hänvisat till annan plats där en utförligare prövning görs (t.ex. Stokkelands bidrag). Med tanke på de stora metodiska problem som skrivarattribution ofta innebär (se nedan) kan ett sådant kortfattat konstaterande te sig provocerande.

Vlams intressanta och originella bidrag består av en analys av skriften i N, följd av ett återskapande av en sida ur denna handskrift. För undertecknad, som upplever ductus, d.v.s. penndragens ordningsföljd och riktning, som ett synnerligen svårhanterligt fenomen, är det upplyftande och lärorikt att ta del av Vlams beskrivning av de penndrag som graferna i handskriften är uppbyggda av. Självklart infinner sig frågan om andra möjligheter är tänkbara, men samtidigt motiverar Vlam tydligt de principer enligt vilka linjerna har rekonstruerats.

Undersökning av skrivarhänder är förknippat med stora metodiska svårigheter, och ett problem är naturligtvis att det i regel inte går att verifiera resultaten. Många olika modeller för skrivarattribution har presenterats, men det råder i själva verket stor oenighet om vilka kriterier som är giltiga. Frågan är alltså: hur stora måste likheterna vara för att man skall räkna med en skrivare? Och hur stora skillnader kan man räkna med inom en och samma hand? I nuläget har vi dessutom bristande kunskaper om hur en skrivarhand utvecklas under tid, och man kan naturligtvis anta att det som en skrivare producerar i början av sin verksamhetstid kan skilja sig en hel del från det som produceras i slutet.

De flesta forskare är dock ense om att de tyngst vägande argumenten vid skrivarattribution står att finna inom kategorin paleografi, d.v.s. skrivarens utformning av enskilda skrivtecken. Stokkeland tar i sin uppsats om skrivarfrågan också sin utgångspunkt här; i själva verket arbetar hon uteslutande med paleografiska kriterier och lägger ortografi och språkliga kriterier helt åt sidan. Hennes studie har genomförts på så vis att hon

har undersökt två blad ur vart och ett av de skrivarpartier som skall kontrasteras, undantaget ett, vilket bara består av ett blad och fyra linjer. De två bladen inom respektive parti är åtskilda, för att man på så vis också skall kunna se den variation som föreligger inom respektive parti. Ett sådant förfarande vid skrivarattribution är absolut gångbart om man enbart arbetar med paleografiska kriterier; trots att det material som undersökts är relativt litet finns ändå tillräckligt med grafer för att en kontrastering skall vara möjlig. Om man däremot vill komplettera den paleografiska analysen med prövning av ortografiska och språkliga kriterier ger detta tillvägagångssätt ett för litet undersökningsmaterial. Stokkelands undersökning av skrivarfrågan är metodiskt tillfredsställande, men det jag däremot efterlyser är en inledande diskussion av metoden och de kriterier som skall undersökas. Jag tycker det är acceptabelt att lägga ortografiska och språkliga kriterier åt sidan och enbart arbeta med paleografi, eftersom forskningens ståndpunkt är att det sistnämnda har tyngst beviskraft i frågor som rör skrivare. Däremot hade man gärna sett att de olika kriterierna diskuterades och värderades i högre utsträckning, och att det motiverades varför vissa drag undersöks men andra inte (som har använts i andra undersökningar av liknande slag).

Paleografiska kriterier delas ofta upp i s.k. makropaleografiska (val av graftyp som representation för ett visst grafem) resp. mikropaleografiska drag (utformningen av en enskild graftyp), där de sistnämnda anses ha tyngst beviskraft vid skrivarattribution. En sådan uppdelning görs inte i denna undersökning, men utifrån beskrivningen av de undersökta dragen är det klart att Stokkeland framför allt har undersökt företeelser som faller inom ramen för mikropaleografiska kriterier ("Utforming"). Dessutom prövas bruket av abbreviaturer och uppsättningen av ligaturer i de olika partierna. Det sistnämnda faller snarast inom makropaleografien, medan det förstnämnda skulle kunna klassificeras som antingen makropaleografi eller ortografi, beroende på vilken syn man har på abbreviatureernas grafematiska status.

De data som utvinns ur denna excerpering analyseras därefter på ett mycket bra sätt. Stokkeland visar att paleografisk variation mellan partierna förvisso kan iakttas, men hon håller ändå för troligt att det är fråga om en skrivare i hela N. Hon konstaterar att skrivarattribution i stor utsträckning kommer an på om man ser skillnader eller likheter som mest relevanta. Detta konstaterande är av stor vikt för frågan om skrivarattribution. Om man anser det förstnämnda vara fallet tvingas man ofta räkna med många skrivarehänder, och så har ofta (men inte alltid) gjorts i äldre

forskning. Numer finns en större tendens att ta fasta på likheterna, med det resultatet att antalet skrivare ofta reduceras. Till det senare förhållningssättet ansluter sig Stokkeland, och det återfinns för övrigt på många håll i volymen. Jag delar också denna uppfattning; det är en rimlig utgångspunkt att räkna med minsta möjliga antalet skrivare. Samtidigt måste man konstatera att alla skrivarattributioner inte görs med samma grad av säkerhet. Om t.ex. paleografisk variation kan iakttas mellan två skrivarpartier måste trots allt en högre grad av osäkerhet föreligga än om de två partierna är helt identiska. Att två partier med mindre paleografisk variation sinsemellan *kan* vara utförda av samme skrivare är inte detsamma som att det är bevisat att så är fallet. En och samme skrivare kan utan tvekan uppvisa skillnader i olika sammanhang, beroende på tidsavstånd, genre, skrivmaterial o.s.v. Utmaningen är då att skilja sådan variation från sådan som faktiskt har sitt ursprung i skilda skrivare.

Undertecknad är inte någon specialist på medeltida homiletik, och de uppsatser som rör detta område, de av Aidan Conti och Olav Tveito, kan jag bara bedöma på en yttlig nivå. De är i alla händelser välskrivna och tillgängliga för en icke-specialiserad läsare. Jag skall dock tillåta mig att göra ett mindre nedslag i Tveitos diskussion av påverkan från Wulfstan av York på dikten *Völuspá*, eftersom denna är av ett stort principiellt intresse för hur litterär påverkan yttrar sig under medeltiden. Till stor del baseras antagandet om påverkan (här och på andra håll) på likheter i ord och ordsamband, men även på vissa likartade motiv. Som exempel på ordlikheter mellan Wulfstan och *Völuspá* som används som argument för påverkan kan tas *mansworan* och *menn meinsvara* resp. *morðwyrhta* och *morðvargr*, där de första orden i paren är fornengelska former som framför allt används i skrifter av Wulfstan, medan de senare orden förekommer i *Völuspá*. (Framhållandet av dessa ordpar synes förvisso inte från början ha sitt ursprung hos Tveito, utan tidigare forskare, t.ex. Dorothy Bethurum.) Antagandet om påverkan måste så vitt jag förstår förutsätta att de fornnordiska orden har tillkommit genom att de skapats med de fornengelska orden som förebild, d.v.s. att t.ex. *morðwyrhta* har stått som modell till och genererat lemmat *morðvargr*.

Ett sådant förlopp är svårt att bevisa, i synnerhet om orden inte är identiska, samtidigt som ordet som skall vara resultatet av påverkan faller in i ett känt ordbildningsmönster i det språk i vilket det förekommer. De ovan redovisade ordlikheterna kan knappast heller sägas vara bindande, och Tveito uttrycker sig också mycket försiktigt. Orden *morðwyrhta* och *morðvargr* har naturligtvis vissa likheter, bl.a. i det att båda är samman-

sättningar med *morð-* i förleden och har en efterled som börjar på *w-/v-*. Efterlederna är dock inte morfologiskt identiska; det fornengelska *wyrhta* hör samman med verbet *wyrcan* ('utföra, göra' etc.), medan den fornisländska sammansättningen har det kända appellativet *vargr* som efterled. Att det nordiska ordet skulle ha uppkommit med det engelska som förebild är således ett vågat antagande.

Även parallellen *mansworan/menn meinsvara* måste sägas vara något osäker. Det är inte otänkbart att det nordiska adjektivet *meinsvari*, veterligen bara belagt i den behandlade strofen i *Völuspá*, kan ha uppstått utan det nämnda engelska substantivet som förebild. *Mein-* är mycket frekvent som förled i sammansättningar, och dessutom med efterleder som betecknar yttranden eller att yttra (t.ex. *meinmæli* och *meinmæla*). På så vis faller *meinsvari* in i ett känt ordbildningsmönster, och förekomsten av fornengelskans *mansworan* kan inte sägas vara tvingande för ett samband mellan *Wulfstan* och *Völuspá*.

