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Two Short Essays by Árni Magnússon on the Origins of the Icelandic Language*

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1. *Introduction*

The text of MS AM 436 4to begins with two short essays by Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) on the origins of the Icelandic language (ff. 1r–5v). The former essay bears the title *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine* [On the expression ‘the Gothic language’], while the latter is entitled *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium* [Some notes on the languages and migrations of the northern peoples]. These two essays, originally written after 1718 but with all probability before 1726, are the subject of the present article.

While they may fall short of present-day standards of scholarship, these essays are nevertheless of great scholarly interest. However far knowledge of their subject

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matter may have advanced since their time of writing, they are today a source of information on Humanist and early Illuminist scholarship in Scandinavia at a time when relations between the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden were in a state of conflict following the dissolution of the Kalmar Union in 1523.

The power struggle between the two Crowns was not always material: the sense of identity as well as primacy was just as important as the borders separating the kingdoms, over which they fought by force of arms. When questions of historical legitimacy were at stake, scholars took on the role of soldiers, while treatises and dissertations served as bayonet charges on the battlefield of academia.

With the renewed interest in Old Norse/Icelandic antiquities in the 17th century (see Jakob Benediktsson 1987[1981]), Icelandic became yet another bone of contention in a series of claims for possession of a unique cultural heritage which the two rival kingdoms each perceived as theirs alone. It would thus seem only natural that the Icelandic-born Árni Magnússon should make a contribution to this aspect of the dispute.

The aim of the present article is to give renewed attention to the above-mentioned two essays by editing them afresh, with an English translation for ease of access.¹ After an overview of the cultural milieu in Denmark and Sweden with respect to the Old Norse cultural heritage (§ 2) and Árni Magnússon's life and work (§ 3), the discussion focuses on the aforementioned essays, providing a context for their inclusion in MS AM 436 4to (§ 4). A diplomatic edition of the texts is then given (§ 5) in such a way as to convey an idea of the layout of the essays as they appear in the manuscript. The Latin original of each text is followed by an English translation. The final section (§ 6) consists of a commentary on the two texts and a brief evaluation of Árni Magnússon's scholarly approach as it emerges from the two essays.

2. The academic strife between Denmark and Sweden

The two essays in question were written at a time of particular rivalry between the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden and should be read in that context. The two sections that follow will accordingly provide the reader with an overview of the cultural milieu of early modern Scandinavian Humanism and the use of the Old Norse cultural heritage by the rival Crowns of Denmark and Sweden.

¹ The two essays have been previously edited by Finnur Jónsson and published without translation in *AMLevn.Skr.* (II: 108–113).

2.1 Humanism in Scandinavia and the rediscovery of Old Norse/Icelandic antiquities.

The Humanist movement reached Scandinavia concurrently with the Lutheran Reform in the 16th century, when strife between the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden was intensifying after the final dissolution of the Kalmar Union.²

The battle between the two powers was fought on every front, and the antiquarian interests of Scandinavian humanists were soon turned into weapons of war. Historical precedence was invoked unabashedly for political ends. Evidence for the collaboration between court and academia (which continued from the 16th into the 17th century) can be found in a provision of the Treaty of Stettin at the end of the Northern Seven Years' War in 1570, forbidding slanderous writings in either of the two countries, Sweden and Denmark, at the expense of the other (see e.g. Jørgensen 1931: 88–90, Ilsøe 1973: 48–51, Skovgaard-Pedersen 1993: 114–116 and 2009: 84–85, Akhøj Nielsen 2004: 166–168).

The first attempt to sway international opinion about Denmark, showing that the Danish kingdom was on a par with the rest of Europe (cf. Már Jónsson 2012: 27), was the publication of *Gesta Danorum*, the history of the Danes written by Saxo Grammaticus at the turn of the 12th to the 13th century, at the instigation of Absalon Archbishop of Lund (d. 1201). Although the text of the *Gesta Danorum* had been used before by Albert Krantz (1450–1517) for his *Chronica Regnorum Aquilonarium Daniae, Sueciae, et Noruagiae* (Strasbourg, 1546), it had never been published in its entirety. Finding a sufficiently complete text of the *Gesta* proved to be difficult, and it was not until 1514 that Christiern Pedersen was able to publish the work in Paris. As the first publication to draw attention to the history of Scandinavia, *Gesta Danorum* left such a strong impression on its international audience that it was reprinted in 1534 and 1576.

With its emphasis on the history of the North from a Danish point of view, Saxo's perspective did not appeal to Sweden, which appeared to have been relegated

² In 1397, the three Scandinavian kingdoms, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, united under a single monarch in order to contain German expansion in the Baltic area. The united monarchy was nevertheless faced from the very beginning with problems arising from the divergent interests of the local aristocracies. The Swedish nobility in particular was dissatisfied with the position of Sweden within the Union, and this gave rise to an internal conflict that formed a threat to the Union as early as the 1430s. The Kalmar Union came to an end in 1523, with the accession of Gustav Vasa (d. 1560) to the Swedish throne and Sweden's breakaway from the Union.

to a subordinate position in the power balance of Scandinavia since the High Middle Ages. In order to present the rest of Europe with a different view, Gustav Vasa in the 1530s commissioned Olaus Petri to write a history of Sweden, *En svensk Cröneka*. The author's overcritical use of his sources and his opinion of his country's past rendered this work useless for the king's purposes, however, and it was suppressed.

Despite their situation as Catholic exiles, the role of ambassadors for Sweden fell to the brothers Johannes and Olaus Magnus, who presented the Swedish people as originally descended from the Goths of historical fame, in accordance with an idea that had surfaced time and again since the Middle Ages. Johannes Magnus had begun to write his *Historia de omnibus gothorum sueonumque regibus* during his travels in the Baltic area, but it was only in 1554, after its author's death, that the work was published in Rome, thanks to the efforts of Johannes's brother Olaus.³

Although Johannes Magnus was a Catholic living in exile in Rome, where he died, this work of his won the approval of the Protestant Swedish court, since it presented Sweden as the heir to a grand legacy dating back to Biblical times. The Goths, viz. the Swedes, were presented as descendants of Noah's grandson Magog, and as the subjects of King Berik, who led them out of Scandinavia as they embarked on the first of a long series of campaigns of conquest. Although the aim of the work was to draw the attention of the Roman Curia to the affairs of the Church in Scandinavia and especially in Sweden, its parallel to the expansionist ambitions of the Swedish kingdom in the so-called *Stormaktstiden* could not be ignored, and explains why Johannes Magnus's *Historia* was a much more appealing text than Olaus Petri's rejected project, offering as it did an assurance that Sweden could return to its ancient splendour.

Even if Johannes Magnus's *Historia* could hardly be further removed from the standards of modern historical writing, the work is of value today as an example of Renaissance scholarship, showing how Humanists were for the most part still attached to medieval models, with an anchorage in rhetorical artifice as opposed to historical accuracy.

The idea that the ancient Goths originated in Scandinavia can be found in Jordanes's *Getica*, but the remaining sources for Johannes Magnus's *Historia*, where he was not simply creating the subject-matter himself, were mainly Classical literature

³ Olaus is the author of the voluminous *Historia de gentibus Septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1555), a patriotic descriptive account of the Northern peoples which has been translated into many languages.

and Saxo Grammaticus (cf. Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen 2002: 355–356). It may seem surprising that in order to write about the glories of the Swedish past, Johannes was prepared to use Saxo Grammaticus's monumental celebration of the Danish kingdom, but writing about Scandinavian ancient history with reference only to continental sources hardly left him any alternative.