Jag vill dock betona att detta inte skall förstås som kritik mot Tveito. Han uttrycker sig hela tiden med största försiktighet (till skillnad från många av hans föregångare), och parallellen med *Völuspá* är bara en liten del av artikeln. Uppsatsen i övrigt belyser på ett intressant sätt kopplingarna mellan England och Norge under denna tid.

Sammanfattningsvis är *Vår eldste bok* en synnerligen läsvärd och intressant samling uppsatser, för såväl den specialiserade medeltidsforskaren som en bredare allmänhet. Det enda man hade kunnat önska sig ytterligare vore en förnyad språklig behandling av denna högintressanta handskrift. Om det nu är en och samme skrivare som har skrivit hela handskriften, hur skall då den språkliga variationen förstås? Hur fördelar sig variationen i handskriften? Stora filologiska och språkvetenskapliga framsteg har trots allt gjorts sedan Elis Wadsteins stora undersökning av *N:s ljudlära*. Tveklöst finns fortfarande stora upptäckter att göra, och förhoppningsvis kommer *Vår eldste bok* att bidra till att forskare tar sig an detta spännande studieobjekt på nytt.

Lasse Mårtensson

Institutionen för nordiska språk

Uppsala universitet

Box 527, SE-751 20 Uppsala

lasse.martensson@nordiska.uu.se

http://www.nordiska.uu.se/personal/lassemartensson

Recensioner

Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2. From c. 1035–1300 (Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages II). 2009. Kari Ellen Gade (ed.). 2 parts, cvii + 914 pp. Turnhout: Brepols. ISBN: 978-2-503-51897-8.

This is the second publication in the nine-volume project *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (*SkP*), whose volumes I have awaited with great expectation. The first published volume, *Poetry on Religious Subjects*, number VII in the series, appeared in 2007. The second published volume is a companion to *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1. From Mythical Times to c. 1035* (*SkP I*), to appear in spring 2011. This volume (*SkP II*) is in two parts (*Poetry by Named Skalds c. 1035–1105* and *Poetry by Named Skalds c. 1105–1300*; and *Anonymous Poetry*), and over 840 pages of the editions cover the poetry, over eight hundred stanzas and half-stanzas, of fifty-nine named skalds presented in chronological order, from Magnús inn góði Ólafsson to Sturla Þórðarson, as well as three poems and thirty-three *lausavísur* by anonymous skalds. The ambition is to “provide a critical edition, with accompanying English translation and notes, of the corpus of Scandinavian poetry from the Middle Ages, excluding only the Poetic Edda and closely related poetry” (p. xlvii). The edition is “based on a thorough assessment of all known manuscript evidence and on a review of previous editions and commentaries” (*ibid.*).

Part 1 opens with more than one hundred pages containing the *Contents* (v–xi), the *Volume Editor's Preface* (xiii–xiv), *Acknowledgements* (xv–xvi), *General Abbreviations* (xvii–xx), *Sigla used in Volume II* (xxi–xl), *Technical Terms used in this volume* (xli–xliv), a presentation of the *Contributors* (xlv–xlvi) in order of the number of (half-)stanzas edited: Kari Ellen Gade (510); Diana Whaley (189); Judith Jesch (47); Jayne Carroll (32); Valgerður Erna Þorvaldsdóttir (21); Lauren Goetting (15); Russell Poole (6); Matthew Townend (2); and finally an *Introduc-*

tion (xlvii–cvii). The introduction is divided into six sections: 1) *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages – a New Edition* (xlvii–xlviii, presenting the edition); 2) *The Poetry in this Volume* (xlviii–lv, presenting its poetry); 3) *How to use this Edition* (lv–lviii), giving advice on usage; 4) *Sources for Skaldic Poetry Cited in the Kings’ Sagas: Manuscripts, Facsimiles, and Editions* (lviii–lxxx), a thorough assessment of all known manuscript evidence and a review of previous editions and commentaries; 5) *Biographies* (lxxx–xcviii), giving short information in *Royal Biographies* (5.1) and *Biographies of Other Dignitaries* (5.2). Finally, there are presentations (xcviii–cvii) on *Meters* (6.1), *Poetic Diction* (6.2) and *Normalizations* (6.3).

The normalizations have been made in accordance with the language of the presumed dates of the composition of the poem or stanza. They have been divided into three periods, i.e. 900–1200, 1200–1250, and 1250–1300. Only five of the fifty-nine skalds and nine of the thirty-three *lausavísur* belong to the two younger periods. A discussion of the principles will appear in *SkP I* (p. lvi Fn. 13).

Part 2 concludes with a *Bibliography* (851–873), an *Index of First Lines* (875–894), and *Indices of Names and Terms* (895–914), divided into *Ethnic Names*, *Indigenous Terms*, *Mythical and Legendary Names*, *Nicknames*, *Personal Names*, *Place Names*, and *Miscellaneous Names*. In all, the volume runs to slightly more than 1000 pages.

Each skald is introduced with a *Biography*, containing information, if there is any, on the life of the skald. Any information is basically drawn from the sagas. Þjóðólfr Arnórsson is listed (p. 57) in *Skáldatal* as a poet for both Magnús inn góði and Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson, which dates his poetry to the period 1035–1066. According to *Hemings þátrr Áslákssonar*, he died at the battle of Stamford Bridge, and in *Sneglu-Halla þátrr* he is said to have been from Svarfaðardalur in northern Iceland. The biography of the skalds treated in the two volumes appears only in the first, due to the strictly chronological treatment of the skaldic poetry. This is the case for Sigvatr Þórðarson (p. 11); for some skalds, however, the reader is directed to *Royal Biographies* or *Biographies of Other Dignitaries*.

The biographical information on the skalds is followed by the title(s) of their poem(s) with a table presenting the order of the stanzas in comparison to the order in other manuscripts and in Finnur Jónsson’s *Den norsk-islandske skjaldediktning* (*Skj*) and Ernst Albin Kock’s *Den norsk-isländska skaldediktningen* (*Skald*). This can be exemplified by

Þjóðólfr's *Sexstefja*, composed in honour of Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson's career. This poem is edited by Diana Whaley, and she agrees with Finnur Jónsson on the order of the first five stanzas, but differs on the rest. This is presented in a table (p. 59):

<i>SkP</i>		<i>Skj</i>
1–5		1–5
6	Þjóð veit, at hefr háðar	7
7	Stólþengils lét stinga	6
8	Ok hertoga hneykir	25
...		

The explanation of the deviations from *Skj* is given later in the introduction to the poem (pp. 108–112). Whaley states (p. 109) that stanzas 2–8 relate adventures in the Mediterranean. (The first stanza is about the Battle of Stiklestad.) She suggests that stanza number 8 “seems to refer to the same incident as stanza 7” (p. 120), a stanza that mentions *grikjar* “Greeks”, and both stanzas treat the stabbing out of the eyes of the Byzantine emperor, but she does not comment on any possible reason why Jónsson placed this stanza as number 25. The preceding stanza (24 in *Skj*) describes Haraldr's imposing appearance and ruthlessness in quelling opposition. *SkP* is in this respect more logical and sound than Snorri Sturluson's ordering of Þjóðólfr's stanzas in *Heimskringla* and Jónsson's and Kock's normalized versions, Kock following *Skj*. Whaley also excludes some of the stanzas in *Skj*.

The number of stanzas belonging to a poem thus sometimes differs in *SkP* and *Skj*. The same poet's *Magnússflokkur* (ÞjóðA *Magnfl* pp. 61–87) praising Magnús inn góði Ólafsson, also edited by Whaley, may be used to illustrate how different editors of skaldic poetry disagree on whether or not stanzas belong to a poem. Jónsson's opinion is that the poem consists of 25 stanzas, but Whaley accepts only 19 (p. 58). She does not include stanzas 15–18 and 23–24 of Jónsson's version, but admits that it is problematic to justify why certain stanzas belong to the same poem, as “the external evidence of the prose context and the internal evidence of style point in different directions” (p. 62). The stanzas omitted by Whaley are instead treated as loose stanzas about Magnús Ólafsson in *Danaveldi* (pp. 88–103) by the same skald (ÞjóðA *Magn*).

Björn krepphendi's *Magnússdrápa* (pp. 395–405), edited by Kari Ellen Gade, can serve as an example of how individual poems are treated

in this volume. After the title of the poem and the name of the editor, information is provided in the *Introduction* which presents the poem. *Magnússdrápa* commemorates Magnús berfættr's early military exploits in Halland and in Norway as well as his first expedition to the west. The summary of the poem is accompanied by references to stanzas in other poems dealing with the same events. The presentation leads to a relative dating of the *drápa*, in this case 1099–1100, as it does not mention Magnús's later military campaigns. Finally, references to literature treating the poem are given.

The poem is then rendered in the normalized language of its day, as in the first stanza of *Magnússdrápa* (page 396).

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Vítt lét Vǫrsa dróttinn | Brenndi buðlungr Þrænda |
| — varð skjótt rekinn flótti — | — blés kastar hel fasta — |
| — hús sveið Hǫrða ræsir — | — vakði viskdælsk ekkja — |
| Halland farit brandi. | víðs mǫrg herǫð síðan. |

After the normalized stanza, a prose version is given:

Dróttinn Vǫrsa lét Halland farit vítt brandi, flótti varð rekinn skjótt; ræsir Hǫrða sveið hús. Síðan brenndi buðlungr Þrænda víðs mǫrg herǫð; hel kastar blés fasta; viskdælsk ekkja vakði.

This version is followed by a translation:

The lord of the Vǫrsar [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús] advanced far and wide in Halland with the sword; the fleeing ones were pursued with haste; the ruler of the Hǫrðar [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús] scorched houses. Later the lord of the Þrændir [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús] burned a great many *herǫð*; the death of the wood pile [FIRE] breathed life into the blaze; the widow from Viskedal lay awake.

It is debatable whether the prose version or the original stanza should be translated. A poetic translation would have given:

Far and wide had the lord of the Vǫrsar [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús]
 — the fleeing ones were pursued with haste — the ruler of the Hǫrðar
 [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús] scorched houses — beaten Halland with
 the sword. The lord of the Þrændir [NORWEGIAN KING = Magnús]
 burned — the death of the wood pile [FIRE] breathed life into the blaze
 — the widow from Viskedal lay awake — a great many *herǫð* later.

It all depends on which user the edition is intended for, a question to which I shall return.

After the translation, the manuscripts preserving the stanza are presented. The manuscripts in which the poem occurs and the folios are given, e.g. *K*^x (593v–594r) = AM 63 fol^x (Kringla) according to the list of sigla for manuscripts used in the volume (pp. xxxvi–xxxix). This section is followed by a presentation of deviating readings. The method of presenting the readings differs from the variants given in Finnur Jónsson, who also gives allographic variants, e.g. line 1 *Skj varsa*: *SkP* vorsa. However, these readings are easier to understand than Finnur Jónsson's, e.g. line 7 *SkP*: viskdølsk: 'viskdøsk' E, 'viskdolǫ' 42^x, vígdølsk H, víkdølsk Hr (p. 396), as compared to *Skj A* (p. 435): visc-: vig- 66, vik- Hr, dǫlsc: dǫsk 47; dolǫ 42. As is evident from the example, different sigla are sometimes used. In *SkP* E (= *Eirspennill*) corresponds to Jónsson's 47 (AM 47 fol), and the editors of *SkP* have chosen to use the names given to the manuscripts, whereas Jónsson preferred the number of the manuscript in the Arnarnagnæan collection, although with a number of exceptions. Thirdly there is a list of the editions in which the stanza is published.

Next follows a summary of the context of the stanza, in this case "Magnús campaigned in Halland" (p. 396). Finally, the treatment of the stanza is finished by *Notes* (pp. 396–397). These give, as far as possible, the dating and the political "background" of the campaign, both unknown for *Magnússdrápa*. There are also comments on the semantics of words which were translated differently in Jónsson, e.g. *let farit vítt* (adv.) "advanced far and wide", which *Skj B* takes as *vítt* (adj.) *Halland* "the wide Halland". The change is made with the motivation that the word is used adverbially on numerous occasions in the poem with a number of references given to the stanzas and to Kock's *Notationes Norræne* (NN §§1148, 2785). The *Notes* also include possible explanations for variant readings. Furthermore, information is provided on places and place-names, e.g.: "Halland is a district in the south-west of present day Sweden (then a part of Denmark)" (p. 397). Kennings are also explained: *hel kastar* 'the death of the wood-pile [FIRE]' (ibid.), and names of mythical characters are treated. It is stated that "*Hel* is a synonym for 'death', but it is also the name of Hel, the daughter of Loki" (p. 397). Whether *hel* is a synonym for 'death' can be debated, and Gade states (ibid.) that "[i]t is not clear whether the word should be taken as a pers[onal] n[ame] or as a common noun here." In *Skj B* this part of the stanza is normalized

hel víðs kastar blés fasta and translated “stormen lod ilden flamme op” (the tempest made the fire blaze up). Gade’s deviation from Jónsson’s interpretation which involves a more complex syntax (*blés kastar hel fasta (vakði viskdælsk ekkja) víðs*) is sound, but is not commented upon. The *Notes* give a first impression of thoroughness, but this impression is misleading. The normalization *blés kastar hel fasta* was, in fact, suggested by Kock in *Skald I* (p. 200); this is not mentioned, however. Furthermore, the noun *herð* “districts” is marked in italics, but not commented upon; perhaps there will be a wordlist for Old Norse special terms in *Skj IX*?

The fact that the poetry is presented in a normalized version changes the focus slightly from what is stated in *How to use this Edition*: “*SkP* is intended for a variety of users: for students and scholars of Old Norse and other medieval European languages and literature, for scholars in cognate disciplines such as history, archaeology, the history of religion, and comparative literature, and for users whose primary interest is in skaldic poetry” (p. lv). I agree that the edition is very useful for scholars and students in cognate disciplines. However, the translations into English are based on the prose versions of the stanzas, a fact that leads the students that do not understand Old Norse away from the text itself somewhat. As for scholars and students of Old Norse and other medieval European languages, I am not so sure. It is claimed (p. lvi Fn. 13) for the diplomatic editions of the poetry that the electronic version contains these as well as images. I have found the images of the manuscripts at www.skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/db.php (skalds > poems > manuscripts > images), but not the diplomatic editions. It seems though as it is still necessary to consult Finnur Jónsson’s *Skj A* for quick references to the various readings. Scribal errors have been corrected, but are noted in the *Readings*, so that is not a great problem. But the normalizations have been made to “satisfy the requirements imposed by syllable-counting metres” (p. cvi), an operation taking the reader a step further away from the textual witnesses and the scribes. A remedy for that problem would have been to include the diplomatic editions. It would of course have caused thicker volumes, but would have helped the linguistic and philological specialists. As it is now, such a specialist will need both *SkP* and *Skj*. The information in the *Notes* in *SkP* suggests that it is fully covering earlier research, but this is actually not the case. To find other possible interpretations of the poetry, *Skj B* and *Skald* together with *NN* need to be consulted. A final minor comment is that the titles of individual

poems, regardless of whether they occur in the manuscripts or were given by Finnur Jónsson, can only be found in the table of contents. An alphabetic index would have been helpful, but perhaps it will appear in the final volume.

However, the information given in the biographies of the skalds and in the context of the poems and the careful discussion of readings and interpretations in the *Notes* make this a very useful tool for the student and scholar interested in cognate disciplines and in Old Norse society. This impression is greatly strengthened by the fact that this is the first complete academic edition of skaldic poetry in English, a fact that widens the group of readers enormously beyond people versed in Danish and Swedish. My judgment of the great usability of the book is strengthened by the series' conservative treatment of the poems. Finnur Jónsson added stanzas to poems and moved stanzas within poems with no support from the manuscripts and with no motivation for his interference. The series *Scaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* treats the poetry with good judgment on manuscripts and motivates the choices thus employing sound textual criticism, something Finnur Jónsson never did, or at least never explained. Furthermore, the information provided in the biographies and in the notes is very helpful to anyone who is interested in Old Norse Poetry and Old Norse elite society.

Rune Palm

Department of Scandinavian Languages

Stockholm University

SE-106 91 Stockholm

rune.palm@nordiska.uu.se

Recensioner

Margaret Clunies Ross, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga*. 163 s. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010. ISBN: 9780521514019, paperback ISBN: 9780521735209.