Information about ancient Scandinavia could be found in abundance in the medieval manuscripts written in the vernacular in both Iceland and Norway, but these were largely ignored by scholars, who were unable to access the language in which the sources were written.

Christiern Pedersen, mentioned above, was among the first to recognise the importance of Old Norse/Icelandic sources. In beginning his search for parallels between Saxo and Old Norse/Icelandic literature, he found it necessary to acquire the assistance of a Norwegian lawman who could interpret the language for him.⁴ While his findings gave rise to a degree of interest in the sagas of the Norwegian kings,⁵ it was not until a young Icelander named Arngrímur Jónsson published in 1593 a booklet entitled *Brevis commentarius de Islandia* with the aim of defending his country from foreign slander that the interest in Old Norse/Icelandic manuscripts really bloomed in Scandinavia.

Arngrímur's timing could not have been better. A number of scholars were writing new works on Danish history at the time, and were suddenly made aware of a great number of previously unknown sources, which confirmed Saxo's assertions as to the talent the Icelanders had for recording the past. Arngrímur came into contact with Chancellor Arild Huitfeldt and the future Royal Historiographers Niels Krag and Jon Jacobsen Venusin, working for them in translating historical sources from Icelandic, and so making them available to Danish scholars.

A veritable stream of manuscripts began to flow from Iceland and Norway to Copenhagen in the 17th century. Since the 16th century Icelandic students had had free

⁴ The national law of 1274 was still in force in Norway, making it necessary for lawyers to have a working knowledge of Old Norwegian, a language very close to Old Icelandic.

⁵ Scholars in Bergen began to show an interest in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* in the 16th century. Although the work itself did not appear in print until 1633, Peder Claussøn Friis made in the 1590s the first complete translation of the text, the *Norske Kongers Chronika*, on the basis of the Jöfraskinna manuscript (of which only a fragment, MS AM 325 VIII 3 d 4to, now survives), while around the middle of the century Laurents Hanssøn and Mattis Storssøn worked on the Kringla manuscript of *Heimskringla* (cf. Jørgensen 2007: 21–24).

bed and board at the University of Copenhagen, making it the choice of location for most Icelanders pursuing an academic education. Many arrived in Copenhagen bringing manuscripts with them, hoping thereby to find benevolent patrons during their stay abroad. Icelandic students also functioned as readily available assistants to Danish antiquarians in transcribing, interpreting, and translating manuscripts.

Many of the students who had at one time or other worked as assistants to Danish scholars often continued their collaboration with them even after their return to Iceland, where they often reached positions of influence, as can be seen for example in the correspondence between Ole Worm and his former students.⁶

In Sweden, the existence of Old Norse/Icelandic sources was recognised earlier than in Denmark, and Johann Bureus was the first to show interest in the manuscripts preserved in the kingdom of Sweden since the Middle Ages (see furthermore Schück 1932: 89–93). However, the largest acquisition of Old Norse/Icelandic writings there was that of Magnus de la Gardie, who bought the library of Stephanus Stephanus from his impoverished widow and gave it to the *Antikvitetskollegium*, the Swedish Institute for Antiquities.

Other manuscripts reached Sweden as a result of war, such as the library of the magistrate Jørgen Seefeldt. Sweden lacked however somebody who could help antiquarians decipher the manuscripts. This situation changed when Swedish forces captured a ship on its way to Denmark: one of the passengers was the Icelandic Jón Jónsson from Rúgstaðir, who was on his way to Copenhagen with a coffer of manuscripts. Known in Sweden as Jon Rugmann, he became the first of a number of Icelanders to work for the Swedish Institute of Antiquities.⁷

2.2 *The use and appropriation of the Old Norse/Icelandic cultural heritage*

The results established by the early antiquarians of Scandinavia come across to modern Old Norse scholars as little more than works of fiction. Yet their achievements are of undeniable importance in giving authority for the first time to the concept of a past for Northern Europe. Objectivity was perhaps not the foremost

⁶ A number of the relevant letters are preserved in MS AM 267 fol., edited in Jakob Benediktsson 1948.

⁷ Jon's contribution to the study of antiquities has been recently further investigated by Källström (2017). In his article, Källström suggests that Jon Rugmann edited the appendix to the 1664 edition of *Gautreks saga* which constitutes the first corpus edition of a collection of Swedish runestones with transcription, pictures, and translation ever printed in Sweden.

concern of the rival Crowns of Denmark and Sweden, who tried to outdo each other's claims as the only heirs to the remarkable cultural heritage of which the Old Norse/Icelandic literary legacy was part and parcel. The idea that Icelandic was the original, uncorrupted language of Scandinavia, perhaps inspired by Johannes Magnus, but put forward for the first time in Arngrímur Jónsson's *Crymogæa* (Hamburg, 1609), prevailed in both kingdoms, where it was equated with Gothic and the language of runic inscriptions. This left it open to both Denmark and Sweden to claim Icelandic and its literary past as their inheritance. Relations between the kingdoms naturally influenced the way in which they used and appropriated the Old Norse/Icelandic cultural heritage for themselves, but not quite in the way that might be expected.

Despite the fact that Iceland and Norway were provinces of the Danish Crown, no attempt was made to steal their cultural legacy or to assimilate it to Danish identity. Norway was in fact provided with a National Historiographer of its own, and while no such favour was granted to Iceland, the Royal Historiographer Anders Sørensen Vedel openly approved the work of the printing press at Hólar in Hjaltadalur (see Gottskálk Jenson 2008a: 10–12).

Danish scholars made use of the Old Norse/Icelandic sources in writing about the Danish past, but largely disappointed the Icelandic bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson's hopes of seeing medieval Icelandic texts published in Denmark. Only a few of them came out in print, such as the so-called *Laufás Edda*, a reworking of Snorri's *Edda* by Magnús Ólafsson, which Peder Resen published, along with *Völuspá* and *Hávamál*, in 1665. Lexicographical and grammatical works on the Icelandic language, on the other hand, were published, under the auspices of Ole Worm. For example, the first Icelandic dictionary, *Specimen Lexici runici obscuriorum quarandum vocum* by the aforementioned Magnús Ólafsson, came into print in 1650, and the first Icelandic grammar, *Grammaticæ islandicæ Rudimenta* by Runólfur Jónsson, was published in 1651.

Scholars in Denmark did not try to appropriate the Icelandic language for themselves, for all that it was thought to be the same as the language of the runic inscriptions,⁸ and in general they showed no interest in laying claim to the Old

⁸ One reason for this, perhaps, is that Danish scholars were much concerned at the time to turn the Danish vernacular into a literary language. Jacob Aarhus, for example, strongly influenced by Petrus Ramus, published in 1586 *De literis libri duo*, advocating a careful cultivation of the vernacular with

Norse/Icelandic literary achievements, They simply made use of the medieval vernacular sources as a testimony to the characteristics of Danish identity from its earliest times.

In Sweden, the ideals of Gothicism made the approach to the Old Norse/Icelandic heritage more aggressive. This can be seen in, for example, a comment by Johannes Bureus on the medieval manuscript of *Þiðreks saga af Bern* (Holm. perg. 4 fol.), which he states as having been written “på rätt gammal Suänska” [in very old Swedish] (Schück 1933: 45), despite the fact that the manuscript was written in West Norse.