Margaret Clunies Ross bok, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga*, riktar sig, som titeln antyder, speciellt till gymnasieelever, universitetsstudenter på lägre nivå och allmänna läsare och inte i första hand till specialister på islänningasagor och mediehistorik, trots att författaren i förordet säger att hon hoppas att boken ska vara intressant också för dem. Avsikten med boken är att diskutera de isländska släktsagorna och annan fornisländsk litteratur av samma slag i ljuset av ny forskning, behandla deras ursprung och utveckling, deras litterära egenskaper, bevarandet av litteraturen, utgåvor av sagorna och olika förhållningssätt till dem, från medeltiden till våra dagar. Författaren delar in boken i nio kapitel och inleder med att diskutera Island under medeltiden. Därefter definierar han texterna i andra kapitlet och diskuterar deras ursprung och ålder i tredje och fjärde kapitlet. Det femte kapitlet behandlar uppdelningen av sagorna i ämnesgrupper (släktsagor, fornaldarsagor, samtidsagor etc.) och kapitel sex och sju redogör för berättarsätt, stil, perspektiv och struktur. Det åttonde kapitlet handlar om bevarandet av litteraturen och dess spridning. Slutligen handlar det sista kapitlet om receptionen av litteraturen.

Boken är mycket innehållsrik och det är risk för att de som inte känner den fornisländska litteraturen särskilt väl ganska snabbt ger upp, inte minst på grund av att bokens korta format varken ger författaren möjlighet att behandla ämnet grundligt eller ge utförligt med exempel för att förklara det. För universitetsstudenter i isländsk medeltida litteratur samt forskare som inte känner den väl kan denna bok emellertid ge en översikt från författarens synvinkel över forskningen inom genren och dess nuvarande ståndpunkt. Bokens största fördel är att den berör de flesta om-

rådena inom den fornisländska litteraturen, även om författaren lägger störst vikt vid de isländska släktsagorna, som också är de mest utforskade, mest lästa inom universiteten och av vilka det finns nya översättningar till engelska. Men som författaren helt riktigt påpekar har forskarna visat andra genrer ökad uppmärksamhet under de senare åren. Det är därför olyckligt att boken inte behandlar helgonsagorna, som enligt många forskare troligtvis har en viktigare del i utvecklingen av släktsagorna än författaren verkar anse. Sagorna om de isländska biskoparna behandlas också styvmoderligt i boken, kanske därför att många av dem är besläktade med helgonsagorna vad gäller innehåll och struktur. Det är däremot i full överensstämmelse med ny filologisk forskning att författaren mycket noggrant redogör för sagornas bevarande i handskrifterna samt publiceringen av dem, deras spridning och mottagning. Margaret Clunies Ross har själv varit mycket aktiv inom forskningen på detta område.

De som känner till Margaret Clunies Ross forskning överraskas inte heller av bokens fokus på det muntliga bevarandet av sagorna. Under de senaste decennierna har forskare åter visat intresse för det muntliga bevarandet av den fornisländska litteraturen och försökt att ta reda på hur det har kunnat utvecklas till skrivna berättelser. Detta är dock ett ämne som är svårt att hantera, vilket författaren med rätta nämner, men hon har i fråga om detta utgått från nyare forskning om levande muntliga berättelser på andra håll i världen och bevarandet av dem. Författarens kritik av resultaten hos Carol J. Clover beträffande nedskrivningen av sagorna i boken *The Medieval Saga* (s. 42–43, 139) tyder på att Clunies Ross anser att berättelserna kan ha existerat i muntlig form i sin helhet, precis som vissa forskare för omkring etthundra år sedan hävdade.

Detta medför att boken berättar mycket lite om författarna av den fornisländska litteraturen. Snorri Sturluson anses dock vara författaren till *Heimskringla* och *Edda*, vilket verkar vara i strid med Clunies Ross betoning på muntligt bevarande. Författaren lägger inte heller någon större vikt på att förklara för läsarna den miljö som litteraturen skapades i. Därför blir hennes svar på frågan varför islänningarna skrev så mycket under medeltiden ganska vaga. Många forskare har emellertid försökt belysa den medeltida kyrkans påverkan på skrivandet på Island, speciellt påverkan från klostren, samt det kulturella kapital som isländska stormän möjligtvis såg i litteraturen, både den muntliga och den skriftliga. Kartan över Island i början av boken visar visserligen biskopssätena samt några av de viktigaste klostren och hövdingasätena. Men Reykholt

visas inte, där Snorri Sturluson bodde, och inte heller Staðarhóll, där hans kusin Sturla Þórðarson mestadels bodde, trots att dessa två män är bland de få medeltida författare på Island som man känner till namnet. Inte heller nämns klostren på Staður i Skagafjörður eller Þverá i Eyjafjörður, vilka forskarna har tillmätt en stor betydelse i utvecklingen av skriftkonsten i landet.

Margaret Clunies Ross kritik av olika forskares åsikter beträffande när de olika släktsagorna skrevs ner är däremot motiverad. Hennes kritik stämmer faktiskt överens med åsikter som många andra har lagt fram. Problemet är bara det att någon form av relativ kronologi mellan sagorna är en förutsättning för att kunna skapa sig en idé om deras utveckling. Det är också riktigt, vilket påpekas i boken och andra har även framhåvt, att muntliga berättelser kan påverka senare versioner av en skriven saga. Samspelet mellan muntliga berättelser och skrivna är komplext i ett samhälle där enbart få bar på kunskaper avseende skrivkonsten, vilket antagligen var fallet på Island under medeltiden.

I enlighet med Margaret Clunies Ross tidigare diskussion av den fornisländska litteraturen i hennes bok *Prolonged Echoes: Old Norse Myths in Medieval Northern Society* betraktas denna litteratur som *en* litterär genre som i sin tur indelas i undergrupper, inte minst beroende på ämne, tid och plats för de händelser som utspelas. Denna uppdelning tar hänsyn till den äldre uppdelningen av texterna enligt deras innehåll, och den förklarar till en viss del det att berättelser som finns i olika undergrupper inte desto mindre kan likna varandra på många sätt. Margaret Clunies Ross påpekar t.ex. att släktuppräknings berättelser är vanliga i många underkategorier inom den fornisländska litteraturen och att de mera bestämmer formen på berättelserna än forskare under de senaste årtiondena har velat erkänna. Vidare handlar både de isländska släktsagorna och samtidssagorna om konflikter och hämnd, och i de isländska släktsagorna händer saker som inte är mindre överkliga från en modern synvinkel än innehållet i fornaldarsagorna. Berättarsättet är också i allmänhet detsamma i de isländska släktsagorna och i kungasagorna, och den narrativa strukturen i olika kategorier inom den fornisländska litteraturen är ofta mycket lik. Emellertid tar denna uppdelning inte hänsyn till grupperingen av annan medeltida europeisk litteratur som många forskare anser ha påverkat den fornisländska.

Margaret Clunies Ross menar att det går att förklara att berättelser, som annars uppfattas som realistiska av moderna läsare, behandlar ämnen som är mer besläktade med fantasi än verklighet. Enligt henne be-

höver varje enskild berättelse nämligen inte följa samma ”literary mode” hela tiden, utan kan t.ex. både vara tragisk och komisk. Berättelserna visar ofta ”mixed modality”, liksom i postmodern litteratur. På detta sätt kan författaren förklara Kormáks förtrollning i *Kormáks saga*, religiösa motiv i *Valla-Ljóts saga* och dikten *Darraðarljóð* i *Njáls saga*. Det vore också möjligt att förklara kristet präglade passager i *Fóstbræðra saga* på detta sätt, vilka länge har förvirrat både läsare och forskare. Författaren kopplar också sagornas stil och perspektiv till ”literary mode”. Sagornas perspektiv och värdering kan dock inte helt och hållet förklaras på detta sätt. Under de senare åren har t.ex. många forskare behandlat etiken i den fornisländska litteraturen, särskilt heder och vänskap i sagorna, men detta upptar bara mycket liten plats i Margaret Clunies Ross bok. Det är särskilt påfallande hur litet kvinnors roll i sagorna diskuteras, eftersom åtskilliga studier har publicerats om detta ämne under de senaste decennierna, även om författaren inte har varit bland dem som har skrivit om ämnet. I själva verket upptar personbeskrivningar en mycket liten plats i boken, trots att de är bland sagornas viktigaste kännetecken.

Detta visar i ett nötskal bokens största brister, men också dess fördelar. Boken bygger på Margaret Clunies Ross forskning om den fornisländska litteraturen under decennier samt på hennes omfattande kunskap inom medeltidsforskningen. Hon tar dock lite fel när hon anser att gården Stöng i Þjórsárdalur hade legat infrusen i en glaciär (s. 3) och hon blandar ihop Óskar och Ólafur Halldórssons namn i samband med studiet av *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða* (s. 41). Boken presenterar författarens resultat. Andras närmanden till den fornisländska litteraturen omtalas framför allt i samband med hennes egen forskning; annat lämnas oberört. Här finns därför ingen utförlig diskussion av antropologisk forskning om sagorna eller av forskning om dem ur genusperspektiv, och europeiskt inflytande på den fornisländska litteraturen underskattas även om forskningen tyder på att det var avsevärt. Vidare får den forskning störst plats som har skrivits på engelska eller åtminstone har översatts till detta språk. Men ett av de viktigaste kännetecknen för forskningen om den fornisländska litteraturen är just hur internationell den är och att resultaten har publicerats och fortfarande publiceras på många språk. Boken ger därför inte en korrekt statusbild av forskningen i olika länder, även om engelskspråkiga forskare har bidragit mycket till denna forskning under de senaste decennierna. Detta leder till att *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga* bara till ett visst mått är en ”up-to-date analysis of the medieval Icelandic saga genre” (s. ix), men inte desto

mindre är den en intressant bok för studenter och allmänheten i engelskspråkiga länder, om läsarna är klara över dess begränsningar.

Úlfar Bragason
Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum
– Stofa Sigurðar Nordals
Þingholtsstræti 29
Box 1220, IS-121 Reykjavík
ulfarb@hi.is

Översättning: Veturliði Óskarsson och Lasse Mårtensson.

Berättelse om verksamheten under 2009

Isländska sällskapets styrelse hade under år 2009 följande sammansättning:

ordförande: Henrik Williams

vice ordförande: Heimir Pálsson

sekreterare: Agneta Ney

skattmästare: Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist

klubbmästare och vice sekreterare: Maja Bäckvall

övriga ledamöter: Ulla Börestam, Lasse Mårtensson och Daniel Sävborg (redaktör för *Scripta Islandica*).

Ordförande för Isländska sällskapets Umeå-avdelning är universitetslektor Susanne Haugen.

Vid årets slut hade sällskapet 186 medlemmar. Sällskapets inkomster under året uppgick till 86 920 kronor och utgifterna till 80 224 kronor.

Den femtionionde årgången av *Scripta Islandica*, Isländska sällskapets årsbok 59/2008, har utkommit. Den innehåller uppsatserna "Clári saga. A case of Low German infiltration" av Marianne Kalinke, "En plats i en ny värld. Bilden av riddarsamhället i Morkinskinna" av Ármann Jakobsson, "Catholic saints in Lutheran legend. Postreformation ecclesiastical folklore in Iceland" av Margaret Cormack, "Social eller existentiell oro? Fostbrödradråp i två isländska sagor" av Tommy Danielsson, "On the etymology of compounded Old Icelandic Óðinn names with the second component *-fǫðr*" av Mathias Strandberg, "Bautasteinn – fallos? Kring en tolkning av ett fornvästnordiskt ord" av Susanne Haugen, "Anmärkningsvärda suspensioner i DG 11 4to (Codex Upsaliensis av Snorra Edda) – spåren av en skriven förlaga?" av Lasse Mårtensson och Heimir Pálsson, "Harald hos jätten Dovre. Forntida initiationssymbolik i en medeltida tåt" av Stefan Olsson samt "Eddan och texttermerna.

Kort terminologiskt genmäle till Henrik Williams” av Bo-A. Wendt. Årgången innehåller även debattartikeln ”Literacy in the looking glass. Vedic and skaldic verse and the two modes of oral transmission” av Michael Schulte, recensioner av *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, volume VII: *Poetry on Christian Subjects* 1–2, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross, anmäld av Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, *Reflections on Old Norse Myths*, red. Pernille Hermann, Jens Peter Schjødt och Rasmus Trantum Kristensen, anmäld av Else Mundal, *Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World. Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross*, ed. Judy Quinn, Kate Heslop och Tarrin Wills, anmäld av Pernille Hermann samt berättelse om verksamheten under år 2007 av Henrik Williams och Agneta Ney.

Vid sällskapets årsmöte den 27 april höll docent Olof Sundqvist ett föredrag med titeln ”Om hängningen, de nio nätterna och den dyrköpta kunskapen i *Hávamál* 138–145: den kultiska kontexten”. Vid sällskapets höstmöte den 19 november höll docent Heimir Pálsson ett föredrag med titeln ”Det är kort mellan nöd och död – också i rim. Snorri Sturlusons hemkomst från Norge år 1220”.

Den 9–15 augusti anordnade Isländska sällskapet *The 14th International Saga Conference* i samverkan med Institutionen för Nordiska språk vid Uppsala universitet, Institutet för språk och folkminnen samt Högskolan i Gävle.

Uppsala den 22 april 2010

Henrik Williams

Agneta Ney

Författarna i denna årgång

Ingvil Brügger Budal, førsteamanuensis, NLA Høgskolen, Bergen

Finnur Friðriksson, universitetslektor i isländska, Háskólinn á Akureyri

Susanne Haugen, universitetslektor i nordiska språk, Institutionen för språkstudier, Umeå universitet

Heimir Pálsson, docent, Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet

Helgi Skúli Kjartansson, professor i historia, Pedagogiska fakultetet, Háskóli Íslands

Svante Janson, professor i matematik, Matematiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet

Lasse Mårtensson fil.dr, forskare, Institutionen för nordiska språk, Uppsala universitet

Rune Palm, docent, universitetslektor i nordiska språk, Institutionen för nordiska språk, Stockholms universitet

Úlfar Bragason, forskningsprofessor, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Háskóli Íslands

Scripta Islandica ISLÄNSKA SÄLLSKAPETS ÅRSBOK

- ÅRGÅNG 1 · 1950: *Einar Ól. Sveinsson*, Njáls saga.
- ÅRGÅNG 2 · 1951: *Chr. Matras*, Det færøske skriftsprog af 1846. – *Gösta Franzén*, Isländska studier i Förenta staterna.
- ÅRGÅNG 3 · 1952: *Jón Aðalsteinn Jónsson*, Biskop Jón Arason. – *Stefan Einarsson*, Halldór Kiljan Laxness.
- ÅRGÅNG 4 · 1953: *Alexander Jóhannesson*, Om det isländske sprog. – *Anna Z. Osterman*, En studie över landskapet i Völuspá. – *Sven B. F. Jansson*, Snorre.
- ÅRGÅNG 5 · 1954: *Sigurður Nordal*, Tid och kalvskinn. – *Gun Nilsson*, Den isländska litteraturen i stormaktstidens Sverige.
- ÅRGÅNG 6 · 1955: *Davíð Stefánsson*, Prologus till »Den gyllene porten». – *Jakob Benediktsson*, Det islandske ordbogsarbejde ved Islands universitet. – *Rolf Nordenstreng*, Völundarkviða v. 2. – *Ivar Modéer*, Över hed och sand till Bæjarstaðarskogur.
- ÅRGÅNG 7 · 1956: *Einar Ól. Sveinsson*, Läs- och skrivkunnighet på Island under fristatstiden. – *Fr. le Sage de Fontenay*, Jonas Hallgrímssons lyrik.
- ÅRGÅNG 8 · 1917: *Porgils Gjallandi (Jón Stefánsson)*, Hemlängtan. – *Gösta Holm*, I fågelberg och valfjära. Glimtar från Färöarna. – *Ivar Modéer*, Ur det isländska allmogespråkets skattkammare.
- ÅRGÅNG 9 · 1958: *K.-H. Dahlstedt*, Isländsk dialektgeografi. Några synpunkter. – *Peter Hallberg*, Kormáks saga.
- ÅRGÅNG 10 · 1959: *Ivar Modéer*, Isländska sällskapet 1949–1959. – *Sigurður Nordal*, The Historical Element in the Icelandic Family Sagas. – *Ivar Modéer*, Johannes S. Kjarval.
- ÅRGÅNG 11 · 1960: *Sigurd Fries*, Ivar Modéer 3.11.1904–31.1.1960. – *Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson*, Matthías Jochumsson och Einar Benediktsson. – *Ingegerd Fries*, Genom Ódáðahraun och Vonarskarð – färder under tusen år.
- ÅRGÅNG 12 · 1961: *Einar Ól. Sveinsson*, Njáls saga.
- ÅRGÅNG 13 · 1962: *Halldór Halldórsson*, Kring språkliga nybildningar i nutida isländska. – *Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt*, Gudruns sorg. Stilstudier över ett eddamotiv. – *Tor Hultman*, Rec. av Jacobsen, M. A. – *Matras, Chr.*, Föroysk-donsk orðabók. Færøsk-dansk ordbog.
- ÅRGÅNG 14 · 1963: *Peter Hallberg*, Laxness som dramatiker. – *Roland Otterbjörk*, Moderna isländska förnamn. – *Einar Ól. Sveinsson*, Från Mýrdalur.
- ÅRGÅNG 15 · 1964: *Lars Lönnroth*, Tesen om de två kulturerna. Kritiska studier i den isländska sagaskrivningens sociala förutsättningar. – *Valter Jansson*, Bortgångna hedersledamöter.