The Swedes were the first to produce a printed edition of an Old Norse saga, namely *Gautreks saga*, a text dealing with the Swedish past that was found among the manuscripts that Jon Rugmann had brought with him. This saga, *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiæ regum historia lingua antiqua Gothica conscripta*, came out in 1664 under the auspices of Olaus Verelius, under a title thus presenting its language as Gothic, rather than Icelandic.⁹

In claiming moral superiority to the Danes, Swedish scholars were eager to appropriate for themselves the language and literary achievements that properly belonged to the West Norse-speaking world. Under the banner of Gothicism, the Swedes saw themselves as the rightful heirs to Gothic culture, which allegedly had had a runic literary tradition pre-dating the introduction of the Latin alphabet in Scandinavia. From this view it followed that, if Icelandic was the language of the runic inscriptions, it was the same as Old Swedish, and the Icelandic art of saga-writing was only a pale derivative of the older Swedish literary achievements. As we shall see in the essay *De gothiciæ lingvæ nomine*, Árni Magnússon did not take kindly to this.

3. *Árni Magnússon*

descriptions of pronunciation and proposed spelling reforms. Similar ideas were expressed in Denmark in various printed grammars between 1639 and 1663, and in 1657 Rasmus Bartholin, a professor of medicine, gave a speech at the University of Copenhagen on the importance of studying the vernacular (cf. Lundgreen-Nielsen 2002: 360–361).

⁹ The publishing activity continued in the immediately following years with the publication of *Herrauds och Bosa saga* (1666) and *Hervarar saga* (1672). Moreover, Verelius prepared an Old Norse dictionary, which was published posthumously by Olof Rudbeck in 1691.

In this brief chapter, chiefly based on Finnur Jónsson (1930), we direct our attention to the author of the two essays that are the focus of this article. The intention is to gain a better understanding of who Árni Magnússon was and what kind of scholar he became in the course of time.

3.1 *Life*

Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) was born at Kvennabrekka in Western Iceland. He grew up with his grandfather's family before attending the Cathedral School at Skálholt between 1680 and 1683.

Shortly after graduation, he travelled to Copenhagen and enrolled at the local university, soon thereafter becoming assistant to the Royal Antiquarian Thomas Bartholin the Younger (1659–1690). He earned the degree of *attestus theologiae* in 1685, but subsequently travelled back to Iceland to deal with his father's inheritance as well as to collect manuscripts for Bartholin.

In 1686, Árni returned to Copenhagen where he resumed his post as Bartholin's assistant. In 1689 he travelled to Norway where he met with the Royal Historiographer Þormóður Torfæus (1636–1719). From Norway he continued to Lund. His intention for both trips was the collection of material on the Royal Antiquarian's behalf, for, among other things, the latter's *Antiquitates Danicae*, published in Copenhagen in 1689.

After the premature death of Thomas Bartholin in 1690, Árni was admitted at the newly founded Borch College and came under the patronage of the Secretary of the Danish Chancery, Matthias Moth (1647–1719), for whom he worked as librarian. During his time at the college, Árni delivered three lectures and, in 1691, earned the degree of *baccalaureus*.

In 1694, Árni travelled around Germany (Stettin, Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig), the trip having been originally commissioned by the Council of the University of Copenhagen. The intention for the trip was the examination of a collection of books that were offered for sale to the university. However, Árni ended staying longer than planned and used the extension to his time in Germany to consult books and manuscripts, thus gathering important information that he would subsequently use in later works. During this period, he published his first academic work, *Incertis auctoris chronica Danorum et praecipuae Sialandiae* (1695).

Upon his return, the young scholar was appointed Secretary to the Royal Secret Archives, and received a full professorship in Danish Antiquities in 1701, the first Icelander to hold this position.

In 1702, he was commissioned to travel to Iceland in order to conduct a census of the country's population and compile a register of Royal properties, a task he carried out with his friend and colleague, Páll Vídalín (1667–1727) and that would engage the two until 1712. During the winter of 1705–1706, Árni made return to Copenhagen as he did again in 1708–1709.

In 1713, he was appointed Assessor of the Professors' Consistory, and in 1721 he became Head of the University Library.

In 1728, Copenhagen was swept by a fire that damaged both Árni's private collection and the University Library. The fire resulted in the loss of 35,000 texts, including a number of unique works. Árni Magnússon died in Copenhagen in January 1730.

3.2 Academic work

Árni Magnússon's aptitude for academic work earned him a position as assistant to Thomas Bartholin the Younger at the age of twenty-one. During the years spent at the Royal Antiquarian's dependencies, the young Icelander helped his patron by copying excerpts from Icelandic manuscripts, as well as translating from Icelandic to Latin.¹⁰

Painstakingly accurate and always critical of his own work, Árni only published three books during his lifetime:¹¹ the aforementioned chronicle in 1695, a booklet on sorcery trials in 1699, and the edition of *Testamentum Magni Regis* in 1719. This, however, does little to delineate the scope of his scholarly activities.

Before Finnur Jónsson undertook the task of collecting and editing a selection of Árni's work in *Levned og Skrifur* (*AMLevn.Skr.* in the reference list of this article, N/A), a part of his writings had been published in the late 18th century. The first essay considered in this article was published in the edition of *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu of 1775* (pp. 278–279), whereas the second was printed by Erich Christian Werlauff

¹⁰ Árni's work during these years is contained in the so-called *Tomi Bartholiniani* preserved at Copenhagen University Library.

¹¹ Truth to be said, his commentary on a runic inscription on an Icelandic drinking horn (originally preserved in AM 670 4to) appeared in an article by Jacob von Melle in *Nova Litteraria Maris Balthici et Septentrionis* in 1701 (p. 62), where Árni's interpretation is compared to that of Otto Sperling.

(1835: 110–115) in *Biographiske Efterretninger om Arne Magnussen*. Moreover, a Latin translation of *Krisniréttir Árna biskups Þorlákssonar* is printed in the first volume of Erik Pontoppidan's (1741: 786–821) *Annales ecclesiae Danicae diplomatici*. Also, Árni's biography of Sæmundr the Learned, *Vita Sæmundi multiscii*, found its way into the first volume of the edition of the Poetic Edda of 1787 (Sæmundur fróði Sigfússon 1787: i–xxviii, Icelandic translation by Gottskálk Jensson 2008b). However, much more remains unpublished in his handwritten notes. The most important mention goes to his planned edition of *Íslendingabók*, with a Latin translation and vast commentary, of which the aforementioned *Vita Sæmundi* was a part. Árni worked on this work all of his life, but it was never finished.¹² Nonetheless, a commentary on the language of *Íslendingabók* survives, as well as notes on chronology, sources about Sæmundr and Ari the Learned, as well as a commentary on the works attributed to them (all are preserved in MSS AM 411 fol., AM 364 4to, AM 365 4to, and AM 254 8vo).

Chronology especially was a subject dear to Árni, and in regard we can mention his essay *Chronologia postremorum Norvegiæ regum ex stemmate Haraldí pulchricomi* of 1710, preserved in NKS 1598 4to. He also wrote on history in general, as can be seen by the short essay *De historia* in AM 228 8vo (Icelandic translation by Hanna Óladóttir, commentary by Már Jónsson, Árni Magnússon 1998).

Árni also wrote about monasteries in Iceland (MSS AM 215 and 224 8vo), as well as on ecclesiastical history in Denmark and Norway, the latter a consequence of having been left with the task of taking over the unfinished work on the subject by Thomas Bartholin (MSS AM 257 to 262 8vo).

Furthermore, in a letter to Provost Jón Halldórsson (Árni Magnússon 1920: nr. 254), we can read that Árni made notes that could have formed the basis for a work on the literary history of Iceland, although these have been lost along with others pertaining to Icelandic chieftains and bishops, post-Reformation antiquarians, philologists, and law.