ÅRGÅNG 16 · 1965: *Tryggve Sköld*, Isländska väderstreck.

ÅRGÅNG 17 · 1966: *Gun Widmark*, Om nordisk replikkonst i och utanför den isländska sagan. – *Bo Almqvist*, Den fulaste foten. Folkligt och litterärt i en Snorri-anekdote.

ÅRGÅNG 18 · 1967: *Ole Widding*, Jónsbóks to ikke-interpolerede håndskrifter. Et bidrag til den isländske lovbogs historie. – *Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson*, Jóhann Sigurjónsson och Fjalla-Eyvindur.

ÅRGÅNG 19 · 1968: *Einar Ól. Sveinsson*, Eyrbyggja sagas kilder. – *Svávar Sigmundsson*, Ortnamnforskning på Island. – Lennart Elmevik, Glömskans häger. Till tolkningen av en Hávamálstrof. – Berättelsen om Audun, översatt av Björn Collinder.

ÅRGÅNG 20 · 1969: *Sveinn Höskuldsson*, Skaldekongressen på Parnassen – en isländsk studentpjäs. – *Evert Salberger*, Cesurer i Atlakviða.

ÅRGÅNG 21 · 1970: *Davíð Erlingsson*, Etiken i Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða. – *Bo Almqvist*, Isländska ordspråk och talesätt.

ÅRGÅNG 22 · 1971: *Valter Jansson*, Jöran Sahlgren. Minnesord. – *Lennart Elmevik*, Ett eddaställe och några svenska dialektord. – *Bjarne Beckman*, Hur gammal är Hervararsagans svenska kungakronika? – *Baldur Jónsson*, Några anmärkningar till Blöndals ordbok. – *Evert Salberger*, Vel glýioð eller velglýioð. En textdetalj i Völuspá 35. – *Anna Mörner*, Isafjord.

ÅRGÅNG 23 · 1972: *Bo Ralph*, Jon Hreggviðsson – en sagagestalt i en modern isländsk roman. – *Staffan Hellberg*, Slaget vid Nesjar och »Sven jarl Håkonsson». – *Thorsten Carlsson*, Norrön legendforskning – en kort presentation.

ÅRGÅNG 24 · 1973: *Peter Hallberg*, Njáls saga – en medeltida moralitet? – *Evert Salberger*, Elfaraskáld – ett tillnamn i Njáls saga. – *Richard L. Harris*, The Deaths of Grettir and Grendel: A New Parallel. – *Peter A. Jorgensen*, Grendel, Grettir, and Two Skaldic Stanzas.

ÅRGÅNG 25 · 1974: *Valter Jansson*, Isländska sällskapet 25 år. – *Ove Moberg*, Bröderna Weibull och den isländska traditionen. – *Evert Salberger*, Heill þú farir! Ett textproblem i Vafþrúðnismál 4. – *Bjarne Beckman*, Musing. – *Hreinn Steingrímsson*, »Að kveða rímur». – *Lennart Elmevik*, Två eddaställen och en västnordisk ordgrupp.

ÅRGÅNG 26 · 1975: *Björn Hagström*, Att särskilja anonyma skrivare. Några synpunkter på ett paleografiskt-ortografiskt problem i medeltida isländska handskrifter, särskilt Isländska Homilieboken. – *Gustaf Lindblad*, Den rätta läsningen av Isländska Homilieboken. – *Bo Ralph*, En dikt av Steinþórr, islänning. – *Kristinn Jóhannesson*, Från Värmland till Borgarfjörður. Om Gustaf Frödings diktning i isländsk tolkning.

ÅRGÅNG 27 · 1976: *Alan J. Berger*, Old Law, New Law, and Hænsa-Þóris saga. – *Heimir Pálsson*, En översättares funderingar. Kring en opublicerad översättning av Sven Delblancs Åminne. – *Kunishiro Sugawara*, A Report on Japanese Translations of Old Icelandic Literature. – *Evert Salberger*, Ask Burlefot. En romanhjältens namn. – Lennart Elmevik, Fisl. giögurr.

ÅRGÅNG 28 · 1977: *Gustaf Lindblad*, Centrala eddaproblem i 1970-talets forskningsläge. – Bo Ralph, Ett ställe i Skáldskaparmál 18.

ÅRGÅNG 29 · 1978: *John Lindow*, Old Icelandic þátr: Early Usage and Semantic History. – *Finn Hansen*, Naturbeskrivende indslag i Gísla saga Súrssonar. – Karl Axel Holmberg, Uppsala-Eddan i utgåva.

ÅRGÅNG 30 · 1979: *Valter Jansson*, Dag Strömbäck. Minnesord. – *Finn Hansen*, Benbrud og bane i blát. – *Andrea van Arkel*, Scribes and Statistics. An evaluation of the statistical methods used to determine the number of scribes of the Stockholm Homily Book. – *Eva Rode*, Svar på artiklen »Scribes and Statistics». – Börje Westlund, Skrivare och statistik. Ett genmäle.

ÅRGÅNG 31 · 1980: *Björn Högström*, Fvn. bakkakolfr och skotbakki. Några glimtar från redigeringen av en norrön ordbok. – *Alan J. Berger*, The Sagas of Harald Fairhair. – *Ilkka Hirvonen*, Om bruket av slutartikel i de äldsta norröna homiliböckerna IsIH och GNH. – *Sigurgeir Steingrímsson*, Tusen och en dag. En sagosamlings vandring från Orienten till Island. – *Jan Terje Faarlund*, Subject and nominative in Old Norse. – *Lars-Erik Edlund*, Askra – ett engångsord i Egilssagan.

ÅRGÅNG 32 · 1981: *Staffan Hellberg*, Kungarna i Sigvats diktning. Till studiet av skaldedikternas språk och stil. – *Finn Hansen*, Hrafnkels saga: del og helhed. – Ingegerd Fries, Njals saga 700 år senare.

ÅRGÅNG 33 · 1982: *Jan Paul Strid*, Veidur námo – ett omdiskuterat ställe i Hymiskviða. – *Madeleine G. Randquist*, Om den (text)syntaktiska och semantiska strukturen i tre välkända isländska sagor. En skiss. – *Sigurgeir Steingrímsson*, Árni Magnusson och hans handskriftsamling.

ÅRGÅNG 34 · 1983: *Peter Hallberg*, Sturlunga saga – en isländsk tidsspegel. – *Porleifur Hauksson*, Anteckningar om Hallgrímur Pétursson. – *Inger Larsson*, Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða. En bibliografi.

ÅRGÅNG 35 · 1984: *Lennart Elmevik*, Einar Ólafur Sveinsson. Minnesord. – *Alfred Jakobsen*, Noen merknader til Gísls þátr Illugasonar. – *Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt*, Bygden under Vatnajökull. En minnesvärd resa till Island 1954. – *Michael Barnes*, Norn. – *Barbro Söderberg*, Till tolkningen av några dunkla passager i Lokasenna.

ÅRGÅNG 36 · 1985: *Staffan Hellberg*, Nesjavísur än en gång. – *George S. Tate*, Eldorado and the Garden in Laxness' *Paradisarheimt*. – *Porleifur Hauksson*, Vildvittror och Mattisrövara i isländsk drákt. Ett kåseri kring en översättning av Ronja rövardotter. – *Michael Barnes*, A note on Faroese /θ/ > /h/. – *Björn Hagström*, En färöisk-svensk ordbok. Rec. av Ebba Lindberg & Birgitta Hylin, Färöord. Liten färöisk-svensk ordbok med kortfattad grammatik jämte upplysningar om språkets historiska bakgrund. – *Claes Áneman*, Rec. av Bjarne Fidjestøl, Det norrøne fyrstediktet.