Árni also composed biographies of the last Catholic bishop, Jón Arason (AM 226a 8vo), and Þormóður Torfæus (AM 219 8vo). Moreover, he was interested in

¹² It is worth mentioning that Árni rejected the translation he had made in his early years for being too inaccurate, despite the approval of Caspar Bartholin, to which he had given the work for review. Árni refused later to be connected with it in any way, and was not pleased when it was published in Oxford in 1697 without his permission.

genealogy, and collected relative information from *Landnámabók* and sagas of the Icelanders (AM 432 I and II 4to).

He took notes on books and made excerpts from them. Unsurprisingly, in his collection there is a large amount of transcriptions of texts he intended to publish — although this never came to fruition — as well as notes on manuscripts.

Árni was particularly interested in the Icelandic lexicon, as is witnessed by his notes on particular words, which he began to collect during his time working for Bartholin (cf. AM 234 fol., AM 226 a and b 8vo, AM 481 12mo). Additionally, Árni was also interested in comparative linguistics, as is clear from comparisons he himself made between Latin, Greek and Icelandic words in AM 436 4to (section 7, cf. § 4 below). These linguistic interests were at least shared by two other contemporaries of his, namely the father of Árni's last assistant Jón Ólafsson from Grunnavík, Ólafur Jónsson, and his colleague Páll Vídalín. The former in fact started to collect words for an Icelandic dictionary, which was later continued by his son (AM 433 fol.), whereas the latter was mostly concerned with the history of the legal lexicon in the law-book *Jónsbók* (Páll Vídalín 1854).

Although Árni was not a polymath, it does not surprise that his interests were wide and varied, as, indeed, one might expect of a philologist.

4. A brief overview of MS AM 436 4to

The manuscript bearing the shelfmark AM 436 4to is preserved at the Arnamagnæan Collection in Copenhagen (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling). The physical appearance of the manuscript makes it clear that it is made up of originally independent parts, and its contents are consistent with this view. The first sections, up to and including section 3, are taken up with notes and short essays by Árni Magnússon and his brother Jón, as well as by Jón Ólafsson from Grunnavík. The following sections, from 4 to 6, contain copies of annals, which will not receive further attention here. The remaining sections, from 7 to 12, return to the issue of language. A more detailed description of sections 1–3 and 7–12 is given in the paragraphs that follow.

Section 1 (ff. 1r–2v) preserves the first of the two essays under discussion here, *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine*. The text in MS AM 436 4to was copied by Jón

Ólafsson *ex autographo*, i.e. from an original which, according to *AMLevn.Skr.* (I: 104), was once the property of Jakob Langebek (NKS 1855 4to).¹³

Section 2 (ff. 3r–5v) contains the second of the essays treated in this article. Once more it is Jón Ólafsson who copied the text of *Arnæ Magnæi annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium* into MS AM 436 4to, and it is said to have been written *ex idiographo*, i.e. by a hand different from the author's but under his supervision. According to a footnote in *AMLevn.Skr.* (II: 111), where the essay is published in the original Latin, “Disse »annotationes« er her trykte efter originalen i AM 228, 8vo [...]” [these notes are here printed following the original in AM 228 8vo]. MS AM 228 8vo indeed contains Árni Magnússon's autograph and has in reverse order the same three sections as are found in the same essay as it appears in AM 436 4to. The text hereafter follows the order found in AM 436 4to. From a comparison with the text in AM 228 8vo, it is clear that AM 436 4to preserves an order which has with all probability been changed by Árni Magnússon through his scribe Jón Ólafsson. Thus, the essay in AM 436 4to can be seen as being a perfected version of its original. The text is identical in both manuscripts.

Section 3 (ff. 7r–16v) preserves an autograph essay by Jón Ólafsson. It bears the title *De usu veterum vocis lingva Danica (aa danska twngu) item de nominibus Dani ac Normanni* [On the use by the ancients of the expression ‘in the Danish tongue’ (á danska tungu) and also of the ethnonyms Danes and Northmen] and deals with the expression ‘in the Danish tongue’ in the sense found in the writings of

¹³ As previously mentioned, the text of the essay was published in the 1775 edition of *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*, where mention is made of a letter from Árni to Adolf Friedrich von Bassewitz, dated February 8th, 1719 (cf. Árni Magnússon 1920: nr. 62, a copy of this letter is preserved in JS 98 fol.). There Árni commented on the Gothic Bible that its language was not Gothic at all, and gave evidence in support of this view, maintaining that the Bible translation differed from the Nordic languages (1) in its use of the prepositive article (cf. below section 3 in *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium*); (2) in its treatment of the passive voice (also mentioned in section 3 of *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium*); and (3), in forming the supine and past participle by augmentation. In the language of the Bible translation many collective nouns are formed with the *ge-* prefix, which (along with *be-*) is common in German. A comparison of Danish, German and Gothic led Árni to conclude that the language of the translation agreed more with German than with the Nordic languages, of which Gothic formed an older stage. The translation could not therefore have been done by Wulfila, as the language was in Árni's view not Gothic, but some dialect of German.

medieval authors.¹⁴ This essay can be seen to follow on logically from the previous two by Árni Magnússon, and the authors of the present article hope to be able to publish it on some future occasion.

The language-related content of the manuscript resumes in section 7 (ff. 44r–94v) with the list *Voces Islandicæ Græcis & Latinis similes* [Icelandic words similar to words in Greek and Latin]. This glossary, written in Árni Magnússon’s own hand, lists Icelandic and Ancient Greek and/or Latin words, chosen for their phono-semantic similarity for purposes of comparison. The section also contains some other word lists, of less significance but of interest to those interested in the history of linguistics.¹⁵

¹⁴ E.g. Snorri Sturluson, who in the prologue to *Heimskringla* (Snorri Sturluson 2002: 3) states that “Á bók þessi lét ek rita fornar frásagnir um hǫfðingja þá, er ríki hafa haft á Norðrlǫndum ok á danska tungu hafa mælt [...]” [In this book I have had written old stories about those rulers, which held sway in the Nordic countries and have spoken the Danish tongue].

¹⁵ The list on f. 89r contains seven Germanic words showing /n/ before /s/, and compares them with their equivalents in Icelandic: *uns – oss; unsere – osser; anses – äsar, æser; Anlafus – Alafr, Olafir; Ansbertus – asbiartr; ganza – gás, gæs; anz – ás*. On f. 90r instead, some German words are compared with the corresponding Icelandic cognates where the initial /w/ has been elided: *wolff – ulfr; wort – ord; wolle – ull; wunde – und; wunder – undr; wurm – ormr; wonne – unan*. The next folium, 91r, lists alleged French loanwords in Icelandic, with Latin translation: *bastardr, fustan, mustardr, boti, asni, tin, fol, smellt, kveif, fas, puss (pose), buklare, targa, hun, hun bora*. The remaining folia contain respectively a comparison between the Icelandic infinitive ending and the corresponding German, Ancient Greek and Gothic endings (f. 92r); a comparison of numerals from one to ten in Icelandic with Latin and Greek cognates (f. 93r); and a list of Græco-Latin loanwords mainly belonging to the Christian sphere: *kirchia, alltari, biscop, prestr, diakn, diðfull, predikun, kross, fontr, munkr, klaustr, engill, mur, turn, vin, mitra, bagall, stola* (f. 94r, see also Tarsi 2016). A copy of this section, in Jón Ólafsson’s hand, is preserved in AM 1013 4to (ff. 2r–4v), where the frontispiece bears the title *Observationes Arnæ Magnæi ad Lingvam Islandicam spectantes. E schedulis ejusdem manuscriptis (qvi exstant in Bibliotheca ab eodem Academiae Hafniensi legata sub num 436 4to) descriptæ a Jona Olavio Hafniæ Anno Salutis M·DCC·XXX·V d. 5. Aprilis* [Árni Magnússon’s observations on the Icelandic language. From his own handwritten papers (which are preserved under the shelfmark 436 4to in the library, which he bequeathed to the University of Copenhagen), copied by Jón Ólafsson in Copenhagen in the year 1735, April 5th]. In particular, Jón Ólafsson integrates into AM 1013 4to (f. 14v) his copy of f. 94r in AM 436 4to, i.e. f. 14v in AM 1013 4to, with the following statement: “epterfylgiande minna eg hann hafé uppteiknat i því skyne, at þau sieu komen ur latinu med kristnenne” [I recall that he [i.e. Árni Magnússon] has written the following words with the aim of showing that they have come from Latin with [the advent of] Christianity].

Section 8 (ff. 96r–104v) is another comparative glossary, comparable to the one in section 7. The author of this word list is however not Árni Magnússon, but his brother Jón. The glossary, which is in Jón Magnússon’s hand, is preceded by a note by Árni in which he states that he received this word list from his brother in 1726.

Section 9 (ff. 106r–115v) is a copy by Jón Ólafsson of the glossary in section 8 (cf. *Kat.AM* I: 637 and Jón Helgason 1926: 213).

Section 10 (ff. 116r–122v) bears the title *Diversus earundem vocum in Danica dialecto (ut et nonnullarum vocum in Scanica et Norvegica) ab Islandica usus et significatus sed tamen cognatus* [Divergence in usage and meaning of some words in the Danish language (and some in the Swedish and the Norwegian languages) from Icelandic, with which they are nevertheless cognate] and consists of a glossary by Jón Ólafsson in which he compares Icelandic words to the corresponding Danish, and sometimes Swedish or Norwegian, cognates, indicating possible differences from Icelandic in use and/or meaning in the continental Nordic languages.

Section 11 (f. 123r) bears no title apart from the word “Noregr” [Norway] in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Kålund (*Kat.AM* I: 637) describes its content as “oldnorske stednavne” [Old Norwegian place names]. The list is written by Árni Magnússon and contains place names such as Hitrar, Björgvin, and Agder. A copy of this list, in Jón Ólafsson’s hand, is preserved in AM 1013 4to (f. 15r). The copy is preceded by the following note: “Epterfylgiande nomina locorum minna eg hann hafe halldet þau ord, er ei synast verda færð til vorrar Tungu, helldur heyra annarri til, er hier i løndum hafe ädur gengit” [I recall that he [i.e. Árni Magnússon] considered the following toponyms, which do not seem to have entered our language, to belong to another language, which in earlier times was current in these lands] (cf. furthermore the second essay below and relative discussion).

Section 12 (ff. 125r–135v) bears the title *Gandvik* and is an essay on toponymy by Árni Magnússon, whose hand is clearly identifiable here. This essay has been published in *AMLevn.Skr.* (II: 288–290), in an edition based on this very manuscript. Later in the 18th century, Jón Ólafsson from Grunnavík also wrote on the same toponym, basing his essay on Árni’s (cf. Jón Helgason 1926: 280).

5. *The texts*

In this section the two essays under discussion are reproduced in a diplomatic edition, each followed by a translation of the text from Latin to English.

5.1 *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine*

Ex autographo

[De Gothicæ Lingvæ nomine,
libris Islandicis
à Svecis
præfigi solito,
Disfertatiuncula doctissimi Antiquarii
Arnæ Magnæi.]

In fronte historiæ Gothrici et Hrolfi, Thorsteini Vikingii, Egilli unimani, *et* similibus Librorum in Svecia editorum, exstat eos Lingva antiqua Gothica conscriptos esse. Id verò neutiqvam rectè à Svecis factum est, eo, ut videtur, proposito, ut Islandorum libros hac ratione sibi cum tempore vindicare queant, tanquam apud se in Svecia primum conscriptos. Et certè id ex Reenhielmii verbis satis apparet, ubi audacter asserit, Norvegos illos, qui seculo nono sedes in Islandia fixere, istiusmodi libros secum eò transtulisse, quò suo asserto veritati vim facit Reenhielmus, cum antememorati libri omnes in Islandia ab Islandis conscripti sint, et quidem longo tempore post primordia reipublicæ Islandicæ. Islandicum itaque vocandum erat idioma, quod Svecis Gothicum antiquum appellare libuit. Licet enim verisimile et probatu non difficile sit, antiquos Sveonas *et* Gothos (Ostro-Gothos et Vestro-Gothos intelligo, qui medii inter Svecos et Norvegos habitant: illorum enim Gothorum, qui Græciam et Italiam afflixere, qualis sermo fuerit, nondum satis constat) eandem locutos esse lingvam, aut certe p[er]a]rum dissimilem ei, quæ in vetustis Islandorum libris legitur; nihilo tamen minus hæc positio nondum (quantum scio) argumentis adeo roborata est, ut universo orbi erudito de ea constet. Et quicquid illius fuisset, nihilominus non nisi admodum improprie, antiquo Gothico sermone conscripti dicuntur, qui, ut ante dictum est, Islandica dialecto in Islandia ab Islandis sunt exarati.

Satius itaque fuisset Islandicum nomen comprehensio iis idiomati conservare, ac de cætero (ut id quod volunt obtineretur) idoneis monstrare argumentis, Islandicum hocce idioma idem esse cum eo, quo locuti fuerint antiqui Gothi, et contigui eorum Sveones; adeo ut qui vetustum Svecicæ gentis idioma (hodie non parùm ab origine depravatum) nôsse desideraret, non alio labore opus haberet, quàm ad vetustos Islandorum libros se recipere. Hæc, inquam, rationibus confirmanda erant, aut Islandicum idioma cum vetusto Gothico absque argumentis non confundendum. Cæterum hæc disputatio paulo fortè laboriosior videbatur, nec forsitan propositum fuit hæc mundo persuadere (licet id aliàs credi velint), quàm alterum illud, nempe libros hocce, revera Islandicos, Svecos esse, *et* vetustorum Sveciæ scriptorum factum esse. Et quantum ad memoratam thesion attinet, id certum est, Svecicum et Islandicum idiomata non parùm dissimilia fuisse tempore quo Islandi hos libros ediderunt. Nec binæ hæ dialectus penitus similes fuere ab eo tempore quo Sveci Lingva sua vernacula in scriptis usi sunt, id quod utriusque gentis monumenta abundè commonstrant.

Nec approbationem merentur ipsi Islandi, qui idioma suum non rarò Norvegicum (Norrænu, forte Septentrionis Lingvam indigitare volunt) appellant; licet id propius à vero absit, cum Islandi revera sint Norvegi. Cæterum vitandæ sunt confusiones nominum in cognatis rebus. Et Dialectus Norvegica, quæ hodie viget, admodum dissimilis est idiomati Islandico, et diu est, ex quo binæ hæ Dialecti ab invicem discedere cœperunt.

Septentrionis idioma veteres, generali nomine Danicum dixere. neque id distincte fati.

[Hactenus Arnas Magnæus]

5.2 On the expression 'the Gothic language', with which the Swedes customarily label Icelandic books. A short dissertation by the learned antiquarian Árni Magnússon.

It is stated on the title pages of *Gautreks saga*, *Hrólfs saga [Gautrekssonar]*, *Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar*, *Egils saga einhenda*, and other such books published in Sweden, that they were written in the Old Gothic language. This statement by the Swedes is in fact not remotely correct, its purpose apparently being to enable them in this manner to claim in course of time the books of Icelanders for themselves, as if they had originally been written in their own country, Sweden. This is quite clear from the words of Reenhielm, where he boldly asserts that the Norwegians who settled in

Iceland in the ninth century brought books of that kind with them. Reenhielm does violence to the truth with this assertion, since all the aforementioned books were written in Iceland by Icelanders, and for that matter long after the founding of the Icelandic state. Thus the language which the Swedes saw fit to call Old Gothic ought to have been called Icelandic. It is indeed reasonable to suppose, and should not be hard to demonstrate, that the ancient Swedes and Goths spoke a language identical with what can be read in old Icelandic books, or one surely not very different from it. (I mean the eastern and western Goths dwelling midway between the Swedes and the Norwegians, for the nature of the language of those other Goths¹⁶ who ravaged Greece and Italy is still not sufficiently known). None the less this view has not, to my knowledge, yet been supported with arguments that would command the agreement of the entire learned world. And however that may be, the books are still stated, no less than outrageously, indeed to have been written in the Old Gothic language, whereas they were written, as previously said, in Icelandic, in Iceland, and by Icelanders.

[The Swedes] would therefore have [done] better to preserve the Icelandic name once they had understood the language and moreover (in order to achieve their desired end) to show with proper arguments that this Icelandic language is the same as that which the ancient Goths and their neighbours the Swedes spoke, so that anyone who might wish to gain knowledge of the ancient language of the Swedish people (which today is not a little distorted in relation to its origin) would not have to do anything other than turn to the old books of the Icelanders. These considerations, I repeat, needed to be confirmed with arguments, but the Icelandic language should not be confused (in the absence of such proofs) with Old Gothic. However, this reasoning would perhaps have seemed rather more cumbersome, and perhaps there was no intention of persuading the world that such ideas were correct (though apart from that they would like to be believed): the alternative would be to declare these books, which are in truth Icelandic, to be Swedish, and hence the work of ancient writers of Sweden. And with regard to the thesis mentioned above, it is certain that the Swedish and Icelandic languages were not a little different at the time when the Icelanders produced those books. And these two dialects have not been at all alike from the time when the Swedes have used their own vernacular in their writings, as surviving records of both peoples abundantly show.

¹⁶I.e. the Ostrogoths.

Little credit is due to the Icelanders themselves, who not seldom call their language Norwegian (Norræna, perhaps seeking to convey ‘the language of the North’), though this is admittedly not far from the truth, since the Icelanders are in fact Norwegians. Confusion of names where closely related things are concerned should nevertheless be avoided. And the Norwegian dialect which flourishes today is very different from the Icelandic language, and it has been a long time since those two dialects began to differ one from another.

The ancients called the language of the North by the general name of Danish, with truly insufficient precision.

[Thus far Árni Magnússon]

5.3 *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium*

collatum

Ex idiographo

Arnæ Magnæi
Annotationes aliquot
de Lingvis *et* migrationibus gentium
Septentrionalium

[pro ut ipse in schedas, quæ post obitum ejus inventæ sunt, obiter, et ut videtur *pro* memoria, conjecit]

Scheda I.

Lingva, quam nunc loquuntur Finni intra et supra Finlandiam Svecicam, *et* Finni Finnarchiæ incolæ, videtur fuisse ea quæ olim ante Norvegorum adventum in Scandinaviâ (*id est*: toto illo tractu quem Romani scriptores sic vocant) in usu fuerit. Gens ista Finnica, unâ cum idiomate suo, eidem fato succubuisse videtur ac Cambri in Britannia *et* Cantabri in Hispaniâ. Nempe illam in extremum angulum trahit gens illa, quæ aliunde, absque dubio, influens, Norvegiam *et* Sveciam nunc incolit, unde *et* insulæ Danicæ suos incolas indubie acceperunt. Norvegiæ nomen facile inducor ut credam antiquius esse inundatione illâ, *et* itaque Finnicum: Adeo enim maturè ad Plinii

aures pervenit, qvi Nerigon infulam memorat, in Oceano Boreali fitam: nifi Nerigon næriki fit in Sveciâ.

Scheda II.

Gentes qvæ in Septentrionalia Europæ ex orientis partibus ante multum tempus migrârunt (qvi nunc sunt Germani, Sveci, Dani, Norvegi) fese in duas partes divififfe videntur: una Germaniam occupavit, progenuitqve cum tempore inferiores Germanos, Jutiæ incolas (Cimbros), Belgas *etc*(œtera), qvi omnes primum fuorum parentum idioma paulatim corruerunt. Theutobocus Cimbrorum Rex — ipfo nomine vel Germanus est. Nec ullo argumento probari poteft, Cimbros Danicum idioma (qvod poftea fic dictum est) locutos esse. Imò Juti, qvi in Angliam migrarunt, Germanicæ originis esse videntur, Lingvâ qvam fecum devexerunt id indicante. (α)

Altera immigrantis populi pars in Sveciam migrasse videtur, hinc in Scaniam, Uplandias, Norvegiam totam, atqve ex his terris expuliffe incolas, qvi ante hanc immigrationem terras istas incoluisse videntur. Hos Finnos, vel fimilem gentem fuiffe verifimile est. Atqve ex eorum lingua videntur nomina locorum defumta, qvæ nostro idiomati difsimilia funt: ut Skani, Oflo, Biorgyn, imò Noregr, Borgund, Hitrar, *et* sexcenta. (β)

Tandem ex Scania in infulas Danicas migratio facta esse videtur, indeqve priftini incolæ exacti, qvos Sclavonicæ originis fuiffe putarem. Qvicvid illius fit, iftorum non Danici idiomatis funt: Erri, Falftr, Mòn et fimilia. Hæc migratio poft Chrifti nati tempora facta esse videtur: Mela enim infulas Teutonum nominat. A verifimili non abludit, gentem hanc, qvæ Septentrionem implevit, *et* in infulas Danicas migravit, Danos in continente dictos fuiffe, atqve inde esse qvod idioma fuum Norvegi, florentibus adhuc rebus eorum, Danicum vocarint. Poftea ex infulis Danicis in Jutiam transfretasse videntur terramqve illam, profligatis prioribus incolis (Germanis, Cimbrorum reliqviis) occupasse; qvod forfitan* feculo V. cadente (factum est?); tunc enim Danorum nomen celebre fieri cœpit, et à Procopio *et* Gregorio Turonenfi primum (nifi fallor) nominatur. *Imò prius, Joti enim 449. in Angliam transmearunt.

Qvæ de Dano Rege Islandi dicunt, examinari merentur.

Qvæ de Odini immigratione, partim falfa funt, partim confufa, omnia incerta.

Nota Bene Orcadum nomen Norvegicum esse videtur, et tamen antiquissimum, nisi forte Norvegi ex vetusto Orcadum nomine suum Orkn-eyar finxerint, veluti Ann-þekja, Akrs bork, Jorfaler, quod et admodum credibile est.

α.] Credi poterit Germaniam tunc temporis non fuisse omni ex parte vacuum, sed Sclavonicæ originis nationibus habitatam, præfertim quoad septentrionalia, et Baltici maris oram, perpendatur tamen ulterius.

β.] Non secus ac Saxoniarum incolæ in terra sua Wendica nomina retinere: Lipzc. Meiffen, Dreßden etcætera.

Scheda III.

Gentes illas quæ in Italiam et Hispaniam migrantes Latinam linguam corrumpere, Germanicas fuisse, non vero è terris magis ad Septentrionem vergentibus, argumento est, quod illæ articulum præpositivum invexerint, et verba passiva eliminaverint: hoc enim Germanis proprium est, contrarium vero Septentrionis idiomatici.

Quod è Scanzia istos populos Scriptores deducant, parum ponderis habet: neque enim Scriptores isti scivêre ubi sita esset ista Scanzia, sed terram maximè septentrionalem ita dixêre, non secus ac alii eorum Septentrionis quamque extremitatem Thulen appellarunt, et Græci quicquid terrarum ignorabant, Scythas et Celtas dixerunt, nos quoque Tataros et Tatariam dicimus omne illud, quod in istis tractibus distinctiori nomine apud nos caret. Potuere tamen nonnulli è septentrionalibus populis examini isti interessê, et id de Scanzia famam peperisse. || An Scaniarum nomen et Scanziarum vel Scandinaviarum ejusdem sint originis non satis constat. Non tamen à verisimili abludit Scaniarum nomen ab hac vel simili voce originem sumfisse. Certe alteri quam Danicarum linguarum originem debere videtur.

5.4 Some notes on the languages and migrations of the northern peoples by Árni Magnússon

[as jotted down by himself, apparently as an aid to memory, on sheets which were found lying around after his death]

Sheet I

The language now spoken by the Finns within and beyond Swedish Finland, and by the Finns inhabiting Finnmark, seems to have been the same as that which, before the arrival of the Norwegians, was once current in Scandinavia (that is, in the entire land area of what Roman historians call by that name). They seem to have succumbed, these Finns, together with their language, to the same fate as the Cambrians in Britain or the Cantabrians in Spain: they [i.e. the Finns] were pushed into the outermost corner by a people which, pouring in from elsewhere (no doubt about it), now inhabits Norway and Sweden, whence the Danish islands undoubtedly also received their inhabitants. I am easily led to believe that the name of Norvegia is more ancient than that influx of people, and hence Finnish: at an early stage indeed it reached the ears of Pliny, who mentions Nerigos, an island located in the Northern Ocean. Nerigos could have been Næríki in Sweden.

Sheet II

The peoples that long ago migrated from eastern regions into the northern parts of Europe (who are now Germans, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians) seem to have divided into two groups: one took possession of Germany and gave rise in course of time to the lower Germans, the inhabitants of Jutland (Cimbrians), Belgians etc., who all gradually corrupted the original language of their ancestors. Theutobocus king of the Cimbrians, for example, is [shown to be] German by virtue of his very name. No argument can be adduced to show that the Cimbrians spoke what was later called the Danish language, though the Jutlanders, who migrated to England, seem to be of Germanic origin, as appears from the language which they took with them.^(a)

The other branch of the immigrant population seems to have moved into Sweden, and from there into Scania, Uppland, and the whole of Norway, and to have expelled from those regions the people who evidently inhabited those lands before this immigration took place. It is likely that these were Finns or a similar people. It is from their language that place names foreign to our language seem to have been adopted, such as Skani, Oslo, and Bjorgyn, as well as Noregr, Borgund, Hitrar and numerous others.^(b)

Finally, a migration seems to have taken place from Scania into the Danish islands, whence the original inhabitants, who I would think were of Slavonic origin, were driven out. Whatever the facts of the matter, their names for places such as Erri, Falstr, Mön and the like, do not belong to the Danish language. This migration seems to have taken place after the birth of Christ: [Pomponius] Mela indeed identifies these islands as belonging to the Teutons. There can be little doubt that that population, which pervaded the North and moved to the Danish islands, was called Danish on the continent, and that it was from this that the Norwegians, once their affairs were flourishing, came to call their language Danish. Thereafter they appear to have crossed from the Danish islands into Jutland and occupied that land, having defeated its former inhabitants (who were Germans: what was left of the Cimbrians), perhaps in the last part of the 5th century.* The name of the Danes in fact began to become known at that time and is first mentioned (if I am not mistaken) by Procopius and Gregory of Tours. (*Or indeed earlier, because the Jutlanders crossed over to England in 449).

What the Icelanders say about King Dan merits further inquiry.

What [they say] about the coming of Odin is in part false, in part confused, and all uncertain.

[And separately on the same sheet]

NB: The name of the Orcades (Orkneys) appears to be Norwegian, though also of great age, unless by chance the Norwegians formed their name for them, Orkn-eyjar, from an old name of the Orcades, in the manner of Ann-þekja, Akrs bork, Jorsaler, etc., which is also entirely possible.

(α) It might well be thought that at that time Germania was not entirely uninhabited but populated instead by people of Slavonic origin, in particular where the northern regions and shores of the Baltic sea are concerned. This requires further consideration, however.

(β) Just so did the inhabitants of Saxony maintain in their area Wendic toponyms such as Lipsk, Meissen, Dresden etc.

Sheet III

That the peoples who migrated to Italy and Spain and corrupted the Latin language were Germanic, though not from countries extending far towards the North, is shown by the fact that they introduced the prepositive article and dispensed with passive verbs: a feature characteristic of the *Germani*, but at variance with the language of the North.

The fact that historians trace those peoples back to Scanzia is of little consequence, for those historians did not know where this Scanzia was located; they referred to it as the northernmost land, just as others of their number called each extremity of the North by the name of Thule, while the Greeks called any part of the world they did not know Scythian or Celtic. We too call *Tatari* and *Tataria* everything in those regions for which we lack a more distinctive name.

Some of the northern peoples could however have been present in that swarming horde, a factor that could have produced the legend relating to Scanzia. Whether the names of Scania, Scanzia or Scandinavia have the same origin is not sufficiently established. There can be little doubt, however, that the name of Scania took its origins from this or a similar word. It seems certain that it owes its origin to a language other than Danish.

6. *Commentary and conclusions*

While the birth of the nation state is a 19th-century phenomenon, it seems clear that the seeds of the idea embodied in it were sown much earlier. Whereas in the divided Italy of the Renaissance humanist *literati* were seeking with their scholarly endeavours a unifying identity reflecting a glorious past, in 16th-century Scandinavia the Kalmar Union might have offered some such past on which to look back if the disbanding of the Union and its consequences had not been present history and a source of contemporary dispute.

However different from elsewhere the effect on Scandinavia of the ideals of Humanism may have been, once the worship of the past had reached the North the two kingdoms began writing about their past, trying to outdo each other in describing the splendour of the days of yore. Although the rediscovery of Old Norse/Icelandic sources by Arngrímur Jónsson did not stem from the rivalry between the two Crowns, the subsequent interest in the recovery and study of these sources in Iceland can

hardly be separated from the interest shown in them by scholars on the continent, and the conflict between Denmark and Sweden.

The reputation of Iceland increased dramatically in the course of the 17th century, and although the wish for Icelandic independence did not become manifest until the 19th century, it is hard to believe that it did not receive impetus from the rediscovery of Old Icelandic as the Classical language of the North (Gottskálk Jensson 2008a), in which the literary treasures of the Middle Ages were written. The consequence of this was an increase in the feeling of a specific Icelandic identity that has been present from the time of the Commonwealth to the present day. As the policy of linguistic purism in the 19th century was to make clear, the Icelandic language played a key role in the creation of an Icelandic identity. The first of the two above-edited essays is especially interesting in this respect.

While it is clear that the essay is intended as an honest statement of facts in response to the controversy on the Icelandic language, it is hard not to detect in it a certain tone of national pride. Although the essay does not go so far as to advocate purism, we may note Árni Magnússon's choice of words when he writes that the Swedish and Icelandic vernaculars had already diverged greatly by the time of the first examples of written Swedish, and when he points out that the language of the Icelanders' close relatives, the Norwegians, has undergone such substantial changes that it is now very different from Icelandic. Árni positions himself moreover in the school of thought initiated by Arngrímur Jónsson,¹⁷ even providing the Swedes with an improved and indeed valid way of achieving their goal, i.e. by linking the language of their forefathers to Icelandic. If they had done so, we may infer from Árni's words, they would not only have been telling what was then acknowledged as the truth, but would have established a direct and honourable link with their past. What indeed emerges from Árni's words is the wish to reassert the truth against the Swedes' nationalistic claims.

Árni Magnússon's impartial objectivity in matters concerning the past should not, however, be lost sight of. As the second essay above shows, his intentions are not to glorify a fictitious past, but rather to deliver an unbiased opinion on facts that he

¹⁷ Árni's ideas about the genesis of the different languages of the world were of course in line with the narration of the Bible. The idea of the Tower of Babel was furthermore shared not just by Arngrímur Jónsson but also by the so-called First Grammarian (12th c.), the anonymous author of the first of the grammatical treatises preserved in AM 242 fol.

believes to be true, to denounce what he believes to be false, and to call into question what he considers, at best, uncertain. The fact that he was more objective than many of his colleagues did not of course save him altogether from errors that were inevitable, given the limited state of knowledge at his time of writing.

Divided into three *schedæ*, the second essay tackles the question of North Germanic migrations into Scandinavia. This topic was of burning interest among scholars at the time. One may cite for example the lively discussions between Gottfried W. Leibniz and Otto Sperling in the first years of the 18th century, both in private correspondence (cf. Leibniz 2005: nr. 360) and in the journal *Nova Literaria Maris Balthici et Septentrionis* (cf. Már Jónsson 2012: 200) Árne's argument is based mainly on what is dubious toponymic evidence. In the first *scheda*, he asserts that, to judge from local toponyms, it may be inferred that the language spoken by the Finns, and hence the Finnic population, was autochthonous in Scandinavia. In support of this claim he says that the toponym *Norway* is of Finnic origin (*sic!*). However right he may have been to state that the autochthonous peoples of Scandinavia were gradually pushed away by the new, Germanic settlers, it is astonishing to see that he adduces the toponym *Norway* as evidence for this, as there is no doubt that the word is Germanic (< *Norðvegur*, *ÍOb* s.v. *Noregur*). In the second *scheda*, he further explains the aforementioned migrations, and cites a few more toponyms of alleged Finnic origin: *Skáni*, *Oslo*, *Björgyn*, *Borgund*, *Hítrar*, which are actually all of Germanic origin (cf. *ÍOb* under respective entries). Finally, Árne says that there was a migration from Scandinavia first towards the Danish archipelago, and later from there into Jutland. Once again, the evidence given to support this is primarily toponymic, and Árne mentions the following place names: *Erri*, *Falstur*, *Mön*, the etymologies of which are in part still unclear, but are most probably Germanic (cf. *ÍOb* under respective entries). In the third *scheda*, Árne addresses the question of the barbaric invasions of Italy and Spain. He admits that the invading peoples were Germanic, albeit, as he says, not from the far North. In support of this he offers some linguistic evidence and mentions that Scanzia is not given a specific location in the writings of ancient historians. With reference to his linguistic evidence, i.e. the introduction of the prepositive article and the absence of passive verbs, it is worth mentioning that the same argument appears in Árne's letter to Friedrich von Bassewitz, quoted in footnote 13.

Árni Magnússon's essays give an insight into his vast and varied scholarly production. Árni's legacy, both material and intellectual, has been passed on to Icelanders and students of Icelandic philology around the world. For what concerns the history of the Icelandic language, Árni Magnússon's first "student" was his last scribe, the aforementioned Jón Ólafsson from Grunnavík, who in turn acquired both Árni's philological legacy and Arngrímur Jónsson's puristic ideals (Tarsi [forthcoming]). From the 18th century on, it might be said that historical studies of Icelandic literature and language have gone much of the way hand in hand. Language purism is of course also a part of this, with its beginnings in the late 16th and early 17th century, when Icelandic was experiencing an invasion of foreign words and stylistic models as translations relating to the Lutheran Reform were needed. In the age of mechanical reproduction, however, the long-standing duet of philology and linguistics seems to be endangered by a decreased interest in broad knowledge in favour of narrowly focused specializations, from which the study of philology cannot readily benefit.

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SUMMARY

This article presents two essays by the renowned Icelandic manuscript collector Árni Magnússon (1663–1730): *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine* [On the expression ‘the Gothic language’] and *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium* [Some notes on the languages and migrations of the northern peoples]. The two essays are here edited and published in their original language, Latin. Moreover, an English translation is also presented for ease of access. After a short introduction (§ 1), a historical overview of the academic strife between Denmark and Sweden is given (§ 2). Subsequently (§ 3), Árni Magnússon’s life and work are presented. In the following section (§ 4), the manuscript containing the two essays, AM 436 4to, is described. The two essays are then edited and translated in section 5. In the last section (§ 6), the two works are commented and Árni Magnússon’s scholarly thought evaluated.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente deux essais par le renommé collectionneur islandais de manuscrits, Árni Magnússon (1663–1730): *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine* [Sur l’expression ‘le langage gothique’] et *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium* [Remarques sur les langues et migrations des peuples nordiques]. Ces deux essais sont ici édités et publiés en latin, la langue dans laquelle ils furent rédigés. Une traduction anglaise accompagne le texte latin. Après une brève introduction (§ 1) sont présentées une présentation historique de la querelle académique entre le Danemark et la Suède (§ 2) et une présentation de la vie et de l’oeuvre de Árni Magnússon (§ 3). La section suivante (§ 4) offre une description du manuscrit, AM 436 4to, contenant les deux essais. Les deux essais sont ensuite édités

et traduits dans la section 5. Dans la dernière section (§ 6), les deux travaux sont commentés et le travail érudit de Árni Magnússon est évalué.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel präsentiert zwei Essays des bekannten isländischen Handschriftensammlers Árni Magnússon (1663–1730): *De gothicæ lingvæ nomine* [Über den Begriff der gotischen Sprache] und *Annotationes aliquot de lingvis et migrationibus gentium septentrionalium* [Einige Anmerkungen über die Sprachen und Wanderungen der nordischen Völker]. Beide werden hier in Edition vorgelegt, und zwar sowohl in ihrer originalen lateinischen Fassung wie auch in englischer Übersetzung, um den Zugang zu erleichtern. Einer kurzen Einleitung (§ 1) folgend, wird ein historischer Überblick über die akademische Konkurrenz zwischen Dänemark und Schweden gegeben (§ 2), worauf sich eine kurze Darstellung von Leben und Werk Árni Magnússons anschließt (§ 3). Eine Beschreibung des Manuskripts, das die beiden Essays enthält (AM 426 4to) bietet § 4. Schließlich folgt in § 5 die Edition und Übersetzung der beiden Essays, und im letzten Abschnitt werden die beiden Werke kommentiert sowie Árni Magnússons wissenschaftliche Denkweise bewertet (§ 6).

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