ÅRGÅNG 37 · 1986: *Alfred Jakobsen*, Om forfatteren av Sturlu saga. – *Michael P. Barnes*, Subject, Nominative and Oblique Case in Faroese. – *Marianne E. Kalinke*, The Misogamous Maiden Kings of Icelandic Romance. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Jon Helgasons dikt I Árnasafni. Den isländska texten med svensk översättning och kort kommentar.

ÅRGÅNG 38 · 1987: *Michael P. Barnes*, Some Remarks on Subordinate Clause Word-order in Faroese. – *Jan Ragnar Hagland*, Njáls saga i 1970- og 1980-ára. Eit översyn över nyare forskning. – *Per-Axel Wiktorsson*, Om Torleifåtæn. – *Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt*, Davíð Stefánssons dikt Konan, sem kyndir ofninn minn. Den isländska texten med svensk översättning och kort kommentar.

ÅRGÅNG 39 · 1988: *Alfred Jakobsen*, Snorre og geografien. – *Joan Turville-Petre*, A Tree Dream in Old Icelandic. – *Agneta Breisch*, Fredlöshetsbegreppet i saga och samhälle. – *Tommy Danielsson*, Magnús berfætrrs sista strid. – *Ola Larsmo*, Att tala i röret. En orättvis betraktelse av modern isländsk skönlitteratur.

ÅRGÅNG 40 · 1989: *Alv Kragerud*, Helgdiktningen og reinkarnasjonen. – *Jan Nilsson*, Guðmundr Ólafsson och hans Lexicon Islandicum – några kommentarer.

ÅRGÅNG 41 · 1990: *Jan Ragnar Hagland*, Slaget på Pezinavellir i nordisk og bysantinsk tradisjon. – *William Sayers*, An Irish Descriptive Topos in Laxdœla Saga. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Nyisländsk skönlitteratur i svensk översättning. En förteckning. Del 1. – *Karl Axel Holmberg*, Rec. av Else Nordahl, Reykjavík from the Archaeological Point of View.

ÅRGÅNG 42 · 1991: *Stefan Brink*, Den norröna bosättningen på Grönland. En kortfattad forskningsöversikt jämte några nya forskningsbidrag. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Två dikter av Jón Helgason i original och svensk dräkt med kommentar. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Nyisländsk skönlitteratur i svensk översättning. En förteckning. Del 2. – *Nils Österholm*, Torleifåtæn i handskriften Add 4867 fol. – *Lennart Elmevik*, Rec. av Esbjörn Rosenblad, Island i saga och nutid.

ÅRGÅNG 43 · 1992: *Anne Lidén*, St Olav in the Beatus Initial of the Carrow Psalter. – *Michael P. Barnes*, Faroese Syntax—Achievements, Goals and Problems. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Nyisländsk skönlitteratur i svensk översättning. En förteckning. Del 3.

ÅRGÅNG 44 · 1993: *Karl Axel Holmberg*, Isländsk språkvård nu och förr. Med en sidoblick på svenskan. – *Páll Valsson*, Islands älsklingsson sedd i ett nytt ljus. Några problem omkring den nya textkritiska utgåvan av Jónas Hallgrímssons samlade verk: Ritverk Jónasar Hallgrímssonar I–IV, 1989. – *William Sayers*, Spiritual Navigation in the Western Sea: Sturlunga saga and Adomnán's Hinba. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Nyisländsk skönlitteratur i svensk översättning. En förteckning. Del 4.

ÅRGÅNG 45 · 1994: *Kristín Bragadóttir*, Skalden och redaktören Jón Þorkelsson. – *Ingegerd Fries*, När skrevs sagan? Om datering av isländska sagor, särskilt Heiðarvígasagan. – *Sigurður A. Magnússon*, Sigurbjörn Einarsson som student i Uppsala på 1930-talet. Översättning, noter och efterskrift av Carl-Otto von Sydow.

ÅRGÅNG 46 · 1995: *Ingegerd Fries*, Biskop Gissur Einarsson och reformationen. – *François-Xavier Dillmann*, Runorna i den fornisländska

litteraturen. En översikt. – *William Sayers*, Poetry and Social Agency in Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar.

ÅRGÅNG 47 · 1996: *Lennart Elmevik*, Valter Jansson. Minnesord. – *Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson*, Blot i forna skrifter. – *Gísli Pálsson*, Språk, text och identitet i det isländska samhället.

ÅRGÅNG 48 · 1997: *Lennart Elmevik*, Anna Larsson. Minnesord. – *Lennart Moberg*, ”Stóð und árhjalmi”. Kring Hákonarmál 3:8. – *Henric Bagerius*, Vita vikingar och svarta sköldmör. Föreställningar om sexualitet i Snorre Sturlassons kungasagor. – *Páll Valsson*, En runologs uppgång och fall. – *Björn Hagström*, Något om färöisk lyrik – mest om Christian Matras.

ÅRGÅNG 49 · 1998: *Veturliði Óskarsson*, Om låneord og fremmed påvirkning på ældre islandsk sprog. – *Jóhanna Barðdal*, Argument Structure, Syntactic Structure and Morphological Case of the Impersonal Construction in the History of Scandinavian. – *Jan Ragnar Hagland*, Note on Two Runic Inscriptions relating to the Christianization of Norway and Sweden. – *William Sayers*, The ship *heiti* in Snorri’s *Skáldskaparmál*. – *Henrik Williams*, Rec. av Snorres Edda. Översättning från isländskan och inledning av Karl G. Johansson och Mats Malm.

ÅRGÅNG 50 · 1999: *Lennart Elmevik*, Isländska sällskapet 50 år. – *Bjarni Guðnason*, Guðrún Ósvifursdóttir och Laxdæla Saga. – *Veturliði Óskarsson*, Verbet isländskt *ské*. – *Henrik Williams*, Nordisk paleografisk debatt i svenskt perspektiv. En kort överblick. – *Carl-Otto von Sydow*, Jón Helgasons dikt Kom milda nótt i svensk tolkning. – *Veturliði Óskarsson*, Är isländsk språkvård på rätt väg? – *Gun Widmark*, Isländsk-svenska kontakter i äldre tid.

ÅRGÅNG 51 · 2000: *Lennart Elmevik*, Vidar Reinhammar. Minnesord. – *Peter Springborg*, De islandske håndskrifter og ”håndskriftsagen”. – *Gun Widmark*, Om muntlighet och skriftlighet i den isländska sagan. – *Judy Quinn*, Editing the Edda—the case of *Völuspá*. – *Kirsten Wolf*, Laughter in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature. – *Fjodor Uspenskij*, Towards Further Interpretation of the Primordial Cow Auðhumla. – *Tom Markey*, Icelandic *sími* and Soul Contracting. – *Björn Hagström*, Den färöiska ”Modersmålsordboken”.

ÅRGÅNG 52 · 2001: *Lennart Elmevik*, Claes Åneman. Minnesord. – *Lars Lönnroth*, Laxness and isländsk sagatradition. – *François-Xavier Dillmann*, Om hundar och hedningar. Kring den fornvästnordiska sammansättningen *hundheiðinn*. – *Mindy MacLeod*, *Bandrúnir* in Icelandic Sagas. – *Thorgunn Snædal*, Snorre Sturlasson – hövding och historiker. – *Guðrún Kvaran*, Omkring en doktorafhandling om middelnedertyske låneord i islandsk diplomsprog frem til år 1500.

ÅRGÅNG 53 · 2002: *Veturliði Óskarsson*, Studiosus antiqvitatum. Om Jón Ólafsson från Grunnavík, förebilden till Halldór Laxness sagoperson Jón Guðmundsson från Grindavík. – *Þórgunnur Snædal*, From Rök to Skagafjörður: Icelandic runes and their connection with the Scandinavian runes of the Viking period. – *Patrik Larsson*, Det fornvästnordiska personbinamnet *Kíkr*. – *Veturliði Óskarsson*, Ur en eddadikts forskningshistoria.

ÅRGÅNG 54 · 2003: *Henrik Williams*, Än lever de gamla gudarna. Vikten av att forska om fornisländska. – *Anna Helga Hannesdóttir*, Islänningars attityder till språkliga normer. – *Kristinn Jóhannesson*, Halldór Laxness – samtidens spegel. – *Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist*, Arngrímur Jónsson och hans verk. – *Adolfo Zavaroni*, Communitarian Regime and Individual Power: *Othinus* versus *Ollerus* and *Mithothyn*.

ÅRGÅNG 55 · 2004: *Heimir Pálsson*, Några kapitel ur en oskriven bok. – *Staffan Fridell*, *At ósi skal á stemma*. Ett ordspråk i Snorres Edda. – *Agneta Ney*, Mö-traditionen i fornnordisk myt och verklighet. – *Martin Ringmar*, Vägen via svenska. Om G. G. Hagalíns översättning av en finsk ödemarksroman. – *Svante Norr*, A New Look at King Hákon's Old Helmet, the *árhjálmr*. – *Lasse Mårtensson*, Två utgåvor av Jóns saga helga. En recension samt några reflexioner om utgivningen av nordiska medeltidstexter.

ÅRGÅNG 56 · 2005: *Lennart Elmevik*, Lennart Moberg. Minnesota. – *Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist*, The Significance of Remote Resource Regions for Norse Greenland. – *Andreas Nordberg*, Handlar Grimmesmål 42 om en sakral måltid? – *Daniel Sävborg*, Kormáks saga – en norrön kärlekssaga på vers och prosa. – *Ingvar Svanberg* och *Sigurður Ægisson*, The Black Guillemot (*Cephus grylle*) in Northern European Folk Ornithology. – *Staffan Fridell*, *At ósi skal á stemma*. Ett ordspråk i Snorres Edda. 2. – *Else Mundal*, Literacy – kva talar vi egentleg om? – *Leidulf Melve*, Literacy – eit omgrep til bry eller eit brysam omgrep?

ÅRGÅNG 57 · 2006: *Theodore M. Andersson*, *Víga-Glúms saga* and the Birth of Saga Writing. – *Staffan Fridell*, Fvn. *hrynja* och fsv. *rynia*. Om ett eddaställe och en flock i Södermannalagen. – *Kirsten Wolf*, The Color Blue in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature. – *Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist*, Kristen kungaideologi i *Sverris saga*. – *Lars Lönnroth*, Sverrir's Dreams. – *Arned Nedkvitne*, Skriftkultur i skandinavisk middelalder – metoder og resultater. – *Lars Lönnroth*, The Growth of the Sagas. Rec. av Theodore M. Andersson, The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280). – *Anders Hultgård*, rec. av François-Xavier Dillmann, Les magiciens dans l'Islande ancienne. Études sur la représentation de la magie islandaise et de ses agents dans les sources littéraires norroises. – *Heimir Pálsson*, Den stora isländska litteraturhistorian. Rec. av Íslensk bókmenntasaga I–V. Red. Vésteinn Ólason, Halldór Guðmundsson & Guðmundur Andri Thorsson. *Sigurd Fries*, Jón Aðalsteinn Jónsson och studiet av nyisländskan i Sverige.

ÅRGÅNG 58 · 2007: *Heinrich Beck*, Die Uppsala-Edda und Snorri Sturlusons Konstruktion einer skandinavischen Vorzeit. – *Gunnhild Røthe*, Þorgerðr Hölgabrúðr – the *fylgia* of the Háleygjá family. – *Michael Schulte*, Memory culture in the Viking Ages. The runic evidence of formulaic patterns. – *Lennart Elmevik*, Yggdrasill. En etymologisk studie. – *Henrik Williams*, Projektet Originalversionen av Snorre Sturlassons Edda? Studier i Codex Upsaliensis. Ett forskningsprogram. – *Sverre Bagge*, "Gang leader" eller "The Lord's anointed" i *Sverris saga*? Svar til Fredrik Ljungqvist og Lars Lönnroth. – *Heimir Pálsson*, Tungviktare i litteraturhistorien. En krönika.

ÅRGÅNG 59 · 2008: *Marianne Kalinke*, Clári saga. A case of Low German infiltration. – *Ármann Jakobsson*, En plats i en ny värld. Bilden av riddarsamhället i Morkinskinna. – *Margaret Cormack*, Catholic saints in Lutheran legend. Postreformation ecclesiastical folklore in Iceland. – *Tommy Danielsson*, Social eller existentiell oro? Fostbrödradráp i två isländska sagor. – *Mathias Strandberg*, On the etymology of compounded Old Icelandic Óðinn names with the second component *-fǫðr*. – *Susanne Haugen*, Bautasteinn – fallos? Kring en tolkning av ett fornvästnordiskt ord. – *Lasse Mårtensson och Heimir Pálsson*, Anmärkningsvärda suspensioner i DG 11 4to (Codex Upsaliensis av Snorra Edda) – spåren av en skriven förlaga? – *Stefan Olsson*, Harald hos jätten Dovre. Fortida initiationssymbolik i en medeltida tåt. – *Bo-A. Wendt*, Eddan och texttermerna. Kort terminologiskt genmäle till Henrik Williams. – *Michael Schulte*, Literacy in the looking glass. Vedic and skaldic verse and the two modes of oral transmission. – *Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir*, rec. av Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, volume VII: Poetry on Christian Subjects 1–2, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross. – *Else Mundal*, rec. av Reflections on Old Norse Myths, red. Pernille Hermann, Jens Peter Schjødt och Rasmus Tranum Kristensen. – *Pernille Hermann*, rec. av Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World. Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross, ed. Judy Quinn, Kate Heslop och Tarrin Wills.

ÅRGÅNG 60 · 2009: *Daniel Sävborg*, Scripta Islandica 60. – *Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir*, To the letter. Philology as a core component of Old Norse studies. – *John McKinnell*, Ynglingatal. A minimalist interpretation. – *Lars Lönnroth*, Old Norse text as performance. – *Elena Gurevich*, From accusation to narration. The transformation of senna in Íslendinga þættir. – *Theodore M. Andersson*, The formation of the Kings' sagas. – *Helgi Skúli Kjartansson*, Law recital according to Old Icelandic law. Written evidence of oral transmission? – *Terry Gunnell*, Ansgar's conversion of Iceland. – *Helen F. Leslie*, Border crossings. Landscape and the Other World in the Fornaldarsögur. – *Tsukusu Itó*, The Gosforth fishing-stone and Hymiskviða. An example of inter-communicability between the Old English and Old Norse speakers.

ÅRGÅNG 61 · 2010: *Helga Kress*, Eine bewusste Antiregel. Die Stimme der Frau in Halldór Laxness Gedichten. – *Margrét Eggertsdóttir*, Hallgrímur Pétursson and Tormod Torfæus. Their scholarly friendship. – *Jan Ragnar Hagland*, Hefi ek mark á máli mart. Litt om vokabular for særdrag ved folks språk og uttale i gammal-isländsk. – *Olof Sundqvist*, Om hängningen, de nio nätterna och den dyrköpta kunskapen i Hávamál 138–145. *Stefanie Gropper*, rec. av Jonatan Pettersson, Fri översättning i det medeltida Västnorden. – *Jonatan Pettersson*, rec. av Alexanders saga, Manuscripta Nordica 2, utg. Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen. – *Lennart Elmevik*, In memoriam. Oskar Bandle, Peter Foote, Björn Hagström.

ÅRGÅNG 62 · 2011: *Ingvil Brügger Budal*, Who is "I"? Translation of riddarasögur as a collective performance. – *Finnur Friðriksson*, Modern Icelandic: Stable or in a state of flux? – *Svante Janson*, The Icelandic calendar. – *Susanne Haugen*, anm. av Kormaks saga. Historik och översättning av Ingegerd Fries. – *Heimir Pálsson*, rec. av Úlfar Bragason, Ætt og saga: Um

frásagnarfræði Sturlungu eða Íslendinga sögu hinnar miklu. – *Helgi Skúli Kjartansson*, rec. av Rikke Malmros, Vikingernes syn på militær og samfund: Belyst gennem skjaldenes fyrstedigtning. – *Lasse Mårtensson*, rec. av Vår eldste bok. Skrift, miljø og biletbruk i den norske homilieboka. Bibliotheca Nordica 3, red. Odd Einar Haugen och Åslaug Ommundsen. – *Rune Palm*, rec. av. Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2. From c. 1035–1300 (Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages II), ed. Kari Ellen Gade. – *Úlfar Bragason*, rec. av Margaret Clunies Ross, The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga.