

The Development of Education and
***Grammatica* in Medieval Iceland**

By Ryder Patzuk-Russell

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Department of History
School of History and Cultures
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
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Abstract

This study explores how education and the medieval intellectual and pedagogical discipline of *grammatica* developed in Iceland during the medieval period, defined roughly from the official conversion to Christianity c.1000 to the Reformation c.1550. The first chapter deals with social, institutional, and financial aspects of teaching and learning in medieval Iceland, surveying key figures and places, but also arguing that more attention should be paid to the costs of learning and the effect of that on poor students. The second chapter addresses Latin education, discussing the importance of Latinity in medieval Iceland and the types of education that would involve Latin. It also addresses the idea of bilingual education and suggests ways in which extant vernacular writings can provide evidence for how Latin was taught and learned using the vernacular, using the model of Old English bilingual education. Finally, the third chapter addresses vernacular topics of learning, focusing on the development of a vernacular *grammatica* which is focused on the interpretation and normalization of Old Norse texts, rather than the understanding and use of Latin. Discussing these three components of educational history together is fundamental to understanding the intellectual and pedagogical dynamics behind the extant medieval Icelandic textual corpus.

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Abbreviations

1GT: First Grammatical Treatise

2GT: Second Grammatical Treatise

3GT: Third Grammatical Treatise

4GT: Fourth Grammatical Treatise

DI: Diplomatarium Islendicum

DN: Diplomatarium Norvegicum

MG: Málskrúðsfræði

MS: Málsfræðinnar Grundvöllr

OE: Old English

ON: Old Norse

ONP: *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*

Introduction

Education is a key and often under-appreciated component of medieval culture, society, and textuality. The relationship between students, teachers, schools, ideologies and disciplines of learning, and pedagogical texts relates to many different aspects of history, affecting intellectual, social, institutional, and even economic issues. For the distinct social and cultural context of medieval Iceland, involving a unique corpus of vernacular literature produced in an unusually decentralized and rural society, questions of education are particularly pertinent: how did teaching and learning occur, what topics were important, who was involved and how did education affect individuals and society?

This study will broadly examine the topic of education in medieval Iceland for the period from Christianization to the Reformation, roughly 1000-1550. Dealing with such a wide topic over such a long period means that this study cannot address in detail all aspects and issues of medieval Icelandic education. The goal is rather to open educational topics to new questions and research, to show the significance of education, Latinity, and grammatical learning to other fields of historical and literary study, and above all to argue for the complexity and diversity of educational contexts and practices. No previous study has attempted to deal with Icelandic education on this comprehensive level. To this end a wide diversity of sources will be examined: sagas and other narrative sources, legal codes, documents and liturgical writings, poetry, and grammatical treatises.

The discipline of *grammatica* requires particular attention in the study of medieval Icelandic education for several reasons. First, it is the core discipline of medieval pedagogy, addressing basic Latin literacy and textual interpretation, but it also represents a body of ideology and philosophy about language and learning that affects many aspects of medieval culture. Second, the Icelandic grammatical treatises are one of the very few pieces of explicitly pedagogical writing surviving from medieval Iceland. Yet, as vernacular texts which deal primarily with Old Norse (ON) language and poetics, they are divergent from the core Latin grammatical tradition, and in their extant forms represent only one narrow aspect of education in Iceland. This dissonance between the wider discipline of *grammatica* and the

Icelandic grammatical treatises is fundamental to the core argument of this study, that Icelandic education is more complex and diverse than has hitherto been suggested.

I. Medieval Icelandic Society and Culture

Iceland was settled from Norway and other parts of Northern Europe in the later ninth century. It was governed by a group of chieftains known as *goðar*, along with a legislative body known as the Alþing. In the year 1000, with pressure from the king of Norway Óláfr Tryggvason, Christianity was accepted as the official religion of Iceland by agreement of the Alþing. Over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the two bishoprics, Skálholt and Hólar, and a series of monasteries were established. In 1152 the archbishop of Níðaróss was established in Norway, and ecclesiastical reform began to spread from Norway into Iceland. In 1262, after a period of conflict between increasingly powerful and wealthy families, known as the Age of the Sturlungs, Iceland came under direct control of the Norwegian king.

By the end of the thirteenth century, greater control over the Icelandic church from Níðaróss helped shift Icelandic churches from private ownership to episcopal control, and a system of benefices developed for the first time. In 1380, with the union between Norway and Denmark, Iceland switched from Norwegian to Danish rule, and papal influence over the Icelandic bishoprics increased. Plague struck Iceland twice, in the early and late fifteenth century. Finally, the Reformation came to Iceland from Denmark in the 1540s, and the last Catholic bishop of Iceland, Jón Arason of Hólar, was executed in 1550. The fundamental changes in both educational ideology and practice with the Reformation makes it a natural end point for this study.

Throughout this period, the small population of Iceland was entirely rural. There were no cities or towns, and yet even without the urban contexts normally associated with the cultural and literary developments of the late Middle Ages, Iceland produced one of the most impressive extant corpuses of medieval vernacular writing. A wide diversity of prose narrative genres survive: sagas of kings, of Icelandic chieftains and poets, bishops' sagas,

romances and sagas of ancient heroes, and a wide variety of translations. Learned vernacular texts include encyclopedic and homiletic collections, theological translations, grammatical and computistical treatises, and various miscellanies. An extensive body of vernacular poetry, both religious and secular, survives as well. This can be roughly divided into the more complex metres of courtly poetry, or skaldic verse, and the simpler and older metres known as Eddic verse. This poetry influenced almost every aspect of vernacular literary culture, and the prosimetrical form is very widespread in the Icelandic corpus, and distinctive from most other types of medieval prosimetrum.¹

Yet, among this great body of vernacular writing, almost no Latin writing survives, and what little is extant is largely fragmentary. Scholars have frequently asserted that the early authority of ON language and literature was among the most distinctive aspects of medieval Icelandic culture and society, both the authority of the ON language itself, and of certain authors and bodies of literature.² In exploring education and *grammatica*, however, this study will show that rapid ON literary development and linguistic authority did not prevent an active use of Latin in Iceland. Characterizing Icelandic education involves discussing the role of both ON and Latin in Iceland, and the dynamics of bilingual teaching and learning. In order to do that, however, a certain amount of background information is necessary on the characteristics and significance of the medieval discipline of *grammatica*.

II. Grammatica and Medieval Education

Grammatica was one of the three arts of the trivium, the languages arts side of the *septem artes liberales*, which also included *rhetorica* and *dialectica*. Among the liberal arts,

¹ Clunies Ross 2005, 80-81.

² Stephen Tranter argues, regarding the *3GT*, that by “incorporating skaldic verse into his grammatical tracts he maintains the equal right of the native tradition to be treated, like the works of Latin Antiquity, as a canonical corpus.” (Tranter 2000, 147). Clunies Ross is somewhat more cautious, suggesting that, for Icelandic writers, the “vernacular handbooks of vernacular poetics” were intended to confirm “the status of their native poetry not only to themselves but in comparison with the rhetorical and grammatical tradition of medieval European Latinity” (Clunies Ross 2005, 233). Mikael Males’ most recent work characterizes the thirteenth-century development of vernacular *grammatica* as being largely orientated around creating vernacular authority (Males 2016).

grammatica was the most elementary discipline in the Middle Ages: it dealt with the teaching and learning of the Latin language, as well as various forms of interpretation and linguistic ideologies.³ In its concern with interpretation of form, style, and figurative language it overlapped with *rhetorica*, though the latter was generally more concerned with composition, while *grammatica* dealt more with interpretation.⁴ For the purposes of this study, a broad understanding of *grammatica* will be taken, as in the context of Iceland it seems unlikely that the hard distinctions between disciplines were often relevant.⁵

Martin Irvine's seminal 1994 study on the cultural history of *grammatica* in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, *The Making of Textual Culture: Grammatica and Literary Theory, 350-1100*, is fundamental to understanding the discipline in a broader historical context. Irvine points out that the discipline of *grammatica* went beyond its role in school curricula:

[B]y supplying the very conditions for textual culture, the culture of the manuscript book, *grammatica* functioned as an irreducible cultural prerequisite, a status never given to rhetoric or logic. In the terms of medieval scholars themselves, *grammatica* was "the source and foundation of liberal letters" or "the source and foundation of all the textual arts," not only because *grammatica* was the only point of entry into literate culture but because *grammatica* was universally understood to supply the discursive means for constructing language and texts as objects of knowledge.⁶

³ For various medieval iterations of the traditional definition of the discipline, see Irvine 1994, 1, note 1.

⁴ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 28. By the thirteenth century *grammatica* and *rhetorica* were increasingly difficult to separate, particularly in the treatises known as *artes poetriae* which arose during the period (Purcell 1996, 3-10). For more general overlap see also Irvine 1994, 7-8.

⁵ There is little direct reference at all to the idea of *rhetorica* as a discipline or system of thought in the Old Norse tradition. There is only one clear reference to *rhetorica* in the extant grammatical treatises is a single reference in the *Málskruðsfræði*, where it is noted that alliteration is heavily used in both Norse poetics and *rhetorica*, which is translated as *málsnilldarlist* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 96). *Málsnilldarlist* is not a common word, but it does appear elsewhere in the Old Norse corpus, and usually only refers to 'eloquence' in the most general sense. Another instance where it directly translates *rhetorica*, in *Ágústínuss saga*, it is a strictly historical reference to St. Augustine's teaching of *rhetorica* in Carthage (Unger, ed., 1877, vol. I, 125).

⁶ Irvine 1994, 2.

A more recent and equally important work is Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter's 2009 *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475*, which collects and introduces excerpts from grammatical and rhetorical works across this period. They describe *grammatica* in both functional and philosophical terms, including its relationship with dialectic:

John of Salisbury spoke of grammar as the “cradle of all philosophy.” The technical field of grammar was a foundation for explanatory systems of how language signifies and meaning is produced. Through grammatical theory, ancient and medieval readers could move from questions of signification to questions of meaning, from signs to semantics, and ultimately to questions of literary representation, that is, the relationship of poetic language to different kinds of truth, including the possibilities that the poetic language of Scripture offered to speculative theology. Because of its concern with signification, grammar was linked closely with the logical science of dialectic.⁷

In light of current scholarship, then, it is clear that *grammatica* is fundamental to studying not only medieval education, but the relationship between education and the wider intellectual and cultural landscape.⁸

The interpretative side of *grammatica* – the part beyond the essential learning of the Latin language – was traditionally given four core divisions. *Lectio* involved pronunciation and reading aloud, *ennarratio* the principles of interpretation and figurative language, *emendatio* the creation and maintenance of correct language, and *iudicium* involved criticism and judgment of writings.⁹ Like most intellectual or pedagogical disciplines the influence of *grammatica* can be inferred from almost any texts, but *grammatica* is particular in its fundamental role in all textual and manuscript production. The discipline is evidenced not

⁷ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 14.

⁸ In a more recent article, Irvine affirmed that “*grammatica*, in the medieval sense, is not be reduced to what is found in a primer text like Donatus’ *Ars grammatica*, but should be understood to include a range of literate and literary practices shared by the grammatically educated” (Irvine and Thomson 2005, 16).

⁹ Irvine 1994, 4-6.

only through grammatical treatises, various forms of commentaries, and encyclopedic works, but through “the form and content of manuscript books produced within grammatical culture.”¹⁰

Through these methods, *grammatica* was also closely involved with the creation and maintenance of textual authority. On the level of texts and the literary corpus, the authorization was two-way: *grammatica* conferred authority to texts, and in turn, texts which already carry authority – whether through *grammatica* or by other means – conferred authority to grammatical discourses and the ideologies which make use of them. The interaction between Virgil and Donatus’ *Ars grammatica* – his *ars minor* and *ars maior*, written in fourth-century Rome, arguably the most important grammatical textbook of the Middle Ages – is the clearest classical example of this bilateral interaction.¹¹ On a broader linguistic level, *grammatica* helped produce *latinitas* ‘latinity’, the principle of correct linguistic usage and normalized, authoritative language based on systematic principles, literary authorities, and convention.¹²

While at the most advanced levels of grammatical learning there were many changes and new cultural developments, at the elementary and intermediate levels of learning it remained surprisingly consistent from the fifth century to the Renaissance.¹³ Innovations in teaching technique and ideology did occur, however. A classical tradition was steadily Christianized and adapted to new cultural conditions. Bede and other important teachers pressed the argument that Scripture was as complex and sophisticated as any classical *auctor*,¹⁴ and adaptations by Insular grammarians to new linguistic conditions in the seventh and eighth centuries had a wide impact.¹⁵ The late twelfth and thirteenth centuries brought the rise of verse grammars, making use of the verse format for mnemonic reasons, as well as

¹⁰ Irvine, 1994, 8-12.

¹¹ As Martin Irvine describes the interaction: “[W]ith Vergil as the object-text for grammatical discourse, *grammatica* constructed itself as dependent on the authority of cultural scripture, but the authority of the discipline, the discourse of a systematic *ars*, constructed this objectified text with the authority emanating from an institutional and professional power base” (Irvine 1994, 80).

¹² Irvine 1994, 74-8.

¹³ Irvine and Thomson 2005, 17.

¹⁴ Irvine 1994, 291-3.

¹⁵ Law 1982.

other new genres, and the pedagogical dynamics of the discipline were changed.¹⁶ But among these changes there remained a remarkable consistency to the discipline and its role in education.

III. Primary Sources for Icelandic Education and *Grammatica*

A wide variety of sources must be used to explore Icelandic education completely, from social, economic, and institutional angles, as well as from the perspective of *grammatica* and other disciplines. Sagas of Icelandic bishops, *biskupasögur*, along with some other narrative sources give the chronological, social, and political context for education. Laws and documentary sources provide some further important social and economic information, particularly how deals between students, patrons, and teachers were arranged and prescribed. Regarding *grammatica*, the lack of Latin sources is limiting, as the extant sources can only show how vernacular culture adapted and responded to the Latin tradition, namely how a vernacular *grammatica* developed. Information about the core tradition of Latin *grammatica* must be reconstructed from a diversity of sources. The surviving ON grammatical treatises show how native poetic and linguistic learning was adapted and textualized, but also how the terminology and techniques of Donatus and Priscian and other Latin grammarians were vernacularized. The broader understanding of *grammatica* can also be seen in religious poetry and translated hagiography, most notably those which incorporate commentary on language and interpretation into their texts. The writing of commentary was central to the practice of *grammatica*, and thus any type of text which comments on language use in particular can potentially be a source for *grammatica*.

Narrative sources which are useful source for medieval Icelandic education are largely restricted to those which discuss the ecclesiastical history of the post-conversion period, though some other types can be used to illuminate broader concepts of education.¹⁷

¹⁶ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 544-50

¹⁷ *Íslendingasögur*, the sagas of Icelanders, which deal roughly with the period from the settlement of Iceland to just after to conversion to Christianity, and several other genres of saga sometimes mention education within fostering relationships, as will be noted in Chapters 1 and 3.

Samtiðarsögur, the contemporary sagas, were written mostly in the mid-thirteenth century, and potentially adapted by later compilers. They deal with events of the so-called ‘Sturlunga Age’, from the early twelfth century until the end of the Icelandic commonwealth around 1262.¹⁸ *Biskupasögur*, the bishops’ sagas, are sometimes included among the *samtiðarsögur*. They deal with Icelandic bishops in both hagiographic and non-hagiographic modes, and were written from the late twelfth century into the fourteenth.¹⁹ In addition, two other narrative texts, *Íslendingabók* and *Kristni saga*, are important sources for the period of conversion – the former in particular is the earliest extant vernacular text in Iceland, and a source for many later narratives – and deal with bishops and ecclesiastical history, though they are not usually classed among the *biskupasögur*. While there are a significant number of issues with using all of these texts, they remain the basis for the accepted historical narrative of medieval Iceland.²⁰

Lárentius saga and *Jóns saga helga* are the most significant sources for Icelandic education among the narrative corpus, as they contain the most explicit descriptions of Icelandic schools. *Jóns saga* describes in idealized terms the bishopric of Hólar in the early twelfth century, right after its foundation, including the schools and teaching. Bishop Lárentius’ own education and teaching career in the early fourteenth century, both before and after he becomes bishop, is described in *Lárentius saga*, and the saga also contains more comment on Latin and Latinity than any other bishops’ saga. Both sagas are exemplary of the uncertainties inherent in using such sagas as sources. *Lárentius saga* was written soon after

¹⁸ Most of them are part of the *Sturlunga saga* compilation, which includes around twelve sagas, including the *þættir*, as well as the extremely long *Íslendinga saga* which takes up the bulk of the collection. For an overview in English, see Úlfar Bragason 2005; for a more recent and complete overview in Icelandic, see Úlfar Bragason 2010. Among the difficulties in classifying the contemporary sagas as a separate genre are the numerous ways they overlap with the *Íslendingasögur*: see Andersson’s comments on *Þorgils saga ok Haflíða* as an intermediate point between the two genres (Andersson 2002, 403). They also share similarities with the *biskupasögur*; Margaret Cormack offers a distinction between the clerical contemporary sagas, including sagas of bishops that also have *Vitae* written about them, and secular contemporary sagas, mostly represented by *Sturlunga saga* (Cormack 1994, 49-51).

¹⁹ For a recent general discussion of the genre see Sigurdson 2016, 35-8.

²⁰ This use of these types of sagas, and the *biskupasögur* are often thought of as a type of contemporary saga, is well-established: “The bishops’ sagas and other contemporary sagas provide a good deal of information about the intellectual life in the monasteries and school of Iceland” (White 2005, 1). The reliance of historians on the greater reliability of these types of sagas, written more closely to the events they describe than other sagas, has been criticized on multiple grounds, but it still remains a fairly standard practice (Úlfar Bragason 2005, 440-42).

the events it describes, sometime in the mid-fourteenth century, but it is only extant in two sixteenth-century manuscripts.²¹ *Jóns saga helga* was written roughly a century after the events it describes, and while it was originally written in Latin it survives only in vernacular versions, and three major versions survive among the extant manuscripts.²² Care must be thus be taken in taking the evidence of these sagas as anything more than anecdotes about possible forms and practices of education in medieval Iceland.

Diplomatic sources are also relevant for education, though they rarely survive in their original manuscripts. In particular church charters, *máldagar*, survive from the twelfth century onwards and offer some evidence for liturgical prescriptions and church activities, which can reflect on educational practices. From the fourteenth century and later, these *máldagar* begin to record the books owned by churches for the northern diocese of Hólar, which reflects on the use of Latin in Iceland. Educational agreements and mentions of educational agreements in other types of documents survive from the mid-fourteenth century, and in significant numbers from the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

The laws in Iceland are preserved largely in two thirteenth-century codices – *Konungsbók* from the mid-thirteenth century, and *Staðarhólsbók* from c. 1270, known collectively as *Grágás*. Norwegian laws from the period after 1262 come from the 1271 code known as *Járnsíða*, which was soon replaced by *Jónsbók* in 1281. *Jónsbók* survives in a huge number of manuscripts from the fourteenth century and later. According to *Íslendingabók*, the laws were first written down in the winter of 1117-18, though it is unclear and often debated to what extent the extant *Grágás* reflects those laws.²³ As it stands, the *Kristinna laga þáttur* ‘Christian law section’ of *Grágás* contains educational and other provisions which are relevant here, though it is possible more educational law existed which does not survive.

These sources are key for understanding the social, political, institutional, and economic dynamics of education in Iceland. The descriptions of subjects of learning in the *biskupasögur* and the documentary evidence is limited, however, and must be supplemented

²¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, LVIII.

²² For a full discussion of the manuscripts and versions of *Jóns saga helga*, see the introduction of Foote, ed., 2003. Two of the other *biskupasögur*, *Þorláks saga helga* and *Guðmundar saga góða* also survive in several highly divergent versions.

²³ For a brief general survey, see Sandvik and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 2005, 224-8.

by surviving pedagogical texts and literary works which incorporate commentary. There are numerous theological, computistical, and encyclopedic translations and compilations which cannot be sufficiently surveyed here, and will be addressed primarily in Chapter 2.²⁴ The best sources for *grammatica* in Iceland are the grammatical treatises, of which there are four, plus the compilation known as the *Snorra Edda* and some fragmentary material. All of these are written in the vernacular, and thus represent a distinct grammatical discipline, both influenced by and separate from the core discipline of Latin learning and textual interpretation. These treatises deal with the normalization and analysis of the ON language, and the interpretation of ON texts, particularly skaldic poetry.²⁵

All four of the treatises take their names from the order which they appear in the *Codex Wormianus*, the fourteenth-century manuscript which is the only place where all the treatises appear together.²⁶ The oldest of the treatises is the so-called *First Grammatical Treatise (IGT)*, which has been dated to between 1125-1175. It is an orthographic treatise, which proposes a distinct and highly precise vernacular alphabet for ON, and goes on to discuss the reasons for the various graphic distinctions it proposes. Its alphabet was never put into consistent use, however, and it is only extant in the *Codex Wormianus*. Another very short orthographic treatise, known as the *Second Grammatical Treatise (2GT)*, has been dated on linguistic evidence to the late thirteenth century, and is extant in both the *Codex Wormianus* and in a somewhat different version in the *Codex Upsaliensis*, from the early fourteenth century. Rather than a prescription for a new alphabet, the *2GT* introduces the basic philosophical distinctions of sound – a technique of traditional *grammatica* which the *IGT* does not use – and then goes on to describe each letter of the ON alphabet, using some but not all proposed in the *IGT*. It includes some of its own characters as well, including some abbreviation marks, and in the *Codex Upsaliensis* two illustrated exemplary figures are included.²⁷

²⁴ A significant amount of this material is surveyed in Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2005.

²⁵ For a survey of recent scholarship on all the grammatical treatises, see Raschellà 2007.

²⁶ The most recent authoritative study on the manuscript and its contexts is Johansson 1997.

²⁷ There are two standard editions and translations of the *First Grammatical Treatise*: Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972 and Haugen, ed., 1972. Haugen will be used for the most part in this study, though Hreinn Benediktsson's work remains a seminal commentary on and study of the treatise. Both versions of the *Second Grammatical Treatise* are edited in Raschellà, ed., 1982, which also includes a collated edition and translation. The *Codex*

The *Snorra Edda* is thought to have been written by the chieftain Snorri Sturluson c. 1220-40, though parts of the text may have continued to be edited or added after the author's death in 1241.²⁸ It is a composite work in three parts, with an additional *Prologue* which has also been speculated to have been written later. The first part, *Gylfaginning*, presents a series of prose myths based on the frame narrative of king Gylfi visiting the Æsir, the Norse gods, and hearing stories of the gods and other pagan myths. The second part, *Skáldskaparmál*, continues the mythological material, but leads into a discussion of poetic diction: specialized poetic terms known as *heiti*, as well as the circumlocutions known as kennings which are a key component in most ON poetry. *Háttatal*, finally, is a *clavis metricae* thought to have been written by Snorri for King Hákon Hákonarson and Duke Skúli of Norway, framed by a prose commentary on the different metrics of each verse, and continuing some discussion of diction.²⁹

There is little evidence for direct influence of Latin grammatical writing on the *Snorra Edda*, except in the most general sense that *grammatica* pervaded medieval textual culture, and certainly impacted some structural elements of the treatise.³⁰ However, in the reception among Icelandic clerical culture, there are many aspects of the treatise that fit neatly into grammatical discourse. The euhemerizing frame narrative of *Gylfaginning* and the *Prologue* deal with the tension of teaching pagan myth, and provide a single authoritative version of these myths, which can aid in the interpretation and composition of poetry. *Skáldskaparmál* and *Háttatal* deal with the dual topics of diction and metrics, which were

Upsaliensis version of the *2GT* has more recently been edited and translated in Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012. The *1GT*, because of its several unique qualities and linguistic insights into early Icelandic, has received significant scholarly attention, with the *2GT* has much more sparsely studied, and Raschellà's edition remains the main work on it.

²⁸ Faulkes, ed., 2005, xii-xvi. For arguments concerning the potential disunity of the *Snorra Edda*, and the possibility that the commentary of *Háttatal* in particular could have been written after Snorri's death, see Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, lxix-lxxiii, xci.

²⁹ Anthony Faulkes has published both the standard three-part edition of the *Snorra Edda*, as well as the standard translation. See bibliography.

³⁰ In contrast to arguments that the genre of *artes poetriae* influenced or inspired the *Snorra Edda*, Faulkes has argued that there are no significant correlations (Faulkes, ed., 2005, xx). The *artes poetriae* aimed at teaching composition through *enarratio*, generating new texts through the exegesis of old ones (Reynolds 1996, 27), which seems comparable to the *Snorra Edda*, but it is such a broad dynamic that it might have as easily be derived from native poetic pedagogies as from the grammatical tradition. For the relative lack of Latin-derived terminology in the *Snorra Edda*, see also Appendix 2 of this study.

often the core of the grammatical study of poetics.³¹

This clerical reception is evidenced in the two surviving poetic treatises based on translations of Latin texts, which also take influence from the *Snorra Edda: The Third Grammatical Treatise (3GT)* and *Fourth Grammatical Treatise (4GT)*. The 3GT is attributed to Óláfr Þórðarson, the nephew of Snorri Sturluson, and can be roughly dated to the period from his return to Iceland from the Danish court of king Valdemar around 1242, to Óláfr's death in 1259.³² The treatise itself is divided into two parts: The *Málfræðinnar Grundvöllr (MG)*, based on a translation of part of Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* as well as other texts,³³ and the *Málskrúðsfræði (MS)*, based on a translation of Book 3 of Donatus' *Ars Maior*, conventionally known in the Middle Ages as the *Barbarismus*.³⁴ The 4GT has no solidly established author, though there has been speculation, but on paleographic and internal historical evidence it has been dated to c.1320-40.³⁵ It was written as a continuation of the *MS*, using material primarily from Alexander de Villa-Dei's *Doctrinale*, but also some from Eberhard of Béthune's *Græcismus*, both standard verse grammars across Europe during the thirteenth century and afterwards.

The *MG* deals with the characteristics of sounds, letters, syllables, and words, and is in essence a standard introduction to grammar. Its adaptation to deal with ON, however, involves several changes: it compares Latin and runic alphabets, the significance of syllables in Latin and ON poetics, and carefully avoids discussions of syntax and inflection normally included with such introductions, as they would be less translatable between languages and

³¹ As, for example, in Bede's composition of a *De arte metrica* and a *De schematibus et tropis*.

³² Wills, ed., 2001, 6-7.

³³ The core source may of course be a text derived from Priscian, and there is additional material from Petrus Hispanus' *Summulae Logicales*, native material from *Háttatal*, original material on runes as well as other vernacular topics (Wills, ed., 2001, 143). There was also almost certainly extensive influence from Ælfric's *Excerptiones* in some form or another, but definitely in metalinguistic terminology (Gade 2007, 338).

³⁴ There are minor changes suggesting influence from other texts, probably from commentaries on the *Barbarismus* itself, but also potentially from other Latin texts on the *figúrur*. Ólsen's notes to his edition of the text marks several passages which must have come from a different source, and speculates on possibilities. For example, for the added details on the four named barbarisms, *mytacismus*, *labdacismus*, *jotacismus*, and *collisiones*, he suggests Martianus Capella and Servius' commentary on Donatus (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 69-71), for *alleotheta* he suggests Alexander de Villa Dei or Petru Helias (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 85), and the quote of Ovid in the discussion of *metaphora* is also used in Alexander's *Doctrinale* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 103). More recently, Clunies Ross and Wellendorf have reaffirmed that the *Doctrinale* must have been a source (Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, xli-xliv).

³⁵ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, xii-xiii.

less significant to native speakers of ON. It is thus in part an orthographic treatise, like the *1GT* and the *2GT*, but more general, philosophical, and comparative.

The *MS* and the *4GT* are poetic treatises, structured like *Háttatal* as a series of stanzas framed by prose commentary, and are both concerned with a collection of terms and ideas which we will identify here by the prevailing Norse term *figúrur* ‘figures’. In the *MS* these are the faults and virtues of speech, covering a variety of exegetical and prescriptive ideas. What the *MS* terms barbarisms are faults in individual words, solecisms are faults in phrases, and the other faults were miscellaneous and sometimes later recast as virtues. For the virtues, metaplasms are changes in the form of words, schemes are changes in phrases, and tropes involved some sort of semantic changes. The significance of Donatus’ take on this system of stylistics in the Middle Ages is shown by the fact that even after most of the *Ars maior* was rendered largely obsolete by Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae*, the *Barbarismus* continued to circulate.³⁶ The *4GT*’s collection consists of a variety of terms, for the most part virtues rather than faults of speech, which the *Doctrinale* added to Donatus’ list. It is most distinctive and innovative in its focus on using religious poetry for its examples and adding some theological exegesis to its commentary.

The exegetical functions of the sources of the *3GT* and *4GT* represent some of the most basic, well-known and consistent functions of *grammatica*. Donatus’ *Ars maior* was originally a grammatical commentary on Virgil, while Priscian broadened that scope to a massive number of references on nearly the whole classical canon.³⁷ The *Doctrinale* was intended above all to prepare students to read the Vulgate bible, and at the same time would come to essentially replace Priscian, while being supplemented with other texts.³⁸ The *Graecismus* was generally transmitted with the *Doctrinale*, and functioned alongside it in the same ways.³⁹ The vices and virtues of the *Barbarismus* were the core theory of figurative language in the Middle Ages, and all other treatments of the topic were based ultimately upon

³⁶ Law 2003, 69. The *Barbarismus* tended to circulate with book XVII and XVIII of Priscian’s *Institutiones*, neither of which are used in the *3GT*.

³⁷ Irvine 1994, 107.

³⁸ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 574-5.

³⁹ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 584.

Donatus'.⁴⁰ Its centrality to medieval composition and *enarratio* is in part derived from the Stoic idea that plain writing is devalued by readers, and that figurative speech is required for serious writing, and thus for the interpretation of serious writing.⁴¹ The essential Christianization of this idea is exemplified by Bede, who greatly developed the widespread idea that the *figúrur*, 'figures', could be found in the Scriptures themselves, and were not simply a classical idea being superimposed upon the holy text. His examples in *De schematibus et tropis* are Scriptural, and the treatise thus becomes essentially a guide for reading and interpreting biblical language.⁴² Overall, the *MS* and the *4GT* are a vernacularization of an organized, formal system and vocabulary capable of speaking abstractly about figurative language, morphological variation in poetry, rhetorical and grammatical devices, and more.

All these grammatical treatises in the Old Norse corpus are transmitted in manuscripts with a part or the whole of the *Snorra Edda*, and usually also with additional poems. While the manuscript context of these treatises in the twelfth and thirteenth century cannot be reconstructed, it is clear that from the earliest manuscripts at beginning of the fourteenth century that the *Snorra Edda*, and vernacular poetry in general, is at the centre of vernacular *grammatica*. These manuscripts have been surveyed most recently in the major studies of the *Snorra Edda* by Nordal, Faulkes, and Clunies Ross.⁴³ Three manuscripts contain the entire

⁴⁰ Irvine 1994, 107.

⁴¹ Irvine 1994, 230. See also Irvine and Thomson 2005, 34.

⁴² Irvine 1994, 291-6. These *figúrur* were also the key area where the disciplines of *grammatica* and *rhetorica* overlapped, (Reynolds 1996, 27) which speaks to their universal significance in medieval culture. To a grammarian, whose traditional goal was correctness, the tropes in particular were often faults – or at least deviations from the prescriptive norm – while to a rhetorician they were essential to embellishing a text. The great compromise between the disciplines inherited in the late Middle Ages was largely Priscian's: a certain level of incorrectness was acceptable among the *auctores*, because there was deeper, truer grammar that was being served, a platonic ideal of linguistic structure. This deepened the importance of *enarratio* as applied to the *figúrur*, and led to them becoming of much greater importance themselves (Reynolds 1996, 21-4). Scholars have often tended to view the *figúrur* of Icelandic grammatical treatises as rhetorical: Clunies Ross refers to the figures of the *Barbarismus* as "rhetorical figures" and "the core of grammatical rhetoric" (Clunies Ross 2005, 191), and Peter Foote titled his work on Latin influence in the treatises "Latin Rhetoric and Icelandic Poetry" (Foote 1984). See most recently the terminology in Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014. However, in this study they will be viewed as primarily grammatical, while acknowledging that the distinction could be very fluid in the Middle Ages.

⁴³ Guðrún Nordal 2001, 41-72; Clunies Ross 2005, 187; Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 19-21; Faulkes, ed., 2005, xxviii-xxxii. The current survey is based primarily upon Nordal's.

Snorra Edda: Codex Upsaliensis, DG 11 4to, from c. 1300-1325; *Codex Regius*, GKS 2367 4to, from c. 1300-1325; *Codex Wormianus*, AM 242 fol, from c. 1350. For a study of vernacular *grammatica* the *Codex Wormianus* is the most important manuscript, as it is the manuscript from which the four grammatical treatises take their names, and the only manuscript which contains the *1GT* and *4GT*. The *Codex Regius* contains the whole of the *Snorra Edda* and two skaldic poems, but none of the grammatical treatises; the *Codex Upsaliensis* contains the *2GT*. Other manuscripts contain partial versions of these treatises.⁴⁴

Apart from this tradition of vernacular *grammatica*, there is some manuscript evidence of grammatical texts involved with the teaching of the Latin language. AM 921 III 4to is a direct translation of some of Ælfric's *Excerptiones*, specifically a paradigm of the Latin verb *amare* 'to love', with direct Norse translations of each form of the verb, and the names of the tenses, persons, moods, etc. which describe the paradigms, where Ælfric's text had Old English. Like Ælfric, the goal here appears to be to use the vernacular to teach Latin at an elementary level. While the manuscript itself is quite late,⁴⁵ it will be argued here that the translation of such an elementary text from an Old English original is likely to be no later than the eleventh or twelfth centuries. In addition, there are two glossaries in Latin with Old Norse glosses, GKS 1812 4to and AM 249 I fol. The original manuscript from which both derive dates somewhere around the end of the twelfth century.⁴⁶ A few other very small pieces of evidence survive in compilations which may reflect Latin grammatical learning in Iceland.⁴⁷

The last body of evidence for *grammatica* and grammatical education is the extant

⁴⁴ Three other manuscripts contain *Skáldskaparmál* separate from the rest of the *Snorra Edda*: AM 748 Ib 4to, from c. 1300-1325; AM 757 a 4to, from c. 1400; AM 748 II 4to, from c. 1400. AM 748 Ib 4to also contains the sole surviving fragment of the *Fifth Grammatical Treatise*, several poems, *Litla Skálda*, and the *Pulur* – metrical lists of *heiti* – and the *3GT*. AM 757 a 4to likewise contains several poems, the *3GT*, the *Pulur*, and *Litla Skálda*. AM 748 II 4to, in addition to part of *Skáldskaparmál*, only contains the *Pulur* and a genealogy of the Sturlungar family. While the fourteenth-century manuscripts show a strong connection between all the grammatical treatises, the relationship between *Skáldskaparmál* and the *3GT* is thus most apparent, emphasizing the central role of discussions of diction and figurative language in vernacular *grammatica*.

⁴⁵ AM 921 III 4to itself dates to around 1400, but it is certainly a copy of an older manuscript (Gade 2007, 335).

⁴⁶ Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 299. Hreinn Benediktsson offers only the late-twelfth century dating in his summary of the Old Norse grammatical literature (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 21).

⁴⁷ The compilations AM 732 b 4to contains Greek glosses, ciphers, macaronic and Latin poetry, edited in Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1884-91.

corpus of poetry and hagiography. The Old Norse poetic corpus is one of the largest of vernacular verse for medieval western Europe.⁴⁸ Most of the poetry survives in a prose context, as many of the Icelandic sagas are on some level prosimetrical,⁴⁹ though many of the surviving verses are also preserved in the grammatical treatises. There are two main types of Old Norse poetry. Eddic poetry, the poetry that appears in the older, somewhat simpler metres, is often discussed in terms of oral tradition, mythology, or the prosimetrical *fornaldarsögur* – ‘sagas of ancient times’, which deal largely with vikings and ancient Scandinavian heroes – in which it appears,⁵⁰ though there is a body of eddic Christian and wisdom poetry composed in the Middle Ages. Probably the most well-known extant poems come from the great manuscript of mythological and heroic poems, the *Codex Regius* manuscript, from c. 1275.⁵¹ Skaldic poetry, a much larger corpus of court poetry, appears in many of the other genres of saga. It was also a significant component of the vernacular grammatical tradition, and holds a special place in discussions of chronology and historicity, as by all but the most critical estimations it represents the earliest Old Norse compositions with narrative historical content.⁵² Likewise, the skalds have long been viewed by scholars as a type of pre-Christian historian.⁵³ There is some evidence that there was a medieval conception of Eddic metres of poetry as older and more mythic, spoken by gods, while skaldic poetry was attributable to known, human poets.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Clunies Ross 2005, 6. The main edition of skaldic poetry is Finnur Jónsson’s four-volume *Skaldedigtning*. However, this is in the process of being expanded upon and replaced by the Skaldic Project (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/skaldic/db.php>), which in addition to the online database has three volumes released: two volumes on poetry from the Kings’ saga, and one volume on Christian poetry.

⁴⁹ Two of the most cited general studies on the role of verse in the sagas are Bjarni Einarsson 1974 and O’Donoghue 2005.

⁵⁰ Most of the Eddic poetry which does not appear collected in the *Codex Regius* is contained in prosimetrical form in the *fornaldarsögur* (Torfi Tulinius 2005, 448). See also Clunies Ross 2005, 10-12 and Friis-Jensen 1987, 46-9, for discussion of prosimetrum in the *fornaldarsögur*.

⁵¹ In addition to the *Codex Regius*, or GKS 2365 4to, some of the most important manuscripts for Eddic poetry include the *Codex Wormianus*, which in addition to the grammatical treatises contains the sole surviving, but incomplete, text of the poem *Rígsþula*, and AM 748 IA 4to, which contains parts of *Skálskaparmál* and a collection of mythological poems, some of which do not appear in the *Codex Regius* (Clunies Ross 2005, 7-9).

⁵² For general introductions to the poetic corpus and the types of Old Norse poetry, see Clunies Ross 2005, 6-29; Clunies Ross 2005 and Guðrún Nordal 2001 represent the main recent examinations of both the corpus of Old Norse poetry and the role of the poetry and poets in society.

⁵³ However, this is based almost entirely on a single quote from the prologue of *Heimskringla* (Andersson 1964, 28, note 5).

⁵⁴ Clunies Ross 2005, 10.

Both types of poetry interacted with imported Latin culture and were impacted by translation. The fairly rapid confluence of Latin Christian tradition and skaldic poetry is evidenced by Christian kennings and religious themes appearing in poetry from the very time of conversion, and the massive achievement of Einar Skúlason's *Geisli*, written for St Óláfr, to be recited at his shrine at Níðaróss, probably in 1153.⁵⁵ Several Christian poems are particularly important to discussions of *grammatica*: *Merlínusspá*, the late twelfth-century ON translation of the *Prophetiae Merlini*, contains several verses of commentary on its own use of symbolic language and the interpretation of prophecy; *Lilja* and several other related religious poems of the fourteenth century comment directly on the *Snorra Edda* and the use of complex language;⁵⁶ *Háttalykill*, finally, is a *clavis metricae* which is thought to have been among the sources and inspirations for *Háttatal*.⁵⁷

In addition to this poetry, there is a small corpus of ON hagiography which incorporates commentary, and thus evidences the practice of *grammatica*, though they have not been considered in terms of *grammatica* before. These are primarily fourteenth-century texts, though a version of *Jóns saga baptista* from c.1280 is particularly interesting in that a letter survives discussing its composition, which parallels in several respects a short epilogue to the saga, discussing glossing and the interpretation of symbolic language.⁵⁸

When surveying these sources, it is important to keep in mind the number of manuscripts that have been lost. The lack of Latin texts, and the focus of the extant grammatical writing on ON language and literature, need not indicate a lack of Latin or Latin education in Iceland. Likewise, the almost complete lack of direct references to lay education does not mean that only clerics were educated or literate. Having to speculate heavily about

⁵⁵ For a full description of the development of Christian poetry, see Attwood 2005 and Clunies Ross 2005, 114-140; the standard edition and commentary of *Geisli* is Chase, ed., 2005, though it has also been more recently edited and translated in Clunies Ross, ed., 2007.

⁵⁶ The relevant passages from *Merlínusspá* and the fourteenth-century religious poems are excerpted in Appendix 3.

⁵⁷ The dating of *Merlínusspá* is based on its attribution to the monk Gunnlaugr of Þingeyrar in AM 573 4to. *Merlínusspá* is edited with the rest of the early fourteenth-century manuscript *Hauksbók*, the only place where it survives, in Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1892-6. *Lilja* has recently been re-edited and translated in Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 554-677. *Háttalykill* is transmitted only in two seventeenth century manuscripts; its early dating is based on the mention of its composition in *Orkneyinga saga* (Clunies Ross 2005, 155).

⁵⁸ Excerpts from *Jóns saga baptista* as well as *Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs* are included in Appendix 3.

the details of lay education and Latin *grammatica* does not mean that such things were not important to Icelandic society and culture. Using the full diversity of available sources is fundamental to showing the range of possible dynamics and discourses in medieval Icelandic education and *grammatica*.

IV. Outline of this Study

Chapter 1 will consider the evidence for the history of Icelandic schools and education in terms of social, institutional, and economic factors. It will survey the sources available and general chronological framework, i.e. what important teachers, students, and schools existed, and what major changes took place in Icelandic history that may have affected educational practice. From there it will discuss the context and institutions behind education and schools, including monasteries and cathedral schools, but also social context, such as when education intersected with fostering relationships and conflict resolution. These social bonds provide a link between Christian, secular, and pre-Christian educational practices, and point to the wider social role education could play in Iceland. Financial and economic factors have also tended to be neglected in the scholarship, and it can be shown that the cost of education could be quite high, and must have been a consistent factor in who was educated, what sort of education they received, and what context it was in. Rather than present a chronological account or a judgment on the rising and falling quality of education in Iceland, this chapter will emphasize that there was always a range of possibilities in educational dynamics between the conversion and the Reformation.

Chapter 2 will defend the significance of the Latin language in medieval Iceland as a preface for describing Latin and bilingual educational topics and the available evidence for them. In response to trends of scholarly dismissal or ignorance of Icelandic latinity, the evidence of booklists and many other sources can show that Latin was important to Icelandic clerical and textual culture throughout the medieval period. There is almost no evidence, however, for the relevance of Latin learning to lay Icelanders, though they certainly regularly heard it during the Mass and other liturgical performances. Education which made use of

Latin was orientated around the the training of priests, and can be roughly divided into elementary, intermediate, and advanced forms of learning, among which *grammatica* was the most central discipline. This division emphasizes the potential diversity of learning and Latin literacy among educated Icelanders. While there is significant evidence for elementary and grammatical learning, the evidence for more advanced forms of learning is limited, and may have been in part confined to a clerical elite who could travel to Norway or further abroad for education.

The final section of Chapter 2 will propose that the translated vernacular grammatical treatises can be used as evidence of Latin *grammatica* in Iceland, based on the model of scholarship on Old English (OE) grammatical texts. There is solid evidence that Icelanders based some of their grammatical practices on the model of OE grammatical pedagogy, particularly Ælfric's *Excerptiones*. This likely produced a similar form of bilingual *grammatica*, with ON being used extensively for the teaching of Latin, and an extensive vernacular metalanguage developing thereby. Medieval Iceland can thus be seen in terms of wider vernacular adaptations to Latin *grammatica* and metalinguistics in the medieval west.

Finally, Chapter 3 will explore vernacular forms of learning, both secular and clerical, to the final purpose of characterizing the discipline of vernacular *grammatica* as an intellectual and pedagogical practice. Several forms of learning, including law, runacy, and poetry, all must have existed in pre-Christian Iceland, and have had linguistic concerns which fed into the development of vernacular *grammatica*. These disciplines characterize what we must assume oral, secular Icelandic education looked like, and vernacular *grammatica* in part represents the mixing of this secular learning with clerical ideas about language and pedagogy. As there was no need to teach native speakers their own language, the largest part of this discipline had to do with interpretation and normalization, and from this perspective the discipline can be seen not only in treatises, but also in poetry and the incorporated commentary of hagiography. The fourteenth century shows a culmination and mixing of many threads of vernacular grammatical discourse, particularly through the different influences on the *4GT*. These threads involve various methods and ideologies of interpretation and normalization. The teaching of vernacular *grammatica*, however, can only

be speculated about, and it does not seem to be as widely significant as Latin *grammatica* for the core of clerical learning at any point.

By taking a broad perspective on different aspects of education and grammatical discourse in Iceland, this study will show both the diversity of educational practices and the wider significance of education to other topics of study, including literary and ecclesiastical history. Even within the limitations of the evidence, educational dynamics must be taken into account: the social and economic role it could play in both clerical and lay society, the widespread importance of Latin learning despite its lack of representation in the extant corpus, and the extensive incorporation and development of grammatical ideas in vernacular textual culture. Viewing education more comprehensively, both more speculatively and more critically, than has been hitherto been attempted creates a space for considering the role of education in future historical and literary research. It also emphasizes the complex, multi-layered way in which Latin and European culture influenced and interacted with native Icelandic culture, where individuals and institutions could have an impact on the dissemination and development of learning.

1: Schools and Education in Iceland

The social, institutional, and economic aspects of education are key to giving historical context to all other aspects of teaching, learning, and intellectual life in medieval Iceland. This chapter will begin by exploring the historical background of medieval Icelandic education and the relevant sources, setting up a chronological framework for the rest of this study but also addressing the limitations of a diachronic approach to education. From there the chapter will examine a series of topics, first the schools and other institutions and locations of learning, and, second, the conditions of people involved with education, namely teachers, students, and patrons.

Icelandic education can be shown to have been diverse and adaptable, functioning in different contexts for different people and purposes. It reflected both wider European developments as well as the immediate conditions of Iceland, and was never a singular, monolithic tradition. The primary goal of this chapter is to show the broad range of ways education could have taken place, and while the limitations of the source material prevent very many certain conclusions, they do show a wide potential for different types of teaching and learning. These were affected by many aspects of Icelandic society and culture, including the cost of education, the development of ecclesiastical institutions, the relationship between lay and religious schooling, and relationships between schoolmasters, teachers, and students. A key aspect of this diversity is financial: while poorer Icelanders and the lower classes of the Icelandic priesthood are not very well represented in the sources, their existence and significance must be acknowledged to gain a complete picture of the many roles education could play in medieval Icelandic life. In light of this diversity, what qualifies as an important context of education must also be questioned, and what makes a particular person or place important to broader dynamics of teaching and learning.

1.1 The Historical Background and Sources of Icelandic Education

Establishing the aspects of the history of medieval Iceland most relevant to education,

and contextualizing within that the information available from the extant sources, is the first step for understanding the ways in which education functioned in Icelandic society. As this chapter is dealing primarily with social, economic, and institutional factors, the evidence will be a combination of narrative sources, primarily the *biskupasögur*, as well as legal and documentary ones. After considering the relevant historical events and sources of the period from the conversion to the Reformation, this section will address issues of source criticism and scholarly methodology which, it will be argued, have limited and mischaracterized Icelandic education. In particular, this is an issue of how to incorporate all the different types of evidence, how to deal with the rhetoric and narrative tropes of the *biskupasögur*, and how to deal with those aspects of educational history which are mostly absent from the sources. On the whole, it can be argued that there was more continuity in Icelandic education over the course of the Middle Ages than has been suggested, even while there were many diverse forms of education happening at any given time.

1.1.1 Education in the Commonwealth Period

This study is concerned with the history of education in Christian Iceland, that is, after Iceland's official conversion in 1000. Scholars have speculated little about earlier modes of learning, pagan or Christian, for which sources are sparse.⁵⁹ Little can be said for certain about how topics like vernacular poetics, secular, genealogy, and runic literacy were taught. However, it is vitally important to the history of education after 1000 to acknowledge that they that must have been taught, however informally, as all of them clearly continued to appear in the literary corpus.⁶⁰ Literature cannot be produced without education, and as will be asserted throughout this chapter, there were no hard distinctions between formal and informal education. Native, pre-Christian subjects of learning may have been taught primarily in the home, by parents and foster-parents, but there was a significant amount of

⁵⁹ Pre-Christian education was touched upon briefly in Jón Sigurðsson's highly nationalistic history of Icelandic schools, where he emphasized law as the most important topic, but also runes, *seiðr* and Eddic poetry (Jón Sigurðsson 1842, 83-4). Of course, there were Christians in Iceland before 1000 who were probably involved with education as a part of conversion, but there is little evidence about what that would have entailed.

⁶⁰ These topics of pre-Christian and oral teaching will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.1.1.

overlap between that type of learning and more institutional forms.

The first priests in Iceland that are mentioned in the extant sources were missionaries, who in order to convert must have been involved in both teaching and learning: teaching relevant Christian topics and training Icelandic priests, as well as themselves learning enough of Icelandic society and language to effectively communicate their teachings. The sources mention a series of these missionaries, though there was very likely more of them.⁶¹ Before the conversion Þangbrandr is said to have been sent by Óláfr Tryggvason, and bishop Friðrekr travels to Iceland from Saxony to baptize the family of his friend Þorvaldr; when the Icelanders Gizurr *hvíti* and Hjalti Skeggjason are sent around the year 1000 by Óláfr Tryggvason to convert the island, they are accompanied by the court priest, Þormóðr, from England, and six other priests.⁶² Several other priests are mentioned in the extant sources who appear to be missionary bishops.⁶³ The major sources are *Íslendingabók*, *Kristni saga*, and *Hungrvaka*, while some are also mentioned in *Landnámabók*, *Þorvalds þátrr ens víðförla*, and *Vatnsdæla saga*. These are mostly from the thirteenth century, and possibly all deriving in some way from *Íslendingabók* as the earliest source. While nothing is mentioned in these extant sources of teaching practices of the missionaries and missionary bishops, they were active for some fifty years before an Icelandic bishop was ordained. Thus, at least the first two generations of Icelandic priests must have depended on them for their education, and so they must have been fundamentally important to how Christian topics were first

⁶¹ Orri Vésteinsson, while marginalizing their importance compared to aristocratic Icelanders, does acknowledge that there were likely more missionaries than are mentioned in the sources, and that they must have educated some Icelandic priests (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 75-80).

⁶² Benjamín Kristjánsson argues that these priests are being referred to in a passage in *Eyrbyggja saga*, where the saga mentions that the promise of new clergy encouraged church-building (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 4).

⁶³ These missionary bishops are: Bjarnharðr *bókvísi* Vilráðsson, a priest of St. Óláfr from England, who stayed in Iceland c. 1018-23; Kolr, possibly sent by St. Óláfr and living and teaching at Haukadalr, in Iceland c. 1026-30; the English Bishop Hróðólfr, again someone who had come from England with St. Óláfr, was in Iceland c. 1030-49 and possibly kept a small monastery and school at Bæ, though this is a controversial topic; Jóhann *írski*, c. 1050, and Heinrekr, c. 1060, from the Orkneys; Bjanharðr, c. 1048-68, sent to Norway by Adalbert, archbishop of Bremen. In addition, there are what *Íslendingabók* calls the three *ermiskir*, or Armenian, bishops: Petrus, Abrahám, and Stephánus. For the account of these in *Íslendingabók*, see Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 14-18; for *Kristni saga*, see Sigurgeir Steinsgrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 3-13. Benjamín also goes into some detail about the careers of these missionaries, and his estimation of the dates they stayed in Iceland are used here (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 5-13). More detail is given about these figures, and travels to and from Iceland in the eleventh century and earlier, in Melsteð 1907-15 and Grønlie, ed., 2006, 26, note 77.

adapted to Icelandic contexts.⁶⁴ These missionaries not only trained the first Icelandic priests, but oversaw the first mixing of vernacular and Latin pedagogy and liturgy, and thus must have laid the foundation for later developments in bilingual intellectual culture.

The first bishopric in Iceland, and thus the first known educational institution, was the southern bishopric of Skálholt, founded around 1056. Skálholt was the first *staðr*, or major church-farm wherein the church owned enough of the land around it to support a household. It took a long time for an independent institutional church to develop in Iceland, as church property was privately owned until the so-called *staðamál* in the second half of the thirteenth century, a conflict which brought the beginning of Church ownership and first giving of benefices in Iceland. As such, the founding of Skálholt was as much a moment of aristocratic history as ecclesiastical history.

The first bishop was Ísleifr Gizurarson, a member of the powerful Haukadælir, who were dominant over ecclesiastical politics and institutions until the mid-twelfth century, when other aristocratic families began to become more involved.⁶⁵ Ísleifr was the son of the Gizurr *hvíti* who played a central role in the conversion of Iceland. He was raised in Skálholt, brought to Herford in Saxony and educated there, according to *Kristni saga* and *Hungrvaka*.⁶⁶ *Hungrvaka* and *Jóns saga helga* also state that his son, Gizurr Ísleifsson, the second bishop of Skálholt, was educated in Saxony as well.⁶⁷ Ísleifr is praised by the sources as the first great teacher of Iceland, and the evidence presented are his most prestigious students: *Íslendingabók*, *Hungrvaka* and *Kristni saga* all state that at Skálholt he taught Jón Ögmundarson, the first bishop of Hólar, and Kolr, a bishop of Vík, in Norway.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Hreinn Benediktsson seems to ignore the possibility of early education and takes the native-bishop bias of the bishops' sagas at face value: "the introduction of Latin writing – the basis of, and prerequisite for, the development of written literature – hardly made noticeable progress until it was in the hand of native clerics. The earliest of these whose name is now remembered is Ísleifr Gizurarson . . ." (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 175-6).

⁶⁵ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 144-8.

⁶⁶ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 38-9; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 6. *Hungrvaka* specifically notes that Ísleifr was put in the care of an abbess while in Herford.

⁶⁷ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 14; Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 182.

⁶⁸ Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 20; Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 38-9; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 9. Despite the relative dearth of references to education, this particular point of ecclesiastical and educational history seems to have had particular significance, as it is also mentioned in *Jóns saga helga* (Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 181).

Haukadalsr, the *staðr* in the south of Iceland which was the home of the Haukadællir family, is also notable in educational history of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ari *fróði*, the author of *Íslendingabók*, was fostered there. Teitr, the son of Bishop Ísleifr Gizurarson, was Ari's foster-father and, according to *Jóns saga helga*, was a teacher at Haukadalsr: he is said to have taught Þórlákr Runólfsson, the third bishop of Skálholt, as well as Björn Gilsson, the third bishop of Hólar.⁶⁹ Teitr is also cited as a source in *Íslendingabók* and is said to have been the wisest man Ari knew,⁷⁰ suggesting the possibility that Teitr educated Ari. There is also a clear connection between Haukadalsr and Skálholt, and they may have interacted in their role as schools and providers of learning.

Ísleifr and his son's education abroad, the school at Skálholt, the education of foster-children at Haukadalsr, and the naming of particularly well known priests as students, are the core narratives of the development of Icelandic education in the latter eleventh century. There are several important dynamics for Icelandic history, and the role of education within it, which begin here. There is a clear relationship between aristocratic fosterage and education, and an overlap between fostering at a household with educational resources and sending them to school at a cathedral. This is in part because the aristocratic control of the Icelandic church, and the important role of aristocratic priests and what are generally referred to as chieftain-priests: Icelanders who were secular leaders, having control over a district or *goðorð*,⁷¹ who were also ordained as priests. There is a link between ecclesiastical and secular power which developed over the later eleventh and early twelfth century, and the general consensus is that by owning churches and being priests, chieftains could consolidate their power, drawing their neighbours to their own wealthy churches and thereby showing off their own wealth and power, extracting tithes, and strengthening social bonds.⁷² A tithe was established in 1097, based on property values, which gave church-owners a means of funding and supporting their churches, and potentially for funding a greater number of priests.⁷³

⁶⁹ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 182. *Hungrvaka* also mentions the education of Bishop Þórlákr Runólfsson at Haukadalsr (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 14).

⁷⁰ Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 4.

⁷¹ For a discussion of *goði* and *goðorð* see Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999, 9-83.

⁷² Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 238.

⁷³ For a full discussion of the tithe law and its implications, see Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 67-92.

The foundation of a second bishopric at Hólar in 1106, and the development of education and the Church over the twelfth century, occurred in the context of this close connection and overlap between the Icelandic secular aristocracy and the priesthood. There is a highly idealized description of Hólar's school in *Jóns saga helga*, and this account, alongside the tithe-law and the first vernacular writings, has persuaded many scholars to argue that education expanded greatly in the twelfth century.⁷⁴ *Jóns saga helga* describes Jón Ögmundarson's own education at Skálholt under Ísleifr in the eleventh century, whom he is said to have called his foster-father, then his journey abroad, including meeting Sæmundr *fróði* in France and bringing him back to Iceland.⁷⁵ Jón and the next few bishops at Hólar are said in *Jóns saga* to have taught many prestigious students: Björn Gilsson, the third bishop of Hólar, presumably continuing the education he had at Haukadals; Ísleifr Grímsson, a kinsman of the bishop, and two men named Jón *svarti* and Bjarni Bergþórsson; Vilmundr and Hreinn, the first and third abbots of Þingeyrar, respectively; finally, Klængr Þorsteinsson, the fifth bishop of Skálholt, is particularly highlighted among the students.⁷⁶ For the most part *Jóns saga* lists the students in a similar format to the other sources mentioned here: they serve as explicit sources of prestige for the bishop. This prestige value is also linked to the genealogical and aristocratic aspect of Icelandic ecclesiastical historiography, the status of each elite priest being enhanced by his relationship to the others.

This Sæmundr *fróði*, of the Oddaverjar family, is also a figure who appears influential in the narrative of Icelandic education, as he is highly praised in *Jóns saga* and elsewhere as

⁷⁴ Ernst Walter speculated that traveling abroad for education increased in the twelfth century, but does not offer any sources for this argument (Walter 1971, 200). Jónas Gíslason in particular has gone beyond the sources in arguing for an expansion of education in twelfth-century Iceland: he has speculated that Icelandic education during the twelfth century could match that of anywhere in Europe, with the exception of the most prestigious universities (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 121-22). He likewise suggests that so many young learned Icelanders were educated abroad that a cultural revolution occurred around 1100, and Icelandic schooling became so high quality, that this led to the period of saga writing and the rather dated scholarly idea of a cultural flowering in thirteenth-century Iceland (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 125).

⁷⁵ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 181-3, 187-8. *Jóns saga* is not actually at any point explicit that Jón's journey abroad involved any sort of formal schooling, though this is commonly assumed by scholars, and is not impossible. Sæmundr's return from France, and his ordination as a priest upon his return, is also mentioned in *Íslendingabók*, though it is not suggested there that Jón Ögmundarson was in any way involved (Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 20-1).

⁷⁶ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 218-9. Klængr also appears in an earlier episode as a student, where Jón chastises him for reading an illicit Ovidian text (Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. II, 211-2).

one of the most learned priests of his time, while the farm Oddi is referenced several times as location of a school. In *Þorláks saga*, the saint Þorlákr Þórhallsson, bishop of Skálholt 1178-1193, is said to have studied at Oddi under the priest Eyjólfur, the son of Sæmundr *fróði*, before going to Paris and Lincoln for further learning.⁷⁷ According to *Páls saga*, Páll Jónsson, bishop of Skálholt 1192-1211, was brought up at Oddi, though it is not said explicitly that he was taught there, before going to be taught in England. Páll's father, Jón Loptsson, was the grandson of Sæmundr *fróði*,⁷⁸ and one of the most powerful and important Icelandic chieftains of his day. Jón was also the foster-father of Snorri Sturluson, and as nothing explicit is said in any source about Snorri's education as a layman, it is assumed that it has something to do with Jón's fostering and the resources at Oddi. The Oddaverjar, the family of Sæmundr *fróði*, are therefore emblematic of the genealogical aspect of Icelandic educational history, and the strong overlap between the secular and clerical elite during the twelfth century.

Icelandic monasteries also began to be founded in the twelfth century. There were at least eleven known monastic foundations in Iceland, and eight of these were founded in the twelfth century: Þingeyrar (c. 1133), Munkaþverá (c. 1155), Hítardalur (c. 1166), Þykkvabær in Veri (c. 1170), Helgafell (c. 1184), originally established at Flatey (c. 1172), the convent of Kirkjubær (c. 1186), Saurbær (c. pre-1200), Viðey (c. 1226), the convent of Reynistaðr (c. 1295), Möðruvellir (c. 1295/6), and Skriða (1493).⁷⁹ While there are no explicit references to students being educated at monasteries in the twelfth century, there are a few *biskupasögur* references to them in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and then numerous documentary references to monastic education in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Considering that education in monasteries was such a standard practice in the Middle Ages, it has generally been assumed that schooling occurred there in the twelfth century as well, though Icelandic monasteries are thought to have been distinct in their close connection with

⁷⁷ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 49, 52.

⁷⁸ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 49, 297.

⁷⁹ Names and dates are based on Janus Jónsson 1887, a useful survey of the monasteries, abbots, priors, and abbesses of Iceland. Janus' study and these dates are primarily based on annalistic and documentary sources. Almost all these monastic foundations lasted until the Reformation, being dissolved at some point in the 1540s or 1550s, with two exceptions: Hítardalur appears to have closed around 1249, and Saurbær around 1224.

the secular elite.⁸⁰

The relationship between Icelandic chieftains and the priesthood, and by implication their relationship with clerical education, began to shift in the twelfth century. The rise of the Oddaverjar and other families meant that the Haukadælir lost some influence over ecclesiastical politics, and in the latter half of the twelfth century more chieftains tended to have younger sons or other family members ordained, rather than the heads of family themselves.⁸¹ Iceland was increasingly affected by ecclesiastical reform after it fell under the domain of the archbishopric of Níðaróss in 1152, and in 1190 the archbishop made a decree that anyone in a position of secular authority, namely anyone who possessed a *goðorð*, could not be ordained and take orders.⁸² However, local leaders of more minor families that did not possess a *goðorð* continued to be ordained as aristocratic priests after the late twelfth century, again presumably to solidify their social and political relationship with the areas they controlled.⁸³

The development of poor, lower-class priests and their education over the course of the eleventh and twelfth century is more uncertain, but a complete understanding of the diverse ways education could have occurred in Iceland must account for them. Orri Vésteinsson's seminal study of the Icelandic church before the fourteenth century completely marginalizes priests from outside the aristocratic families: he argues that itinerant priests, without landed property, must have existed in the eleventh century, but that they were not important to the development of society.⁸⁴ He allows that priests of different social and economic groups must have developed, but that poorer priests were still not socially significant until the later twelfth century, and there were relatively few of them.⁸⁵ Apart from the fact that the extant sources, like nearly all medieval sources, are almost entirely concerned with the upper classes, Orri bases this argument primarily upon his assumed motivations for aristocratic priests, that the social and political benefits of chieftain-priests

⁸⁰ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 133.

⁸¹ For a full discussion of chieftain-priests see Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 182-94.

⁸² *DI I* 289-91. The date of this decree is also given as 1191, see for example Guðrún Nordal 2001, 20.

⁸³ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 238-40.

⁸⁴ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 77.

⁸⁵ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 188-9, 193-4.

would have been undermined by the existence of lower-class priests.⁸⁶ He only allows that chieftains and local leaders could have allowed poorer, subordinate priests to perform services for them after the mid-twelfth century, when significant power consolidation meant that it was no longer necessary for ordained aristocrats to perform services themselves.⁸⁷

Apart from the basic problem of taking the elite bias of the extant sources at face value, there are several other issues with this characterization of lower-class priests. First, Orri himself admits that there is no explicit indication of what exact role chieftain-priests, or other aristocrats who become ordained, played, or how they thought of their identity as priests, and that it is just as likely that they saw themselves primarily as patrons of the Church rather than needing to perform liturgical services themselves.⁸⁸ Yet if such chieftain priests did not themselves perform services regularly, as seems likely given that they were primarily secular leaders with other responsibilities, they would have needed an underclass of priests.⁸⁹ Second, Orri describes a fairly small number of priests in eleventh-century Iceland, and a problematic lack of priests in the twelfth century,⁹⁰ both of which would surely have motivated more priests of different social classes to be educated and then minister to the country.

Finally, the Old Christian Law section of the law code *Grágás* provides a means for

⁸⁶ “The fact that in the early and middle twelfth century many chieftains were ordained as priests or had their sons ordained would fit ill in a scenario where there was also a great number of priests of humbler origin. It is difficult to see why the chieftains should have wanted to become priests if it did not in some way give them a firmer grip on their followers/subordinates and an edge over their rivals. And it is unlikely that the chieftains could have achieved this if they were taking on roles which had already been played by some other class of people and with whom they would be in competition” (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 182).

⁸⁷ “The success of the union between priesthood and chieftaincy will have prompted rich householders and others who aspired to power or influence to do the same, but when the immediate goal of the householders/chieftains to increase their influence or tighten their grip on their neighbours had been achieved they no longer needed to be seen to perform the services themselves and it began to suffice to be seen to provide these services. It is then that a demand for professional priests will have arisen” (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 182).

⁸⁸ “We do not of course know whether the likes of Sæmundr *fróði* or his pupil Oddi Þorgilsson actually had ministered to a flock and had sung masses regularly or if there had some completely different sense of what their pastoral duties involved. In this context it does not matter much; it is clear that in the early and mid-twelfth century aristocrats attached significance to being ordained and we can with confidence assert that this also meant that they found it expedient to be, or to be seen, as patrons of the Church” (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 193).

⁸⁹ Helgi Skúli Kjartansson has noted that there were a number of small churches and remote congregations in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and that while chieftains may have enhanced their own status by performing liturgy at their own churches, it is likely that other priests dealt with the time-consuming task of travelling around the countryside performing Mass (Helgi Skúli Kjartansson 2005, 101).

⁹⁰ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 179-82.

poor Icelanders to pay for their educations. The law states that a young man could become ordained, or his legal guardians could send a young boy to be ordained, by making an agreement with a church-owner to pay for his schooling – along with vestments and the necessary liturgical books – and then be bound to that church until he could educate another to the point of taking his place. The need for the necessary knowledge to become a priest essentially makes such students indentured, and the laws explicitly say that they could be legislated against as slaves.⁹¹ Orri dismisses this law, arguing that it could only have been developed after the chieftain-priests' consolidation of power in the twelfth century, and in response to a shortage of priests,⁹² but this argument is based entirely on Orri's speculations as to what would have motivated chieftain-priests, and how they understood themselves as priests, and so is not enough to dismiss a significant piece of evidence. It is particularly difficult to relegate the *Grágás* passage to a later period, when it describes one of a very narrow number of ways a truly poor priest – which even Orri admits must have existed – could have paid the expense of an education. Moreover, there was certainly an equally high need for priests back into the eleventh century, with the new conversion to Christianity.

The beginning of the thirteenth century was a time of change, though the extant narrative sources on education are few. The main source for the period is the collection of sagas known as *Sturlunga saga*, which is primarily concerned with the secular conflicts that characterized Icelandic society during this period; the collection does include *Guðmundar saga góða*, however, which deals with the life of the reformist Guðmundr Árason, bishop of Hólar 1203-1237, who played a significant role in the conflicts of the period. Guðmundr is said to have had his education taken care of by a sort of apprenticeship to his uncle Ingimundr, who changed residences several times during Guðmundr's education, strongly

⁹¹ Vilhjámur Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol. II, 20-22.

⁹² Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 181-82. Helgi Skúli Kjartansson also relegates this educational law to the later part of the twelfth century, on the grounds that the increasing endowment of churches he argues for at this point required more priests permanently based at a particular church, and that only under these circumstances would the law make sense, as it attaches the priest to a single church (Helgi Skúli Kjartansson 2005, 101-2). I am not addressing the mobility of priests and its development in this study, but the financial considerations of educating a poor priest is undeniable, even if in practice the may have taken a slightly different form in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

suggesting his teaching was tied entirely to his person, not to any location or institution.⁹³ While for the most part it does not deal with education or clerical culture, *Sturlunga saga* does make note that Óláfr Þórðarson, the author of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, taught at least one student at Stafaholt in the mid-thirteenth century.⁹⁴

Guðmundr saga góða also references education occurring at the *staðr* of Vellir. Early in the saga, Guðmundr is forced to leave Vellir, before he is bishop, and the saga says that he travels with his foster sons and students, *fostrar hans ok lærisveinar*, suggesting he had been doing teaching at Vellir.⁹⁵ Later, when Guðmundr returns to Hólar after sixteen years as bishop, he sets up a school there with a certain Þórðr as *meistari* ‘schoolmaster’, but they are quickly driven out of Hólar by Guðmundr’s opponents, and Þórðr moves his school to Vellir, and the saga claims he taught many students there that year.⁹⁶ At least one version of the saga states that while throwing himself into his work at Hof, sometime in the mid-1180s, Guðmundr taught students alongside his writing and reading activities, between divine services.⁹⁷ While the saga clearly uses education to praise Guðmundr, as with sources dealing with earlier periods, it does not present the same idealized image as *Jóns saga helga* does of its subject, or offer a teacher or student with superlative learning like Ísleifr Gizurarson or Sæmundr *fróði*.

In this period, Orri Vésteinsson argues that the first half of the thirteenth century involved a fundamental shift in the Icelandic clergy, not only in the supposed growth of a professional class of priests, but in the establishment of a clerical identity. The concept of clerical identity greatly impacts upon how education is understood, in that education can serve to create, reinforce, or change identities. Bishop Þorlákr and Guðmundr Arason, Orri argues, were pioneers among the priesthood in creating a distinct clerical identity; before the

⁹³ Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 33-40. Guðmundr seems to have been orphaned, and as an illegitimate child who could not inherit, was raised by Ingimundr. Ingimundr lives in no less than nine places between 1168 and 1185 (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 205).

⁹⁴ “Annan morgin viku kom til þeira Þorgils Þorsteinn prestur titlingr. Hann hafði verit til kennslu í Stafaholti með Óláfi Þórðarsyni . . .” (Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, vol. 2, 184).

⁹⁵ Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 77-8.

⁹⁶ Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 179.

⁹⁷ Not mentioned in the A-version of the saga, see Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 59-60, but it does appear in the version of the saga in the *Sturlunga saga* collection (Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, vol. 1 134-5).

mid-thirteenth century, it is suggested, there were no hard distinctions between priests and laymen. While making use of the *biskupasögur* and some documentary sources, this argument is primarily based on the role of priests in *Sturlunga saga*, where they behave much like laymen, taking part in violent conflicts and serving secular leaders, with no particular loyalty to any institutional church.⁹⁸ He presents the argument in clearly quantitative terms: “Out of 186 identifiable priests in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of whose actions some account is preserved, only twenty-three appear performing tasks related to their office.”⁹⁹

As even Orri admits, however, there is a fundamental problem with such evidence, in that it is entirely focused on secular affairs and conflicts, and would have little reason to describe normal clerical activities. The lack of clerical identity he describes is primarily based on the idea that priests had no compunctions about taking part in violence, political conflict, or being married and having children. In terms of education, however, there is no basis for the argument that a distinct clerical identity developed so late. The monastic culture which developed in the twelfth century, for example, clearly involved a close relationship between education and clerical identity: there has been literary production in both Latin and ON attributed to Þingeyrar at the end of the twelfth century, suggesting active teaching, learning, and interest in intellectually based identity. The monks Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson, and the works they produced, are representative of this intellectual culture,¹⁰⁰ and scholars have held up Gunnlaugr as one of the most learned Icelanders of his day.¹⁰¹

It is likewise important to keep in mind that multiple identities could exist and overlap, and should not be overly simplified.¹⁰² The *IGT* was composed in the mid-twelfth

⁹⁸ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 209-12.

⁹⁹ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 211.

¹⁰⁰ Around the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, the monk Oddr Snorrason appears to have written a Latin text on which *Yngvars saga víðförla* is based, as well as a Latin life of Óláfr Tryggvason (Haki Antonsson 2012, 74-77, 94-5); Gunnlaugr Leifsson, also a monk at Þingeyrar, lived from around the 1140s to 1218/19, and was roughly contemporaneous with Oddr Snorrason. Gunnlaugr wrote the Latin original upon which the extant *Jóns saga helga* is based, translated *Merlinusspá* based on the *Prophetiae Merlini*, and like Oddr wrote a Latin life of Óláfr Tryggvason (Haki Antonsson 2012, 95-6).

¹⁰¹ Haki Antonsson 2012, 95. For a full discussion of Gunnlaugr’s authorship of *Jóns saga*, see Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. I, CCLXXXIII-CCXCII.

¹⁰² Erika Sigurdson has noted, in response to Orri’s points here, that “clerical identity cannot be reduced to simple adherence to ecclesiastical principles” (Sigurdson 2016, 129).

century, and as will be discussed in the Chapter 3 the development of vernacular *grammatica* involves an overlap of secular and clerical learning in an intellectual context. Particularly in the context of secular leaders being ordained, and potentially educated, as priests, the prestige which they gain from such ordination would inevitably produce some sort of clerical identity, functioning alongside their secular one. Ísleifr himself, as an ordained bishop, must have had some sort of clerical identity alongside his aristocratic and secular ones, and the fact of his education abroad suggests that his learning was a large part of this. The same is true of all the chieftain-priests, and the argument that ordination was a purely political process, that the lack of a powerful institutional Church upon which priests could place their social and political loyalty negates the possibility of clerical identity, needlessly marginalizes the role of education and intellectual culture in the creation of identity.

An older scholarly commonplace has described the beginning of the thirteenth century as a period of educational decline, both because of the political conflicts and because of the changing nature of the source material.¹⁰³ However, as with the question of intellectually based clerical identity, a lack of sources is not evidence that education was poorer and less frequent. Likewise, *Guðmundar saga* describes the teachers and students at Hólar successfully continuing their educational practices in Vellir, when Hólar becomes embroiled in conflict. The very lack of a strong institutional church may have thus lent itself to the flexibility of Icelandic educational practices. In terms of pedagogical writing and poetics, this is also the period when both the *Snorra Edda* and the *3GT* were written, pointing to more complex interactions between Christian education and secular culture.

For the period between 1000 and the mid-thirteenth century, there thus is a significant amount of narrative evidence for education in the form of the *biskupasögur*, alongside the Old Christian Law in *Grágás*, and the existence of some vernacular pedagogical texts. The lack of sources contemporary with the events they describe, however, and the lack of

¹⁰³ Benjamín Kristjánsson emphasized Bishop Páll Jónsson in *Páls saga* as the last major figure before the evidence for education starts to decline for Skálholt, and along with it education itself (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 24-5). Jónas Gíslason argued that the founding of the monasteries led to the end of the schools of Oddi and Haukadalr, replacing their function and this somehow represents a downturn in Icelandic education around 1200 (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 122). Sverrir Tómasson, most recently, has suggested that education fell off during the episcopate of Guðmundr Arason, though he does not offer any argument (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 24-5, note 91).

documentary sources make it difficult to say much about specific developments of educational practices, or the direct influence of any individuals. The focus must rather be on the range of possibilities within educational practices: its contexts, social and cultural roles, values, and influences. In discussing education in such a way, as a field of possibilities rather than a sequence of events, it is important not to marginalize any of the people or processes involved. A full understanding of medieval Icelandic education must therefore take into account the teaching and learning of the lower classes of priests, and implications of education – such as intellectually based clerical identity – which were not always of interest to the authors of narrative sources.

1.1.2 Education after 1262

Around 1262, after a long period of conflict among the powerful chieftains, Iceland fell under the rule of the Norwegian kingship. The system of chieftains ruling over their individual *goðorð* ended, and by the mid-fourteenth century a series of officials replaced them: a single *hirðstjóri*, the highest official, two *lögmennt*, who replaced the earlier office of the Lawspeaker, and up to twenty *sýslumenn*, who were essentially sheriffs over newly formed administrative districts.¹⁰⁴

Equally fundamental changes affected the Church. Continuing efforts at reform from the archbishopric of Níðaróss, and the enactment of the New Church Law in 1275 brought greater influence of canon law. A series of conflicts known as the *Staðamál* took the control of church property away from secular rulers and produced a beneficial system, whereby the *staðir* were given to powerful clerics as benefices.¹⁰⁵ During the period 1238-1380 most Icelandic bishops came from Norway, primarily clerics who had held high positions as Norwegian monasteries and cathedral chapters.¹⁰⁶ Under these bishops a system of church officials developed based on Norwegian models: The *officialis* and *ráðsmaðr*, or vicar-general, both worked at the bishopric itself, while *profastar* were representatives stationed in

¹⁰⁴ Sigurdson 2016, 16-17.

¹⁰⁵ Sigurdson 2016, 21-5.

¹⁰⁶ Sigurdson 2016, 89.

each district, responsible for maintaining church law in their territory. In part because of the relative simplicity of the Icelandic Church, these officials were of relatively higher status than equivalent ones outside Iceland.¹⁰⁷ The combination of these new offices with the system of benefices meant that the wealth and power of the Icelandic clergy vastly increased from the later thirteenth century through the fourteenth and fifteenth.¹⁰⁸

In the context of these new offices, administrative writing also began to develop, though at a significantly slower pace. Of the approximately 1500 original documents which survive in Iceland from before 1540, less than fifty date to 1370 or earlier. Among the earlier documents, standardization and consistency increased significantly from 1340 to 1370, even while the form of the most common types of documents in both Iceland and Norway were reflections of previously existing oral legal practices.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the fourteenth century was a period of massive manuscript production: only 100 manuscripts can be dated to before 1300, while about 300 come from the fourteenth century itself, including many of the largest and most elaborate codices. Annal writing grew, as well as several new genres of literary texts.¹¹⁰

In light of all these new offices, both clerical and secular, and the production of these texts, it must be assumed that administrative literacy increased in Iceland after the Norwegian takeover. Educational practices must have expanded to deal with the new demand for literacy. Despite this, scholars of Icelandic education have tended to argue for a downturn at this point, primarily based on the idea that foreign bishops would have neglected Icelandic education, and that the practice of Norwegians filling the highest offices in the land would have demotivated Icelanders from aspiring to higher education.¹¹¹ However, there is no

¹⁰⁷ Sigurdson 2016, 75.

¹⁰⁸ Sigurdson 2016, 99-100.

¹⁰⁹ Sigurdson 2016, 57.

¹¹⁰ Sigurdson 2016, 30.

¹¹¹ Benjamín Kristjánsson argued that foreign bishops would have neglected their offices, education would have suffered thereby, and this dynamic in part explains the lack of sources on the school at Skálholt for the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 25). Jónas Gíslason and Sverre Bagge have argued similarly that Norwegian bishops negatively affected education, the former specifically suggesting that with the two highest offices filled by outsiders, Icelanders would have lacked motivation to become highly learned (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 122, 126; Bagge 1984, 6-7). Jónas Gíslason even, quite inexplicably, links the neglect of foreign bishops to a general spiritual decay of the church under the Avignon-popes. Both scholars likewise argue for a smaller number of Icelanders studying abroad after the Norwegian

evidence that any of the fourteenth-century Norwegian bishops actually neglected their diocese,¹¹² nor could the quality of education have entirely depended on filling the highest offices in Iceland: poor priests and the lower branches of the elite would have been equally in need of learning.

The Icelandic clerical elite both developed its identity and continued earlier practices in these changing contexts. Orri Vésteinsson argues that true clerical identity was formed in the middle of the thirteenth century, primarily using the example of Brandr Jónsson, bishop of Hólar 1263-4 and abbot of Þykkvabær before that, and his role and that of his students in conflicts of their day. In this characterization, clerical identity was primarily based on the peaceful, mediating role of clerics in conflict, and on the creation of an institutional, land-owning church through the *staðamál* and the creation of benefices.¹¹³ Erika Sigurdson has expanded upon this in her exploration of fourteenth-century clerical identity, suggesting that social and personal relationships continued to function alongside institutional ones, wherein the relationship between bishop and the elite clergy was modelled on that of a chieftain and his followers. In terms of education, she suggests that fostering and educating children could continue to have similar socially bonding and peace-making roles as it had before the Norwegian takeover.¹¹⁴

In terms of evidence, there are two *biskupasögur* which deal with events after the Norwegian takeover. *Árna saga* mentions the education of Árne Þorláksson, bishop of Skálholt 1269-1298. Sometime in the 1250s Árne was educated, mostly at the monastery of Þykkvabær with abbot Brandr Jónsson, but he also spent time at other locations – in Skál with family, in Kirkjubær with the priest Grímr Hólmsteinsson, and at Kálfafell with Þorsteinn, the son of the abbot Brandr – and some of his education may have occurred at these places as well.¹¹⁵ Brandr Jónsson is presented, like Ísleifr Gizurarson and Jón Ögmundarson, as a prominent teacher, and two prestigious students at Þykkvabær besides

takeover, though the only evidence for this appears to be that among the very small number of sources, fewer names appear of Icelanders going abroad to study.

¹¹² Sigurdson 2016, 92-4.

¹¹³ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 224-34

¹¹⁴ Sigurdson 2016, 119, 130-36, 146-7, 177-8.

¹¹⁵ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 6.

Bishop Árne are mentioned as evidence: Jörundur Þorsteinsson, later bishop at Hólar, and Runólfur Sigmundarson, would become abbot at the monastery of Þykkvabær.¹¹⁶ The saga also deals with a dispute between Bishop Árne and the layman Ásgrímur Þorsteinsson, where as part of the resolution Árne agrees to educate Ásgrímur's son Þorsteinn, so that he might be ordained as a priest.¹¹⁷

The other *biskupasaga* dealing with the late thirteenth and fourteenth century, *Lárentius saga*, contains more discussion of education than any other text; Lárentius Kálfsson, bishop of Hólar 1324-1331, spends much of his career as a teacher. An episode of Lárentius' own education at Vellir is described, where he is said to have been taught among other boys, though it is not clear if there were multiple teachers as well.¹¹⁸ It is possible that Vellir developed as a school from Guðmundur's time to Lárentius', based on Þórður's removal there. But it is also possible that Guðmundur doing teaching there earlier in his career suggests that there had already been schooling there.

From there, Lárentius is said to have been invited by Bishop Jörundur to study at Hólar, under the schoolmaster Óblauður Hallvarðsson.¹¹⁹ Lárentius' career begins around 1288, when after being ordained deacon and then priest he is made a schoolmaster.¹²⁰ One of the most distinctive aspects of the saga is how it shows the career of an Icelandic teacher, before he rises in the ranks to become bishop, though there is no way to know how representative or exceptional Lárentius' educational activities may have been. After Lárentius is unsuccessful in running a benefice he is given, he returns to Hólar, suggesting the office of schoolmaster may not have been not as prestigious or lucrative as a benefice-holding priest. The saga then describes a long, complex education in canon law: first Lárentius is given access to canon law books at Skálholt by Bishop Árne, and then he spends a long time working with Archbishop Jörundur in Níðaróss, learning canon law through practice and under the tutelage of a Flemish man named John.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 7.

¹¹⁷ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 140-41.

¹¹⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 225-26.

¹¹⁹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 227-28.

¹²⁰ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 231.

¹²¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 231-43.

Lárentius' return to Iceland is full of conflict with Jörundr, the current bishop of Hólar, and around 1309 Lárentius is banned from performing Mass, the core activity of a priest, but is allowed to continue to teach, since that had been his profession. This was likely a financial punishment, removing a key source of income.¹²² *Lárentius saga* then follows what is essentially a second teaching career, as Lárentius travels between monasteries, teaching for a short period of time at each of them, collecting student-followers, but having to move because of continuing political conflicts. He fails to convince the monks of Þingeyrar to take him in, so he travels south, where he works at Þykkvabær, a short time at Munkaþverá, then back to Þingeyrar, where Lárentius and his son Árni eventually take vows and become monks.

The device of listing students as a sign of prestige is given for Lárentius before he even becomes a bishop. Contrary to earlier examples, the saga is also showing his charity here: at Þykkvabær he teaches a poor scholar named Runólfr, alongside other monks and clerics, and improves his learning.¹²³ At Þingeyrar he is said to teach the abbot Guðmundr himself, and then his greatest students are listed: Þórðr, the son of the *lögmaðr* Guðmundr, a poor boy named Óláfr Hjaltason who would later be schoolmaster at Hólar, and Einar the son of Hafliði from Breiðabólstaðr.¹²⁴ When Lárentius and his son Árni become monks of Þingeyrar, around 1316/17, the saga notes that a certain Bergr Sokkason was with them, who had been taught by Lárentius at Munkaþverá, and continued to be taught at Þingeyrar.¹²⁵ Finally, in a reconciliation agreement with Bishop Auðunn, Lárentius agrees to teach Auðunn's grandson Eysteinn, whose later prominence is clearly presented by the saga as part of Lárentius' prestige: Eysteinn would work at the Church of St. Mary in Þrándheimr.¹²⁶ This final episode is clearly a similar dynamic to the use of education as a form of resolution in *Árna saga*, and is a key hint to the social significance of education and its relationship to the social role of fosterage.

¹²² Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 306.

¹²³ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 309.

¹²⁴ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 318-9. This Einar Hafliðason is thought to be the author of *Lárentius saga*.

¹²⁵ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 332.

¹²⁶ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 338.

While the school at Hólar is described after Lárentius becomes bishop, no further names of students are given, though it is noted that Óláfr Hjaltason was the schoolmaster, and a certain Valþjófr taught song. Bergr Sökkason becomes abbot at Múnkaþverá, and the saga praises his learning, eloquence, and vernacular hagiographic writings; Árni is ordained a priest, becomes a teacher, and is praised for his poetic skill.¹²⁷ Þórðr Guðmundarson, who is later a deacon, is praised for his Latin and poetic skill.¹²⁸ Lárentius himself is compared to Jón Halldórsson, the Norwegian bishop of Skálholt who studied in Paris and Bologna, and the saga claims that they were the two best Latin scholars in Iceland.¹²⁹ *Lárentius saga* is thus quite self-aware of the history of praising education and learning in the *biskupasögur*, and places itself in that tradition, self-consciously arguing that education and ecclesiastical culture in Lárentius' time was as good as at any earlier point.

After *Lárentius saga* there are no narrative sources describing education, but as noted earlier administrative writing increased in the fourteenth century, and documentary evidence for education begins to appear for the later fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Mentions of education appear in a few type of documents, and all of those which have been found in the course of this study are collected and translated in Appendix 1. Of the twenty-five documented cases collected here,¹³⁰ five are from the latter half of the fourteenth century, ten are from the fifteenth, and ten are from the first third of the sixteenth. Seven of them do not mention specific locations for schools, six give Hólar, four give the monastery of Helgafell, two give the monastery of Skríða, one the monastery of Viðey, one the monastery of Reynisstaðr, one the monastery of Múnkaþverá, one Skálholt, one mentions multiple possible locations, naming Skálholt and Helgafell specifically, and a single Latin document deals with an education abroad in Hamburg.

It is not clear to what extent the writing of these documents would have directly affected education, but nothing about them suggests a new level of formality or bureaucracy

¹²⁷ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 381-2.

¹²⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 397.

¹²⁹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 383.

¹³⁰ There are several more documents but two are copies of earlier ones, and several deal with the same cases as earlier documents, so those have not been included in the overall count, although they are still collected in Appendix 1.

distinct from the earlier narrative evidence. A large majority of these cases involve either direct exchanges of land and property for the education of a son or kinsman, or an exchange of land from both sides with an education included as part of the deal. Most also reference paying for the maintenance of the student, and ordination of some kind into the clergy: there are eleven explicit references to ordination as a priest as being a part of the agreement, two references to ordination as ‘Mass-deacon’, one reference to ordination as sub-deacon, and two references to a non-specific ordination. One other document references ordaining one son as a priest, but to help the other become a man;¹³¹ another has the boy promised a benefice, and it is thus explicit that he is intended to become a priest; another has two women becoming nuns. Of the remaining five cases, most are quite ambiguous, and only one seems to explicitly indicate a layman being educated with no intention of ordination: in 1392 a certain Björn Brynjólfsson divides his very extensive property among three children, and is said to devote enough to his son Óláfr to ensure that Óláfr will have food and clothing and education, and always be capable of self-maintenance. Such a comment on the boy’s future sustenance seems likely to have mentioned an ecclesiastical career, if that were the intention.

As Magnús Már Lárusson noted, all of these documents seem to have something to do with land-ownership, and as with much of the *Diplomatarium Islandicum* that is likely the main reason they survive.¹³² Thus, they cannot be taken as entirely representative, in the sense that there must have been a significant amount of education and schooling happening at the same time with less formal, oral agreements, or entirely informally. The law code *Jónsbók*, which the Icelanders adopted around 1281,¹³³ mandates documenting transactions involving land exchange worth six hundreds or more, and this likely influenced what type of documentary evidence for education exists.¹³⁴ At the same time, similar agreements must have been made orally before the rise of administrative writing, so the evidence they give cannot be confined the fourteenth century and later. This is particularly important given that these documents are the most important evidence for the cost of medieval Icelandic

¹³¹ *hialpa odrum til manz* (DI VII, 109).

¹³² Magnús Már Lárusson 1967, 128.

¹³³ Schulman, ed. and trans., 2010, xiii.

¹³⁴ Schulman, ed. and trans., 2010, 313.

education, so it is possible to interpret them as suggesting a rise of educational costs in fourteenth century Iceland. However, *Grágás* suggests that paying costs for fosterage was well-established by the thirteenth century,¹³⁵ and considering both the cost of maintaining a student and the fact that priests were paid specific fees for so many of their activities, it is unlikely that education was ever free, except when given as a specifically charitable act or perhaps when given by certain members of the household or immediate family.

For the period dominated by documentary evidence, after the end of the narrative of *Lárentius saga*, the only two major events which have been related to education are the Black Death and the Reformation itself. The Black Death, occurring twice in 1402-4 and 1494-5, is the only period for which there is defensible evidence for at least a temporary decline in education in Iceland. The extent of this decline is unclear, however. The annals state that the Black Death left three priests, three deacons, and one monk alive in the north of Iceland, and Benjamín Kristjánsson suggests from this account that the schooling would have been vastly reduced, particularly at Hólar where English bishops sat until the mid-fifteenth century, he argues, cared nothing for education. However, he qualifies such speculation by noting that documentary evidence suggests that 136 priests and 44 deacons existed under Bishop Jón Vilhjálmsson (1426-33), who would have been impossible to train if the country was being exploited and schools neglected immediately after the Black Death.¹³⁶ Moreover, several recent arguments have suggested that some of the impacts of the Black Death have tended to be overstated, and that there is no evidence for disruptions of administrative activities.¹³⁷

In the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century, there were major changes to the Icelandic Church. After 1380 Icelandic connections to the Norwegian Church weakened, and from 1380-1442 Icelandic bishops were appointed by the papacy, and came from diverse national backgrounds. The social networks of clerics which defined much of the Icelandic

¹³⁵ Finsen, ed, 1852, Vol. II, 22.

¹³⁶ Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 152-4. Jónas Gíslason argues that Icelanders serving chieftains and kings abroad in the fourteenth and fifteenth century shows that some were being educated abroad, because they must have had better education than was available in Iceland to be trusted with such positions (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 127). There is, however, not enough evidence for the poverty of Icelandic education during these centuries to make such an assertion.

¹³⁷ Sigurdson 2016, 28. Callow and Evans have suggested a mortality rate lower than those suggested by earlier scholars, not much more than 25% (Callow and Evans 2016, 281-3).

church in the fourteenth century, however, continued to be maintained, and there are a couple examples of these later foreign bishops fitting into Icelandic society. After 1442 Icelandic bishops could again be elected, from among the clerical elite who had been diocesan officers before.¹³⁸

The period of the Reformation includes several significant sources for educational history. However, because Reformation ideologies and reforms had such an impact on education and ideals of learning and literacy, that it is unlikely any of this evidence can be applied to the medieval period. The ordinances of the Danish king Christian III, from 1537, deal extensively with expanding education in Iceland and making school widely available to poor Icelanders.¹³⁹ Two letters from 1542 also survive, one calling for the monasteries of Helgafell and Viðey to establish Latin schools, and the other for Þykkvabær, Skríða, and Kirkjubær to each establish a *lestrarškóli* ‘reading-school’; a third letter from Christian appears from 1550 concerning holding an *unglingaskóli* at Helgafell.¹⁴⁰ More research would be required that is possible here to determine the full effects of these ordinances and attempts at educational reform, or what they might say about education before the Reformation, but the general consensus is that they wholly failed.¹⁴¹ A brief document from the 1550s known as *Pétursorða* prescribes that everyone in Iceland should also have a certain amount of reading skills,¹⁴² and this idealizing of universal education and literacy suggests an ideological relationship to king Christian’s decrees. Finally, a section of the legal text *Búalög*, probably written around the same time as the *Pétursorða*, appears to make allowances for a payment to be made for the teaching of the boardgame *kvátra*, for teaching chess, and for teaching the alphabet.¹⁴³ While this is a Reformation text and thus likely influenced by the new emphasis on reading, it is a wholly distinct source in its emphasis on basic, elementary

¹³⁸ Sigurdson 2016, 178-9.

¹³⁹ *DI X*, 117-328.

¹⁴⁰ *DI XI*, 175-7.

¹⁴¹ Janus Jónsson 1887, 226, 235, 240; Janus Jónsson 1893, 34-5. Jónas Gíslason speculates that there was a rise in Icelandic education right before the Reformation, though he does not offer any clear evidence for this idea (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 127), but it would certainly complicate the apparent judgment of Christian III that Icelandic education institutions were poor and insufficient for the island’s needs.

¹⁴² *DI XII* 191. For a description of the passage on reading see Árni Daniel Júlíusson 2010, 21.

¹⁴³ “xij alner koma aa at kenna kuotro. ix alner skaak. aa stafró” (*Búalög*, 21). See also Árni Daniel Júlíusson 2010, 21, note 12.

type of education taking place at the home, and on the payment of a teacher for their services. It fits well with earlier sources, particularly the tendency of the laws to dictate payments to priests for individual activities, and thus may reflect medieval practice.

The goal here has been to provide a critical survey of education as it appears in the narrative sources, with reference to the importance of documentary and legal evidence. It has shown the diversity of sources available and the types of information which they give, which will be addressed in more detail in the following sections. The main emphasis here has been twofold. First, this section has shown that there was significant continuity: while major changes in the church, particularly pushes for reform from Níðaróss and the advent of benefices, certainly affected education, the extant evidence and the characterization of the ecclesiastical developments by historians suggests few major shifts in how education was practised, or sudden rises or drops in its quality. Even within changing political landscapes the elite clergy and aristocracy were bound together by a continuity of social relationships, and their steadily increasing wealth, alongside the establishment and development of monasteries, may suggest if anything a slow rise in the resources available for education. Second, despite the focus of the narrative sources on this elite, there were clearly contexts wherein different forms of education would be necessary. There was a plurality of potential forms education could take, between a chieftain interested primarily in prestige and political power, a monk or nun concerned about the reading mandates of their rule, and a poor student looking to gain enough learning to be ordained and survive in his career.

In light of this, discussions of Icelandic education for any part of the Middle Ages must take into account all the available evidence, not only the *biskupasögur* and other narrative sources, but also the documentary sources and law codes. The major difficulty in constructing a historical narrative from this evidence is that the types of sources vary between periods: *biskupasögur* dominate until the fourteenth century, when documentary evidence starts to appear and narratives involving education stop being written. The advantages and disadvantages of these sources are different, and despite the chronological gap between earlier narrative evidence and later documentary evidence, they must be used together to some extent to gain the most complete possible picture.

1.1.3 The *Biskupasögur* as Sources

Having established some historical background and the major narrative, legal, and documentary sources for the social, economic, and institutional history of education in medieval Iceland, this section will address the problems with these sources which has limited exploration of medieval Icelandic educational practices. Three methodological problems have arisen from the use of the *biskupasögur* in particular, alongside the lack of sufficient attention to the documentary sources and financial issues: an emphasis on judging the relative quality of education in Iceland, an emphasis on chronological developments using sources with uncertain chronological applicability, and a focus on the education of a narrow, literature-producing elite class. It will be argued here that a better and more complete idea of medieval Icelandic education can be gained by using these sources to show a range of dynamics – social, economic, and otherwise – in Icelandic education, which could affect the whole population of educated Icelanders.

The question of the quality of Icelandic education has intrigued scholars with nationalistic concerns in particular, because it can present Iceland in a positive light relative to the rest of medieval Europe, or it can support narratives of rise and decline which have supported the idealization of the Icelandic commonwealth as a golden age.¹⁴⁴ It is questionable, first, how much judgments of quality can really tell us about Icelandic education: Jónas Gíslason speculates that twelfth-century Icelandic schools could provide students with an education equal to that of all but the very best European schools,¹⁴⁵ but there is nothing to support this idea, nor would such a judgment say anything about how that education functioned and was viewed in Iceland itself. The evidence for any such qualitative judgments is also the most unreliable part of the *biskupasögur*. They are texts

¹⁴⁴ See in particular Jónas Gíslason 1981. Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, while showing more interest in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century education than essentially any other scholar, is framed entirely around the question of how the quality of Icelandic education rose and fell. Most recently Gunnar Harðarson has characterized Iceland as having a high “educational standing” in the twelfth century, but that in the thirteenth century Norwegian elites were better educated than Icelandic ones by European standards (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 42-3).

¹⁴⁵ Jónas Gíslason 1981, 121.

intended to praise and glorify, often written very long after the events they describe, and while they are important in that they show how education was conceptualized and idealized, their qualitative judgments cannot be taken at face value.

With hagiographic texts like *Jóns saga*, the risk of taking rhetoric as reflective of reality is obvious. However, the characterization of wider Icelandic ecclesiastical history in *Íslendingabók*, *Hungrvaka*, and *Kristni saga* has similar issues on a more societal scale. While not centred on any particular individual, all three of these sources hyperbolically praise Ísleifr Gizurarson as a founder of the Icelandic church, Icelandic schools, and a positive relationship between these institutions and the aristocracy. Ísleifr as a character has significant rhetorical value not only to the narrative, but to its social role as a text, and so scholars must be cautious about assumptions of the quality of his learning, teaching, and influence. The genealogical relationship between Ísleifr and later churchmen and aristocrats only increases the potential for strong authorial bias in praising him.

Scholars have gone to surprising lengths to avoid questioning the qualitative judgments of *Íslendingabók* and *Hungrvaka*.¹⁴⁶ Orri Vésteinsson has argued that:

There is no special reason to think that the authors or Teitr or Gizurr were deliberately trying to hide relevant facts in order to make the Haukdælir's part in the making of the Icelandic church look larger. They did not need to . . . the success of the Haukdælir being already established, it was that which was interesting and needed explaining. And in explaining their success it was natural for these men to direct their attentions towards to the positive events which best illuminated the development.¹⁴⁷

It is surely unlikely that a successful family would not be interested in producing propaganda for itself, using rhetorically charged writing to support its claims to power, or that hyperbole and exaggeration would not be a part of such writing. The idea that medieval authors and

¹⁴⁶ For examples of the hyperbolic praise of Ísleifr, following the praise of the medieval sources, see Jón Sigurðsson 1842, 84-5; Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 17-18.

¹⁴⁷ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 19-20.

historians were primarily motivated to write about “that which was interesting and needed explaining” ignores the entire rhetorical side of historiography, the concern for praise, persuasion, and emphasizing certain narratives as more important than others. *Kristni saga*, *Hungrvaka*, and *Íslendingabók* are concerned with praising and emphasizing the importance of these men in Icelandic history, and it cannot be taken for granted that the early development of schools and learning revolved entirely around the patronage of a few aristocrats.¹⁴⁸ The influence of the foreign missionary bishops is deliberately obfuscated in the extant sources, the interest of the authors being in the activities and achievements of native Icelanders,¹⁴⁹ and forms of education which affect lower-class Icelanders are only touched upon when the elites become involved, usually as patrons and teachers in the *biskupasögur*, in a capacity which reflects well upon those elites.

Thus, the issue of qualitative judgments ties into the elite bias of the *biskupasögur* and the narrative which historians have developed around them. These narratives are centered on bishops and on showing the wide significance of those bishops through a deliberate construction of the past.¹⁵⁰ Erika Sigurdson has argued that the extant texts from the mid- to late-fourteenth century were written by a very small clerical elite, one which was concerned with developing clerical identity. This includes using earlier models: she suggests that there are deliberate links between *Jóns saga helga* and *Lárentius saga* in their use of the foundation of Hólar to construct identity.¹⁵¹ This fourteenth-century elite was self-conscious

¹⁴⁸ Walter 1971, 199; Jón Sigurðsson 1842, 84-5;

¹⁴⁹ There is also evidence that they were deliberately ignored in the later sources. Garipazov has noted that there appears to be a changing attitude towards the eastern bishops in the primary sources, from the earlier to the later texts: *Íslendingabók* mentions the three Armenian priests, *Hungrvaka* mentions evil priests influencing the populace, and *Kristni saga*, the latest text, mentions no one, implying that Ísleifr was accepted a bishop by everyone in Iceland (Garipzanov 2012, 17).

¹⁵⁰ In discussing source criticism with sagas, Úlfar Bragason had noted that a realistic tone and an author’s nearness to events do not guarantee veracity, narrative authorial goals must always be kept in mind, and the effect of the sagas themselves on society affects how they can be used as sources (Úlfar Bragason 2005, 440-42).

¹⁵¹ Sigurdson 2016, 59-61, 63-4. Specifically, she points out that Lárentius is said to have been descended from the man, Illugi, which is said to have donated the land on which Hólar was established. This may in turn suggest that the fact that they are the two sagas which describe Icelandic education the most is not entirely coincidental. Stephanie Würth and Sverrir Tómasson argue that the description of the school at Hólar in the fourteenth century in *Lárentius saga* is so similar to that of the twelfth century in *Jóns saga*, that there must have been little change to Icelandic education between these periods (Würth 1998, 194; Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 26-7), but this may additionally be an equally deliberate reflection of the rhetoric of *Jóns saga* in *Lárentius saga*, and a

about reflecting itself and earlier Icelandic clerical culture in its writing: new versions of many *biskupasögur* were written in the fourteenth century.

This elite bias affects the reading of earlier sources as well. All of the sources which discuss Ísleifr's education and his school are deliberately framing the origins of Icelandic Christian education in the eleventh century around a single individual and his family. *Jóns saga*, while describing a whole educational community, similarly centres a great awakening of learning in the north of Iceland around a single individual bishop-saint. While Ísleifr Gizurarson and Jón Ögmundarson were certainly important to Icelandic education, and the sources touching upon their teaching of elite students an important aspect of the social history of education, not all teaching and learning in Iceland centred around men like them.

Overcoming the elite bias of the narrative sources is one of the main reasons why using legal and documentary evidence is so important. While it is impossible to be certain about exactly when the legal provisions on education in *Grágás* were written, or how effective they actually were, they are irrefutable evidence for the relevance of poor priests to Icelandic society, and the centrality of education and paying for education to the position and identity of those poor priests. Likewise, while the narrative sources never even hint at the costs of being educated, or the legal provisions made between students, teachers, and patrons, this is the main concern of the documentary sources. This perspective can moderate the idealism of the narrative sources somewhat: while the rhetorical force of the educational community of Hólar in *Jóns saga*, or Lárentius' activities as a teacher, would perhaps be tainted by discussion of how much it could cost to gain an education and be ordained, the documentary sources can fill in the gaps. While the documentary sources present education as closed-off by financial barriers, primarily a component of land exchanges, *Jóns saga* in particular characterizes learning as something that could be acquired by anyone who wishes to learn. Only by balancing such perspectives can a complete view of education, not entirely dominated by the elite but still limited by cost and function, be acquired.

Closely related to this elite bias is the issue of interpreting gaps in the evidence, and what they mean for a chronological understanding of education. Above all it is important to

modelling of Lárentius on Jón as a bishop.

reject the idea that the existence of narrative sources and highly praised elite students and teachers represent high points of education, and gaps in the evidence represent low points.¹⁵² Sverrir Tómasson has acknowledged this in a general sense, pointing out that there is no reason to believe that teaching was lacking or lesser where it is not mentioned in the sources.¹⁵³ If certain educators and students are discussed and praised, and others unknown or only briefly mentioned, it does not indicate that those more extensively discussed were in fact more learned or capable individuals. It only shows that there was an interest in presenting them as such.

The questionability of looking for chronological peaks also applies to the concept of identifying particular centres of learning as peaking at certain points in time, such as the school of Hólar in *Jóns saga*. While the saga is an important source for educational ideals, from the perspective of its author and the later redactors who expanded the saga, and the incidental details of educational practices, its characterization of the perfect educational community at Hólar is suspect. It cannot be assumed that Jón's newly-formed Hólar was a place of higher education than Guðmundr's conflict-ridden Hólar, simply because *Jóns saga* describes its school in more detail, with more hyperbolic praise and names of prestigious students. Nor can it be assumed to have been a poor school because it was new: the impossible uncertainties of these value judgments mean that the history of Icelandic education cannot be based upon them.

The issue of authorial interests and narrative concerns is in many ways more important than the questions of reliability of knowledge. The capacity of *Jóns saga* – written in the late twelfth century then translated and only extant in much later manuscripts – to reflect the distinctive realities of an early twelfth-century school has been the subject of some debate, and recent scholars have tended to accept its idealized nature.¹⁵⁴ But while the

¹⁵² Some scholars tend to portray a narrative of Icelandic education rising where we have known scholars and teachers, and falling where there are no such descriptions, see for example Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 25-8; Würth 1998, 194. It is worth noting that Benjamín does qualify this tendency in places, allowing that bishops must have maintained schools even when there is no extant saga (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 154), but he still structures his work around a narrative of rising and falling quality.

¹⁵³ Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 24-5, note 91.

¹⁵⁴ Sverrir Tómasson has argued that the historical value of *Jóns saga* is primarily in its reflection of its author's educational realities, but that those practices have older roots (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 25). Orri Vésteinsson

distance between events and writing create some uncertainty, the fact that almost all narrative sources of education are written with a clear rhetorical or propagandistic purpose in mind makes them particularly unfit for judging chronological changes, except perhaps for chronological shifts in those ideals. References to education which appear to be more incidental, as in *Guðmundar saga góða*, are significantly less detailed.

With this issue of idealization in mind, the available evidence is most valuable in describing general aspects of Icelandic education and schooling, and a range of possible dynamics, while specific situations and chronological changes must always be less certain. When a detail is mentioned, it shows us that some aspect of education was present in Iceland, and can be used for positive arguments, but arguing from the negative is significantly more speculative. For example, mention of foreign teachers of *grammatica* in *Jóns saga*, or mention of bishops being directly involved in teaching, can tell us that there were foreign teachers in Iceland, and bishops directly involved with teaching, almost certainly more than those mentioned in sagas. However, such anecdotal evidence cannot provide negative or developmental evidence. In these examples, then, we cannot say that foreign teachers predominated during the office of Bishop Jón Ögmundarson, or that particular bishops were more involved with teaching; *Jóns saga* gives us no grounds to say that the school at Hólar was at a high point during the times of Jón Ögmundarson, or *Lárentius saga* that it was at a high point during the time of Lárentius Kálfsson, simply because their two sagas provide the most detailed descriptions of teaching and lists of Icelanders educated at these schools. To do so would be to assume the bishops' sagas were written with the intention of providing a complete picture of Icelandic education, that they recorded with unbiased intentions the highest points of education institutions, and left the low points unmentioned. We cannot assume that what filled the gaps in the historical record was better or worse, simply from the absence of narrative sources.

Despite these issues with the extant sources and the way they have been used, a better picture of Icelandic education can be obtained. Rather than a narrow history of the highly

has argued in more details that the saga is primarily a reflection of late twelfth-century ideals, and particularly the monastic ideals of Gunnlaur Leifsson (Orri Vésteinsson, 2000, 59-63).

learned elite, the key characters of certain sagas, Icelandic education can be understood through the diverse contexts, institutions, interactions, and people that made it up. Changes in education need not be based on a history of great men or outdated nationalistic concepts of any particular golden age of Icelandic learning: there are clearly chronological developments in Icelandic education, such as the growth of monasteries and the institutional church and the increase of manuscript production and demand for administrative writing. The propagandistic nature of the *biskupasögur* mean that they are not reliable sources for determining the overall quality of Icelandic nature, be it number of people educated, the extent of their education, Latin ability, or literary creativity. Using documentary and legal sources, the economic and social dynamics of education can be better understood. Working towards a more complex, complete picture of the history of schools provides a better context for understanding *grammatica* and the subject-matter of teaching and learning that will be discussed in the following chapters.

1.2 Educational Contexts and Institutions

When examining education in social, institutional, and economic terms, the basic question arises: What defines a school? A wide range of issues are involved with this question, affecting every aspect of how Icelandic education is understood: the extent to which European educational institutions were imitated in Iceland, the size and physical aspects of a school, the relevance of fixed location or mobility, the number of students and teachers, and the available resources and costs. To a large extent this is a question of how much of a division there was between formal and informal education, what is understood as formality, and the question of the importance of particular places or centres to education.

For medieval Iceland, a wide understanding of ‘school’ is necessary, and in many cases it may be better to avoid the term school and its institutional implications altogether, and speak in terms of the activities of teaching and learning. When so much secular literature and vernacular writing was produced, and is at the centre of the study of medieval Iceland, a narrow definition is not useful. It could be argued that a strictly formal school is that which

appears in most of the documents: the expensive upbringing of a young boy in a monastery or bishopric, paid for by the family, explicitly intended to prepare the boy for a clerical career, with it left implicit that this vocational value would justify the initial cost. Such schooling would be based around a practical curriculum, largely consisting of learning Latin and song and preparing to perform the liturgy. But such a curriculum ignores so much of what was clearly important to learn for many members of Icelandic society: vernacular poetry, historiography and genealogy, and secular law. The education of learned aristocrats like Snorri Sturluson would not be explained by such a model. Most importantly, such a model must be adapted or expanded to explain many of the interactions between vernacular and Latin culture, the numerous types of translation, and particularly the development of a vernacular *grammatica* involving skaldic poetics.

The pedagogical ideas and models brought to Iceland had to adapt to the distinct conditions there. Furthermore, there is no singular, monolithic model of European education which Icelanders would have immediately and wholly taken up.¹⁵⁵ Influences from all over Europe could have caused variation in how schooling was adapted for Iceland. The archbishoprics of Hamburg-Bremen, Lund, and Níðaróss all held sway over Iceland for a time and must have influenced its models of education in variable ways. English influence came from the English missionary bishops, who often came via Norway, as well as through continued contact with England, while Icelanders being educated abroad went to Germany, France, and England.¹⁵⁶ Theoretical and disciplinary models, like the seven liberal arts, are fairly prescriptive and could be enacted in variable ways.

Nicholas Orme has pointed out the variable terms for and understanding of schooling in England, with words for ‘school’ in Latin, English, and Anglo-Norman functioning

¹⁵⁵ It is enough to point out the variability of learning shown in England alone in Orme 2006, not to mention the variation which must have existed in the different social and cultural conditions of Ireland, France and elsewhere.

¹⁵⁶ Work has been done establishing connections between French intellectual movements and both Iceland and Norway (Mortensen 2000(a)). Sverre Bagge has pointed to an intellectual revival in the schools of Northern France in the latter twelfth century, and a connection between them and Denmark and Norway, which could in turn have impacted Iceland (Bagge 1984, 3). Stephanie Würth has argued that the general European model of a growing aristocracy leading to increasing education, and particularly lay education, is applicable to the development of education in Iceland from the eleventh to the thirteenth century (Würth 1998, 195).

together. He suggests that Latin *scola* or *scholae* usually referred to the teaching of children, but could also refer to higher education, and could denote the a school building, a classroom, or even a group of people studying or learning together outside of such structures.¹⁵⁷ ON used the loanword *skóli*, though it is not common, and has a similar variability of meaning to Orme's description of English usages. Jón Ögmundarson has a *skóli* established at Hólar in *Jóns saga*, and in a lone fourteenth-century annalistic reference a *skóli* is *haldinn* 'held' at Hólar.¹⁵⁸ A 1440 document is particularly telling as to the vague sense of place or institutionality in uses of *skóli*: the agreement calls for the student to be brought *í skóla* 'into school/schooling' at Skálholt, but the next clause allows that he might be taken to any other place where he might learn well, such as Helgafell or another monastery.¹⁵⁹

Constructions describing the process of education are far more common than any references to a physical idea of a school: someone could be given *kennsla*, *lærdómur*, *læringur*, or *nám* 'education' or 'learning', or students could be *til náms*, *til kennslu*, *til studium*, etc., 'at study' or even *til skóla* 'at school', where *skóli* is understood more as the process of education than a place. The documentary sources and narrative sources tend to focus on the process of teaching, the relationships between student and teacher, and even Ísleifr at Skálholt is only said to have taught and ordained students, not specifically to have held a *skóli*. Thus, from a terminological perspective, Icelandic schools are rarely understood in a physical or institutional sense, but rather more defined by the activities of education.

A medieval Icelandic school shall be understood, therefore, as any location where education is taking place with some level of formality, namely a clear intent and tradition behind the teaching, understanding that formality will always be a flexible idea; medieval teaching in general had a fairly informal quality by modern standards.¹⁶⁰ This definition thus allows that any location could have the potential to be a school, and that the process and goal of learning determines its formality. In part because of the nebulous territory between formal

¹⁵⁷ Orme 2006, 53. Sverrir Tómasson suggested that there are essentially four types of medieval schools – monastery, cathedral, court, and private – but does not speculate as to how these might apply to Iceland, nor how distinct functions or characteristics might be divided between them (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 16).

¹⁵⁸ Storm, ed., 1888, 423.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁰ This informality itself could contribute to the dearth of sources (Birkett 2006, 212-14).

and informal education, Icelandic schools were flexible and adaptable, with an extremely variable level of institutional support, which may have changed over time as the wealth and institutional identity of the Church developed. This variability is a key aspect of the contextualization of Latin and vernacular cultures interacting on a pedagogical level.

1.2.1 Fosterage and Education

Fosterage was an established social institution in medieval Iceland, fundamentally important for the creating and strengthening of social bonds throughout the Middle Ages. It could take a variety of forms, but essentially referred to the upbringing of others' children for a certain period of time. Some arrangements involved lower-status households fostering the children of higher-status parents, others involved two sets of parents of roughly equal status, and some could involve the guardianship of poor or orphaned children. Some scholars have suggested that fosterage actually described several different social practices, and there is evidence in the sagas that fosterage and the term *fóstri* 'foster-son/father/brother', moreover, had the potential to refer to any sort of relationship where someone other than a biological parent was involved with parentage. Like marriage, it could be used to resolve conflicts or maintain peace, and the motivations behind establishing a relationship of fosterage could be complex and multi-layered.¹⁶¹

In many of these forms there is clear evidence for a strong relationship between fosterage and education: simply understood, in several references a foster-child appears to also be a student, and a foster-father also a teacher. This relationship is fundamental to understanding and describing education in medieval Iceland, as the influence of fosterage creates several continuities and links between the dynamics of education. The costs associated with fosterage and education are likely to be related, and may evidence the cost of learning before the documentary sources begin to appear. Fosterage is a pre-Christian and secular institution, but one also practised by clerics, and shows the close link between the social aspects of lay and clerical education. The use of fosterage and education to create

¹⁶¹ See Hansen 2008, 73-6; Miller 1988, 331-33.

social bonds shows a continuity of the social role of education before and after the Norwegian takeover, showing that the role of personal relationships in education continued even after the growth of a more institutional Icelandic church. Finally, some aspects of fosterage can offer evidence for education being conducted within the home. At the same time, the distinctions between fosterage and education are important to keep in mind to avoid oversimplifying a situation: a foster-parent is not exactly synonymous with a teacher, rather they are roles that could often overlap.¹⁶²

There is a full section on dependants in *Grágás*, and in the sense that a student was likely usually a dependent, all of this legislation could conceivably apply to their legal and social status.¹⁶³ But most important is the section which stipulates the cost of fostering, which resemble in several respects the stipulations on educational costs in the documentary sources.¹⁶⁴ In it, it is assumed that the foster-parents will be given a sufficient payment to maintain the child when the fostering agreement is made, and terms are described for when the money should be returned, either because the child left the foster-family for some reason, if ‘defects’ appear in the child, or if the child is poorly treated.¹⁶⁵ Equally, in the educational documents, it is often noted that both education and maintenance are to be provided, and partial repayment can be offered in cases where the child dies, quits their education early, or cannot be ordained.¹⁶⁶ There is an important distinction here, however. While *Grágás* shows that an effort was made to regulate the costs of fosterage, there are no indications of a fundamental goal, other than to raise the child, while the educational documents and many other sources present education as having the explicit goal of ordination.

¹⁶² Cf. Guðrún Nordal 2001, 29-30. Gunnar Harðarson also has also translated *fóstri* as ‘tutor’ when discussing the relationship between Snorri Sturluson and Jón Loptsson (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 37).

¹⁶³ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol. II, 4-28.

¹⁶⁴ Miller has argued that the *Grágás* section on fosterage indicates that all forms of fostering had to be paid for (Miller 1988, 332), though a few years later in *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking* he does not appear to address the topic of paying for fosterage (Miller 1990, 122-24). Hansen has argued that this discussion of costs refers to a fairly narrow form of legal fosterage (Hansen 2008, 77), and that the forms of guardianship which other parts of the dependency section legislates, often involving poor children being saved from vagrancy by being brought into households, without accompanying resources, and so extensive legislation existed to regulate the relationship between a potentially unwanted child and the family expending resourced upon it. (Hansen 2008, 79-82).

¹⁶⁵ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol. II, 22.

¹⁶⁶ See Appendix 1.

There is some saga evidence, however, that among the multiple motivations behind fosterage, education could be one of them, both for laypeople and clerics. There is no indication of institutionalized, organized secular schools in Iceland, comparable to the survival of Roman schools in parts of Italy, or bardic schools in Ireland.¹⁶⁷ Yet, in the broad sense of a ‘school’ as any place of teaching and learning, giving a child to be fostered by an educated individual could be greatly motivated by the education that a foster-parent could provide, alongside whatever other social, political, or economic factors might be at play. *Njáls saga* has a reference to a boy being educated in law by his foster-father, and William Miller has argued that obtaining an education was the one of the main motivations for the arrangement.¹⁶⁸ Certainly the Lawspeaker, the highest secular position in Iceland before the Norwegian takeover, required a legal education, and the section of *Grágás* which discusses this allows for a group of legally-educated advisers; without any available schools, such education must presumably have primarily come from parents or foster-parents with legal educations, though there is evidence that Christian Lawspeakers would need some clerical knowledge as well.¹⁶⁹ Without attributing any direct historical significance to them, the sagas do suggest a wider cultural understanding of the connection between education and fosterage. In *Eiríks saga rauða*, the sorceress Guðriðr says that she was taught lore by her foster-mother in Iceland.¹⁷⁰ In *Völsunga saga*, Regin is Sigurðr’s foster-father as well as his tutor.¹⁷¹ In *Alexanders saga*, Aristotle is called both the *meistari* and *fóstrfaðir* of Alexander.¹⁷² In *Færeyinga saga* there is even an episode where the once-heathen Þrándr teaches his foster-

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Gunnar Harðarson: “[T]here must also have been vernacular schools, in particular as regards the teaching of law. Possibly, Snorri Sturluson ran some kind of a ‘workshop’ or school in Reykholt, and if so, it could have been a vernacular one” (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 41). This passage exemplifies the difficulty in finding terminology to describe the educational practices in Iceland, particularly those among lay people. Considering the lack of reference, it is very unlikely that the teaching of law and poetry which Gunnar is describing was ever conceptualized as a *skóli* or had any kind of institutional status comparable to cathedral schools, for example.

¹⁶⁸ Miller 1988, 331. While it does not mention fosterage, in *Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu* Gunnlaugr, after a conflict with his father, goes to stay with Þórstein, and learns law from him (Foote and Quirk, eds., 1957, 6).

¹⁶⁹ According to *Grágás*, the lawspeaker was required to recite all the sections of the law, the *misseris tal* ‘calendar’, and rehearse the observance of Ember Days and the beginning of Lent, and if he does not have the legal knowledge to begin with he is given a day to consult with five or more legal experts (Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol I, 209-10). Halldór Hermannsson has emphasized that someone must have taught the laws to the lawspeakers, but does not speculate as to how this might have happened (Halldór Hermannsson 1958, ed., x).

¹⁷⁰ Einar Ólafur Sveinsson and Matthias Þórðarson, eds., 1935, 207-8.

¹⁷¹ Wilken, ed., 1912, 171.

¹⁷² Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1925, 3.

son a *Credo*, but incorrectly, but is also said to have taught him legal knowledge as well.¹⁷³ It is doubtless that more examples could be found, and the range of different types of sagas suggests the extent to which education and fosterage was associated, as well as the extent to which it could influence very different conceptions and contexts of learning.

That fosterage existed before Christianization, and was probably associated with education before Christianization, can thus contextualize many of the references which juxtapose fosterage with the education of priests. In the reference in *Grágás* to priestly education, wherein the priest-to-be essentially becomes an indentured servant of a church owner, the law says that the church owner “skal fá honum fóstur og kennslu”, provide him with fosterage and education, according to the law of fosterage, unless they come up with some separate agreement.¹⁷⁴ Here, fosterage is equated with maintenance, while education is something separate which accompanies it, and although it is not explicit what kind of education is being discussed, it must relate presumably to the student being able to perform the duties of a priest. While the documentary sources do not reference a student being provided fosterage, several of them reference a related idea of maintenance using terms like *kosti* ‘board’, and in at least one instance the term *uppfæði* ‘upbringing’ is used,¹⁷⁵ which is essentially synonymous with *fóstri*, though not in the legal sense.

In light of this relationship it seems likely that when students were being sent to Ísleifr at Skálholt in the middle of the eleventh century, it was understood as a form of fosterage, or at least closely related: the potential for education and ordination would have provided a new motivation for an existing social institution. Equally, Ísleifr’s son Teitr was a priest and teacher who brought up children at Haukadalr, as noted in *Íslendingabók*, while *Jóns saga helga* specifies that he *fæddi* ‘brought up’ and *lærði* ‘taught’ many clerics.¹⁷⁶ Orri Vésteinsson has argued that Teitr’s students probably underwent “traditional fosterage rather than formal schooling.”¹⁷⁷ However, there is no evidence for a hard distinction between the two practices, where the fosterage involved students being educated. Likewise, while Orri

¹⁷³ Ólafur Halldórsson, ed., 2006, 115-16.

¹⁷⁴ Finsen, 1952, ed., 17-18.

¹⁷⁵ *DI* VII 235-6, see Appendix 1.

¹⁷⁶ Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 20; Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al, eds., 2003, Vol. 2, 182.

¹⁷⁷ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 145.

argues that the question of payment is unimportant, as elite men like Teitr “can be safely assumed to have been of the financial standing that they were not taking on the boys for the money”,¹⁷⁸ the idea of payment for providing fosterage is a vital link between the education described in these narrative sources and the later documentary sources.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, wealth and elite standing were no barrier to demanding payment for services, as indicated by the early sixteenth-century dispute between Bishop Gottskálk and Teitr Þorleifsson over the failed payment of the costs of education, which lasted at least three years.¹⁸⁰

Education could create and emphasize social bonds, and this was also a key role of fosterage. In *Þorláks saga* Þorlákr’s household seems to have been broken up because of his money issues: his mother, Halla, goes to Oddi with him, and they both are said to have become a part of the household, under the protection of the priest Eyjólfur Sæmundarson.¹⁸¹ With the documentary evidence as well as *Grágás* suggesting how fundamental payment was for education and fosterage, Halla must have given up some property to Oddi, probably land, in order for her and her son to enter their household.¹⁸² Þorlákr begins training as a priest, and he is called a *lærisveinn* of Eyjólfur, but Eyjólfur is also called Þorlákr’s foster-father, and when he returns to Iceland both his family and his foster-brothers are said to rejoice at his arrival.¹⁸³ The bonds created by this fostering relationship are the most likely reason why, despite Þorlákr’s household being broken up, presumably due to poverty, he somehow affords to travel to both Paris and Lincoln for education *after* he has been ordained a priest and begun working. The trip, in other words, was not necessary to his career, nor was he an aristocratic landowner in the position of Ísleifr Gizurarson, whose father could afford to take

¹⁷⁸ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 145.

¹⁷⁹ Sverrir Tómasson argues that, because the students in these references appear to have been raised where they were educated, payment probably occurred, emphasizing the evidence of the fosterage section of *Grágás* and the later documents. He further speculates that there may have been a contract as well (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 20-21), though the relative lack of administrative writing in the eleventh and twelfth century makes it likely that these would have been oral contracts, if they existed.

¹⁸⁰ *DI* VIII, 688-9 and *DI* IX 90-92. See Appendix 1.

¹⁸¹ “. . . þá réðusk þau mæðgin í inn æzta hofðuðstað í Odda undir hönd Eyjólfri presti Sæmundarsyni . . .” (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 49).

¹⁸² Orri Vésteinsson agrees that Þorlákr did not come from a wealthy family, and argues that his education at Oddi suggests his mother may have been well-connected, but does not speculate as to the exact arrangements made for her son’s education. He suggests it is more likely that Þorlákr received support for his journey abroad, rather than paying for it from his earnings alone (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 204).

¹⁸³ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 52.

him abroad to affirm his prestige and breadth of education. The social relationship developed through fosterage affected the economic relationship between a student and his school. Erika Sigurdson has discussed, in light of the educational passages in *Lárentius saga* and *Árna saga* in particular, how this social use of education continued to be used in the fourteenth century, resolving conflicts, strengthening bonds between teacher and student, and between the parent and the student.¹⁸⁴

It is clear that the relationship between fosterage and education could also apply to biological parents and their children, where the parents had a certain level of education. Teitr Ísleifsson, after all, was a priest and a teacher, and without any references to the contrary seems likely to have been educated by his father Ísleifr. *Lárentius saga* offers a clearer example: during his period of moving between monasteries to teach, it is implied that some students followed Lárentius, and it is explicit that his son Árne travelled with him and was taught. Not only does Árne become a priest, but he joins Þingeyrar as a monk alongside his father, showing how the familial educational relationship, like that of fosterage, could function alongside and within other educational institutions.

Finally, *Þorláks saga* offers a brief indication of education occurring at home, and of parents providing secular education. The saga describes its protagonist as an exceptional and disciplined learner from the very beginning, an ideal and obedient student, learning the Psalms at home as a child, before any of his formal education has begun – though at the same time the saga emphasizes that he had little other book-learning at the beginning.¹⁸⁵ This is clearly hyperbolic praise on the part of the saga, particularly in how it combines the characterization of an obedient child and ideal student with the humility-topos, yet it suggests the idea that early childhood could be a context for learning.¹⁸⁶ Learning to read the Psalms

¹⁸⁴ Sigurdson 2016, 134-6, 147.

¹⁸⁵ “Hann var ólíkr flestum ungum monnum í sinni uppfæðingu, auðráðr ok auðveldr í öllu, hlýðinn ok hugþekkr hverjum manni, fálátr ok fálýndr um allt, nýtr ok námngjarn þegar á unga aldri. Hann nam psaltara áðr en sundrskilja yrði þörn móður hans ok föður, en lítit hafði hann bóknám annat í fyrstu.” (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 48) (*He was unlike most young men in his upbringing, yielding and easy in all things, compliant and endeared to every man, reserved and faithful in everything, fit and eager to learn from a young age. He learned the Psalter as a child before his mother and father were separated, but he had little other book-learning at first*)

¹⁸⁶ Though this is the most detailed remark, the suggestion of the protagonist of a *biskupasaga* as an ideal student from a very young age is not uncommon: among the very first remarks *Páls saga* makes about Pál Jónsson was that he was skilful and eager to learn, and practised writing, from a young age (Ásdís Egilsdóttir,

and prayers is well known as a type of early, elementary learning in the Middle Ages, undertaken well before the child would have learned to actually understand any Latin.¹⁸⁷ But even after Þorlákr began schooling at Oddi, it is noted that he found time to learn genealogy and history from his mother, in between other studies.¹⁸⁸ The role of Þorlákr's mother in this should not be thought unusual, in the context of at-home education in the Middle Ages.¹⁸⁹ While this is a unique reference, when combined with the saga references to legal education, it seems to solidify the idea that secular education occurred primarily through parents or foster-parents, even while almost all of the explicit references to foster-parents teaching occur in the context of clerical education.¹⁹⁰

Fosterage is a secular, pre-Christian practice which interacted with ecclesiastical institutions in the development of medieval Icelandic education. It provided a formal context for the interaction of secular and ecclesiastical learning, and for the interaction between social and institutional bonds in educational practices. *Lárentius saga* and *Guðmundar saga* offer examples of teaching and learning in Iceland throughout the Middle Ages detached even more from institutional contexts through the apparent mobility of some teachers and students, emphasizing that there were multiple means for learned scholars to spread their knowledge. These examples suggest that the intellectual community of Iceland was multifaceted and flexible, and they provide potential contexts for different educational discourses to interact. Fosterage may suggest that educational relationships which appear informal – in that they are not associated with a particular cathedral or monastery school – in fact had a legal, institutional base. It likewise suggests that education in general may have had many more important social roles than has hitherto been appreciated.

ed., 2002, 297).

¹⁸⁷ Orme 2006, 60-61; Grotans 2006, 71-2.

¹⁸⁸ “Sú var þá hans iðja er hann var á ungum aldri at hann var löngum at bóknámi, en at riti optliga, á bænum þess í millum, en nam þá er eigi dvalði annat þat er móðir hans kunni kenna honum, ættvísi ok mannfæði” (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 50-51) (*It was his activity when he was young, that he was long at book-learning, and often at writing, at prayer in between these, and when he was not otherwise engaged he learned what his mother was able to teach him, genealogical knowledge and history*).

¹⁸⁹ Small children usually spent more time with their mothers than with their fathers, and it is very likely that literate mothers used the opportunity for teaching (Orme 2006, 61).

¹⁹⁰ The exceptions occur primarily in less clearly historiography and more apparently fictionalized sources like, as noted earlier, *Volsunga saga* and *Eiríks saga rauða*. Examining these examples in more detail would require a more thorough and critical literary study than is possible here.

1.2.2 Cathedrals and the Institutional Aspect of Education

From a chronological perspective, all medieval schools in Iceland evolved from a pre-Christian concept of the learning provided by parent, foster-parent, or guardian, and an adaptation of Christian educational institutions, introduced by missionaries and Icelanders who had been educated abroad, to a society which had no institutional church. Iceland lacked urban centres, municipal governments, and many of the other social and institutional features which defined education in the later Middle Ages elsewhere in Europe. Its population was small, scattered, and relatively poor. For all these reasons, the institutional side of education could not have operated exactly like any contemporary European models.¹⁹¹ While an understanding of Icelandic education must depend to some extent on European analogies, those analogies must always be qualified and adapted according to local circumstances.

The question remains as to what extent Icelandic schools depended on European institutions. In a general sense, the interests of the church inspired and maintained the foundations of literate education, and so most schools must be thought of institutionally as church schools. Oddi and Haukadalr, because of their familial connections and their relationship to vernacular authors, namely Ari *fróði* and Snorri Sturluson, have been characterized by scholars as apart from other schools: secular, private, unofficial or semi-official. Vellir and Stafaholt, as the only other known locations of schooling outside a monastery or bishopric, have also been suggested to be as distinct, but without figures like Ari or Snorri they have not acquired secular connotations in the scholarship.¹⁹² However, at

¹⁹¹ Würth suggests that the image of education in *Jóns saga helga* fits with what is known of European cathedral schools, but she does not explain why or how (Würth 1998, 194). For arguments that education in Iceland was of the same quality as Europe, see Guðrún Nordal 2001, 21-22, citing Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 34-5. Sverrir specifically notes that he is reacting to Halldór Hermannsson's negative comments about Icelandic education in *The Hólar Cato*. This disagreement is exemplary of the problem with discussing education primarily in terms of quality.

¹⁹² Björn M. Ólsen was among the early scholars to bring up the idea of *private skoler* 'private schools', among which he called Oddi and Haukadalr the most important, speculating that they had a *halvofficiel* 'semi-official' character. Vellir and Stafaholt he considered private (Ólsen, ed., 1884, XIX-XX). Halldór Hermannsson speculated that Oddi was a centre of secular and vernacular learning, that it kept native tradition alive, with little more evidence than the fact Snorri Sturluson was fostered there, and speculated that Sæmundur *inn fróði* was an expert in native learning, based on his byname, who also first brought the idea of mythological genealogy to

all of four of these schools, clergymen trained other clergymen to be professional priests, and in this fundamental respect they were no less institutionally related to the church than Hólar, Skálholt, or the monasteries. The account of *Guðmundar saga*, where the whole school of Hólar is moved to Vellir, supports the idea of a close institutional similarity between the schools.

There are shared features of these Icelandic church-schools and education elsewhere in Europe, while the financial side of Icelandic learning seems to remain distinctive. The costs involved in fosterage, the regulation about students in *Grágás*, the documentary evidence, and the apparent failure of Christian III's attempt to create Icelandic schools freely available to poor students suggest that education in medieval Iceland was expected to be paid for, and so the same should be assumed for these schools. While many private and religious schools in medieval England did require fees, the majority of English schools from the twelfth century onwards were public and free to students.¹⁹³ In tenth- and eleventh-century England, and earlier in France, parish priests and churches in the countryside were expected to provide sufficient teaching to meet their own needs, and an 821 *Capitula* of Theodulf, the archbishop of Orléans, mandates that teachers should decline any rewards which were not freely offered by parents.¹⁹⁴ While such mandates certainly were not always followed, the reference to education in *Búalög* indicates that even under the influence of Reformation ideals of universal literacy, even the most basic education in Iceland was expected to be paid for.

Hólar and Skálholt were distinctive, not only as ecclesiastical centres which probably would have had more available resources than any other school, but because they have been

Iceland. This quickly devolves into circular reasoning, when he argues there is no other place Snorri could have learned about mythological matters (Halldór Hermannsson 1932, 30, 33, 39, 44). Würth has more recently has commented that “Auf private Initiative ist der Unterricht an den beiden Höfen Oddi und Haukadahl zurücksuführen” (Würth 1998, 194). Guðrun Nordal, finally, uses slightly different terminology to much the same effect: “There existed in Iceland in the twelfth century important centres of teaching outside the religious houses. The most important of these were in the south of Iceland, at Haukadahl, which had traditional ties with Skálholt, and Oddi, the seat of the powerful Oddverjar family . . . Oddi was probably the most important place of learning in the twelfth century”. (Guðrún Nordal 2001, 29-30). See also Sverrir Tómasson, 2002, 794.

¹⁹³ Orme 2006, 55.

¹⁹⁴ Orme 2006, 39.

identified with the medieval institution of cathedral schools.¹⁹⁵ These were a development of the Carolingian era, though they had roots in earlier communities of learning based around bishops.¹⁹⁶ In the eleventh century, cathedral schools reemerged after the clergy/lay divisions of the Investiture controversy as places of exclusively clerical learning, distinct from other contexts, but as earlier they were based in urban environments. These locations provided resources, but meant that because of cost and distance most parish priests did not attend cathedral schools.¹⁹⁷

The situation in Iceland suggests that, while it is convenient to refer to Hólar and Skálholt as cathedral schools, and they certainly inherited a part of that institutional tradition, there are important differences between Icelandic and European education taking place at bishoprics. As discussed earlier, the Icelandic church was slow to gain an independent institutional status, and benefices provided by an episcopal authority were not even established until the latter half of the thirteenth century. The foundation of Skálholt and Hólar, then, occurred when Icelandic ecclesiastical identity and power was still in development, and very much mixed with secular identity and power. It seems unlikely, therefore, that they avoided educating laymen, and a document from Hólar in 1492 appears to confirm that this lack of division continued throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁹⁸ Neither school existed in an urban environment, and the lack of population density might explain why there does not appear to have been competition between schools in Iceland; in contrast, there is evidence for tension between small-scale teaching and the monopoly of the cathedral schools in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England,¹⁹⁹ while in Western Germany and the Netherlands clerical and secular authorities came into conflict over the rights to schools from

¹⁹⁵ For example, as earlier noted, Stephanie Würth argues that the account of Hólar in *Jóns saga* matches what is known about cathedral school in the rest of Europe (Würth, 1998, 194).

¹⁹⁶ Early medieval episcopal schools spread by the example of great scholars like Augustine of Hippo and Isidore of Seville, who established the *domus episcopi*, small communities of students based around the bishops (Bellitto 2005, 37-38).

¹⁹⁷ Bellitto 2005, 39

¹⁹⁸ The document, included in Appendix 1, describes a certain Guðmundr Jónsson giving his two sons, along with some property, to Hólar and Bishop Óláfr, asking to have one educated as a priest and to *hjalpa odrum til mannz* ‘to help the other become a man’, which must refer to some type of lay education. Guðmundr is said to be sick, so it is possible that he is dying and is asking the bishop to raise his son, but some amount of education seems likely to have been involved.

¹⁹⁹ Orme 2006, 62-3.

the thirteenth century onwards.²⁰⁰

Skálholt and Hólar do appear to have had some status and advanced resources, compared to church schools like Oddi and Haukadals, and the documentary sources suggest the importance of income gained from students. *Lárentius saga* brags that there were always fifteen or more students at Hólar at any given time,²⁰¹ which if not pure rhetoric may suggest that the Icelandic cathedral schools were larger than any other type of school in Iceland, and this number does suggest how a large school at capacity might have been conceptualized. As noted earlier, Björn Gilsson, the third bishop of Hólar, is said in *Jóns saga* to have been educated at both Haukadals and Hólar; Lárentius Kálfsson is described in his saga as being taught at Vellir and then Hólar, and obtaining further legal education at Skálholt, before his journey to Níðaróss. Sverrir Tómasson has argued that Iceland had a sort of system, with smaller schools like Vellir and Haukadals feeding into the larger cathedral schools.²⁰² While at certain times and places such relationships between schools may have existed, such a hierarchy cannot be described as any kind of consistent system: both Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson and Bishop Páll Jónsson are described as having gone directly from Oddi from schools abroad, Bishop Þorlákr Runólfsson is described as having been educated at Haukadals and nowhere else, and the documentary sources describe students who went directly to the cathedral schools without any evidence of attending elsewhere previously.

There are two core connections between the cathedral schools of Iceland and those of the rest of Europe: the relevance of the bishop to education, and the office of the schoolmaster. While it is important not to overemphasize the participation of the bishop in teaching, when the *biskupasögur* as primary sources are strongly biased towards the relevance of their protagonists in all things, the combination of documentary, legal, and narrative evidence confirms that they did have a role. They were above all patrons and administrators, though like all priests they probably did some teaching.²⁰³ The documentary

²⁰⁰ Willemsen 2008, 29.

²⁰¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 373.

²⁰² He suggests that it was likely that the bishop at Skálholt aided Teitr's teaching at Haukadals, and that Haukadals played a similar role for Skálholt as Vellir in Svarafaðardals played for Hólar during the time of Bishop Jörundur and Lárentius (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 21, note 78).

²⁰³ The *biskupasögur* and narrative sources tend to use phrasing which presents the bishops as having others do the teaching for them. For Ísleifr, in *Íslendingabók* it is only said that chieftains sent their sons to him "til

evidence shows the bishop was generally involved in negotiating the agreements with students and their parents or patrons. *Grágás* states that the church-owner patronizing a student's education must provide that student with as many books as the bishop deems necessary for holding services year round; it also allows that such an indentured priest may unbind himself from his church by educating his replacement, as long as that replacement is satisfactory to the bishop.²⁰⁴

This suggests the bishops' capacity to ordain priests gave them a certain authority over education, as ordination was the functional goal of clerical education. *Þorláks saga* shows how such authority might be used. After Þorlákr becomes bishop, the saga discusses his duties in ordaining prospective new priests during the Ember weeks:

. . . honum þótti þat ábyrgðarráð mikit at vígja menn er til þess sóttu langan veg ok hann sá þá mjök vanfæra til, bæði sakir lítills lærdóms ok annarra háttá sér óskapfelldra. En hann nennti þó varla at níta, bæði sakir fátækis þeira sjálfa ok fyrir sakir þeira manna er þeim höfðu kennt eða sínar jarteinir höfðu til sent.²⁰⁵

. . . *it seemed to him a great and momentous responsibility to ordain men who had come a long way for it when he saw in them a serious incapacity, both on account of having little learning and of other behaviour which was disagreeable to him. However, he could hardly bear to deny them, both on account of their own poverty and for the sake of those men who had taught*

læringar og létu vígja til presta” (Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 20) (*for learning and to have them ordained as priests*), and *Hungrvaka* uses essentially this same phrasing (Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 9). *Kristni saga*, however rephrases it to explicitly present him as a teacher: “Hann lærði marga ágæta menn ok lét vígja til presta” (Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, Vol. 2, 204-6, 39) (*He taught many noble men and had them ordained as priests*). Nothing can be said for certain about this ambiguous phrasing. Even with *Lárentius saga*, though Lárentius had done so much teaching before, a final reference to teaching after he had become bishop states that he *látit kenna*, or had them taught, rather than teaching them himself (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 438).

²⁰⁴ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol I, 18.

²⁰⁵ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 76.

*them or had sent their tokens for them.*²⁰⁶

The bishop here forgives poorer men their lack of education and other qualifications, both out of pity for their poverty, and out of respect for their social connections. Both the social and administrative roles of the bishop intersect with clerical education, and even in the context of the rhetorical praise of his own *vita* a sainted bishop can be presented as ordaining under-educated priests because of his relationship with their teachers and patrons, and out of a sympathy for poverty, considering the financial barriers to education.²⁰⁷ Regardless of the accuracy of the passage, the complex ways in which Þorlákr here seems to be praised for both failing and succeeding as a bishop – helping the poor, respecting social bonds, but allowing an underqualified priesthood to be established – suggests that there must have been delicate consideration in how a bishop exercised his role in education and ordination.

Elsewhere in Europe, the likelihood of the bishop being directly involved in teaching at cathedral schools diminished as the office of the schoolmaster developed,²⁰⁸ and this was possibly the case in Iceland as well. Lateran III, in 1179, had mandated that every cathedral have a *magister*, beneficed so that he might be able to teach for free. After complaints that this mandate was not being followed, Lateran IV in 1215 expanded upon it, calling for a *magister* at every cathedral and every church with resources, to teach *grammatica*, while metropolitan churches were expected to have a theologian to teach scripture to priests.²⁰⁹ The Icelandic church, naturally, did not have the capacity to grant benefices before the late thirteenth century, and the reference in *Lárentius saga* to Lárentius leaving his position of *skólameistari* upon obtaining a benefice, only to decree himself that Vellir should be henceforth the benefice of the *skólameistari*,²¹⁰ suggests an attempt to enforce this aspect of

²⁰⁶ Ármann Jakobsson and David Clark, trans., 2013, 17.

²⁰⁷ While Orri Vésteinsson connects this passage to an assumed dearth of priests in the twelfth century, and assumed that Þorlákr “had little choice in the matter” (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 180), it is entirely possible that this was a normative way for Icelandic bishops to use their influence and social connections with the wider priesthood. If a lack of priests was one of Þorlákr’s motivations, it seem likely that this would be mentioned in the passage, as it would seem to shed better light on his motivations in ordaining under-qualified priests.

²⁰⁸ Orme 2006, 163-5.

²⁰⁹ Tanner 1990, 220, 240.

²¹⁰ The saga mentions that when Óláfr Hjaltason is made schoolmaster, when Lárentius establishes a school at the *staðr* to *kenna Latínu*, that Óláfr is given the *staðr* of Vellir in Svarfadalr, presumably as a benefice, and

the Lateran III decree, though there is no evidence whether or not his decree was upheld. This financial aspect of the decrees was ignored in English schools, where fees continued to be charged,²¹¹ and from the documentary evidence this seems likely to have been the case in Iceland. Before the establishment of benefices there was an apparent lack of ecclesiastical officials at Icelandic bishoprics, which may have affected the implementation of such decrees. Scholars have argued that there were never real cathedral chapters in Iceland, and that there was a general lack of offices filled by highly educated clerics.²¹² Indeed, the terminology used to describe the canons of Níðaróss in *Lárentius saga, kórsbræðr*, who are a clearly defined legal group in conflict with the archbishop in the narrative, does not ever seem to be applied to the officials at Skálholt or Hólar.

However, the position of *skólameistari* goes back at least into the twelfth century in Iceland; it may in fact be the earliest ecclesiastical office referenced in Iceland, apart from the bishop himself, and appears to be the only one which existed before the establishment of benefices. In *Jóns saga helga*, Bishop Jón is said to have appointed two teachers: a *skólameistari* or grammarian named Gísli Finnason, from Gautland, and a sort of assistant named Rikini, from France.²¹³ The expanded L-recension also includes a description of a woman named Ingunn who does not seem to have had official status of any kind, but is said to have taught anyone who wished to learn.²¹⁴ Even if this description is anachronistic, and applies to a situation later than the early twelfth century, it at least applied the understanding and ideals of episcopal education at the end of the twelfth century, when the saga was written. *Guðmundar saga góða* references a *meistari* Þórðr at Hólar in the early thirteenth

decrees that the schoolmaster at Hólar should have that benefice permanently (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 381).

²¹¹ Orme 2006, 202.

²¹² Jónas Gíslason 1981, 122; Sverre Bagge 1984, 4. Sverrir Tómasson specifically argues that a lack of offices requiring extensive education accounts for the lack of Icelandic students going abroad for learning (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 34). In addition to the lack of cathedral chapters, Jónas Gíslason speculates that the lack of royal power, and thus a lack of a court, also produced a lack of high clerical offices (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 121). Erika Sigurdson, however, has argued that once benefices were established, the community of elite clerics around a bishop functioned much like cathedral canons (Sigurdson 2016, 123).

²¹³ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al, eds., 2003, Vol. II, 204-6, 217-8. This is the standard normalized edition of the saga, but the description of the school does change between the three main versions, primarily in being expanded in the L-recension.

²¹⁴ Foote, ed., 2003, 88.

century.²¹⁵ There are several mentions of them in *Lárentius saga*: Hólar has a certain Óblauðr Hallvarðsson in the position, before Lárentius becomes *skólameistari* as a young man around 1288, and after he becomes bishop Lárentius himself appoints Óláfr Hjaltason, who is explicitly stated to have taught *grammatica*.²¹⁶ In one instance a *skólameistari* is mentioned in the annals, a deacon named Böðvar at Hólar in 1393.²¹⁷ Finally, there are several incidental references to a particular *skólameistari* in the documentary sources, a certain Ásbjörn Sigurðsson at Skálholt, in 1493, then again in 1507 and 1508.²¹⁸

The *skólameistari* thus is only rarely mentioned in the extant sources, and yet is the only known institutionally appointed teacher in Iceland; there is no indication of an equivalent role in the monasteries. This suggests both the significance of the educational communities at Skálholt and Hólar, in the resources and institutional support they could offer to Icelandic education, yet at the same time suggests that the majority of teaching in Iceland was not done by anyone who was primarily, professionally a teacher. The *skólameistari*, and a variable number of underlings like Rikini, are thus the tools by which the bishop could encourage education, but he was only one professional in an environment where any priest with the time and resources could perform similar functions.²¹⁹

In contrast to individual priests taking on individual students as children, however, there would have been significant opportunity in cathedral schools for extended adult education. The decrees in Lateran III and IV call for teaching to be provided at bishoprics, not only to provide for young students, but *clerici*, *scholares*, and *sacerdotes*. *Lárentius saga* has several references to this type of adult learning. Before going to Norway, but after he had already been made *skólameistari*, Lárentius is introduced to canon law by Bishop Árni at Skálholt. After Lárentius becomes bishop at Hólar, he is said to have provided for the teaching of poor priests, seemingly making up for the deficiencies in the education of men

²¹⁵ Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 179.

²¹⁶ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 228, 231.

²¹⁷ Storm, ed., 1888, 423; also noted in Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 24-5, note 91.

²¹⁸ *DI* VII, 181; *DI* VIII 141, 254.

²¹⁹ Thus, although Benjamín Kristjánsson argues that what appears to have been a rapid rebound in the number of priests after the Black Death must have required significant effort by the bishops themselves (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 153), this is by no means certain. In addition, there is no way to be certain how well educated any of those priests were.

already ordained, as the reference in *Þorláks saga* suggests may have been a frequent enough problem. While both passages are written in praise of Lárentius, they may reflect a general understanding that adults as well as children were taught in cathedral schools, for the purposes of remedial education or advanced disciplines.

While episcopal education in Iceland lacked many of the features of cathedral schools elsewhere in Europe – the aforementioned lack of urban settings, large populations of students and teachers, or evidence for competition between schools – they did have distinguishing features which co-existed and interacted with fosterage and other social aspects of education. The power of the bishops over ordination, both before and after the establishment of benefices, determined the minimum standards of education when and where such power could be fully exercised, and the cathedral schools represented the forms of education occurring at the centre of elite clerical social circles. The Icelandic schoolmaster, the *skólameistari*, was one of the earliest official positions at the episcopal sees, and the only professional teaching office known from medieval Iceland. The schools of Hólar and Skálholt were important and distinct in their institutional status and connections to the wider international Church, but they were only one of many potential contexts for education. Any priest could educate another regardless of institutional context, as *Grágás* suggests, and while scholars have emphasized education at the church farms of Haukadalr and Oddi,²²⁰ which have strong aristocratic associations, the references to Vellir suggest that any wealthy church farm could have dealt with multiple students. A reference in *Guðmundar saga góða*, which seems to only appear in the version of the saga included in the *Sturlunga saga* collection, even has Bishop Guðmundr teaching at the church farm at Hof in outer Skagafjörður,²²¹ a totally unique reference which hints at how many contexts of teaching could have existed which are never mentioned in the extant sources.²²²

²²⁰ The claim that Oddi was the most important educational centre in twelfth-century Iceland (Guðrún Nordal 2001, 29-30) is certainly an exaggeration, when almost nothing is known of the relative quality of education at different schools, and the metric by which such relative importance is judged is unclear.

²²¹ Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, Vol. I, 134.

²²² Benjamín Kristjánsson also has speculated about teaching at another particularly wealthy church farm, Grenjaðarstaðr, though there is no direct references to such (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 159).

1.2.3 Education in Monasteries

Very little is known about Icelandic monasteries, yet at the same time they appear to have rapidly become of fundamental importance to Icelandic education. In general terms, Icelandic monasteries were tiny – the extant references to size range from between four and thirteen monks at any given monastery – but at the same time they grew increasingly wealthy as the Middle Ages progressed, owning roughly 13% of all the landholdings in Iceland by the Reformation.²²³ The documentary sources are the main evidence for education occurring at monasteries, and these suggest a strong overlap between functions of monastic and cathedral schools, at least from the fourteenth century onward if not earlier. There are slightly more references to monasteries than cathedral schools in the documentary sources – ten references to monasteries, and eight references to cathedral schools – yet they seem to have roughly equal function and status there. There is no indication of difference in the quality or cost of education at either type of institution, and the 1440 document explicitly allows that Helgafell or Skálholt would both be equally suitable locations for schooling.

The narrative sources suggest that the role of monastic teaching may have increased over time. The first references to students at monasteries are the students of Brandr Jónsson at Þykkvabær in *Árna saga*, where they are presented as being equally prestigious and elite as any student of Hólar or Skálholt. Of course this is suspect rhetoric in the context of the saga concerned with praising Brandr as Árni's teacher, but it fits with the frequent reference to monasteries, and the seemingly equal status between monastic and cathedral schools, in the documentary evidence. Lárentius' teaching at monasteries after his return to Iceland may suggest an increasing association between monasteries and education, and Christian III's attempts to set up public schools at the former monasteries may similarly suggest a strong identification of monasteries as teaching institutions up to the Reformation.

The nature and development of that institutional status has been much debated. Elsewhere in Europe, monastic schools developed in the early Middle Ages play a key role in

²²³ Sigurdson 2016, 71. To offer some scale for these numbers, in England at the beginning of the fourteenth century, there were some 17,000 clergy at the country's roughly 1000 religious houses (Orme 2006, 255).

the development of medieval education.²²⁴ While there is tentative evidence for Icelandic monks and an associated monastery school in the eleventh century, founded by missionaries,²²⁵ the school at Skálholt had several generations to develop before the first Icelanders could have established a monastic school at Þingeyrar. In this sense, monastic schools must have played a different role in Iceland than they did elsewhere.²²⁶ Several scholars have argued that there is no proof of true monastic schools in Iceland, merely education happening at monasteries.²²⁷ However, none of these scholars have clarified what is meant by a true monastic school, and monasticism was still an institution functioning in Iceland, and as such constituted an institutional influence on education. Both Benedictine and Augustinian monasteries supported education, and Lárentius' teaching career at both types of religious houses may suggest that there was little distinction between them of education, though this of course requires more research into the development of Benedictine and Augustinian monastic culture in Iceland.

For students attending monasteries but not intending to become monks, the distinctive qualities of monasteries appear to have primarily been their wealth, distribution, and educational resources. At least by the mid-thirteenth century, it seems they could provide an education much like that available at a cathedral school, while proximity may have made them preferable to some students. The distinct social and political environment of particular monasteries may have been a factor in choosing them as well: students could have relatives or social connections to a monastery, and *Lárentius saga* shows that there could be instances

²²⁴ See, for example, Riché 1976 100-122, 290-304, 317-36, 427-39, and Orme 2006, 7, 17-27, 255.

²²⁵ The missionary Bishop Hróðólfur is mentioned in the Hauksbók redaction of *Landnámabók* as having left three monks behind in Bær when he left Iceland (Jakob Benediktsson, ed., 1986, 65). Early scholars tended to take this at face value, and assume that Hróðólfur kept a monastery with a school at Bær, and that the monks maintained that institution there (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 12; Janus Jónsson 1887, 179-80; Halldór Hermannsson 1958, ed., x). Ernst Walter was more suspicious of the monks having existed at all, considering the late date of the source (Walter 1971, 198), while others have accepted that a school may have existed, but speculated that it was quickly abandoned (Würth 1998, 194; Jón Jóhannesson, 1974, 193; Jónas Gíslason 1971, 121). Sverrir Tómasson has noted the extent of the discussion, but does not offer an opinion (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 19-20, note 71).

²²⁶ Ernst Walter speculated that early education would have been limited by the lack of monasteries (Walter 1971, 197-8), but this would only be the case if Icelandic education developed along exactly the same lines as the rest of Europe, which is very unlikely.

²²⁷ Würth 1998, 194-95; Magnús Jónsson 1914, 291; Jakob Benediktsson 1971, Vol. 15, 640. Sverrir Tómasson notes this speculation, but does not seem to argue for or against the assertion (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 28, note 98).

where a student or teacher might desire to attend a monastic school while avoiding the bishop.

However, for those staying at the monastic institutions – monks, nuns, and prebendaries – the distinct institutional status clearly had an effect on education. For monks and nuns, reading and learning is mandated as a part of simply being an ascetic.²²⁸ As a form of education, this reading was likely largely self-guided work.²²⁹ Monasteries would have been centres of learning simply because the practice of self-motivated learning was a part of living the ascetic lifestyle, and could encourage active intellectual discourse. A 1413 document is the sole Icelandic reference to gaining an education before joining a religious order. Here two women joined the convent at Reynistaðr, and it makes it clear that the women were expected to have their education taken care of and paid for separately from the agreement granting them permission to join the convent.²³⁰ Orri Vésteinsson has suggested that the monasteries up to the thirteenth century were principally “retirement homes for aristocrats.”²³¹ However, this was the period when many chieftains and other secular leaders were ordained as priests, and thus had already obtained some sort of education, and so such a social role for monasteries would not have necessarily limited monastic intellectual discourse.

However, there is no guarantee that everyone at a monastery had obtained an education, nor that the education was of a particularly high quality, and there is evidence for continuing adult educations in the monasteries. *Lárentius saga* describes Lárentius’ as having a heterogenous body of students at the three monasteries: he teaches both *klerkar* and *bræðr*, clerics and brothers, and when he gets to Þingeyrar he is said to teach abbot Guðmundr himself.²³² This is an important passage suggesting the potential for adult monastic education to not only be self-guided, but also supplemented by teachers – teachers who were not necessarily tied to the institution. Such education does not lead to a career, as education for

²²⁸ The Benedictine Rule, for example, mandated daily reading during Lent (Hanslik, ed., 1977, 48).

²²⁹ As Sverrir Tómasson suggests is the usual scholarly consensus, though he leaves a certain ambiguity as to whether he is referring to the monastery as a school for outsiders, or the learning of monks themselves (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 28, note 98).

²³⁰ *DI* III 751-2. See Appendix 1.

²³¹ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 133.

²³² Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 308, 312, 318.

children, but has inherently more complex motivations, involving devotion, piety, prestige, and pleasure. Alongside this lack of a simple pragmatic function, the content of such education is further complicated by the uncertainty of how educated the monks were to begin with: would a teacher like Lárentius be needed to fill in gaps in basic education, would he bring new resources for advanced topics to the monastery, or would there be some combination of the two?²³³ This is a clearly an important context for overlapping types of learning with varying degrees of formality, as Lárentius' different students – an abbot, monks, adult clerics, children and young unordained students – with distinct but overlapping functions for their learning, would have shared a physical space.²³⁴

It is clear that different educational institutions intersected in medieval Iceland, sometimes overlapping but sometimes functioning parallel to each other, sharing similar educational roles. Cathedral schools, monasteries, and other church schools made use of their institutional inheritance, but adapted to local circumstances and needs, most clearly in the adaptation of cathedral schools to non-urban environments and aristocratic interests. There is no evidence for a strict hierarchy or competition between schools, and social dynamics like fosterage appear to have functioned alongside and within education at monasteries and cathedral schools. Institutional support for education, therefore, did not seem to have impeded its flexibility, and it is thus all the clearer that Icelandic educational history should not be based around judgments about rising or falling quality.

1.2.4 Education Abroad

The ability to leave Iceland to be educated was another essential part of the potential flexibility and durability of medieval Icelandic education, and a key method for new pedagogical ideas and influences to be brought and adapted to Icelandic conditions. There are

²³³ It is mentioned that Lárentius specifically taught Latin to Guðmundr and his brothers in the B-version of the saga, and, arguing that it is very unlikely that a monastery would lack basic Latin-learning resources, Sverrir Tómasson speculates that this could be a sort of higher learning, an advanced *grammatica* (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 63-4).

²³⁴ The exact nature of classroom spaces in medieval Iceland, however, remains entirely unknown and largely unexamined, and awaits further study that is not possible here.

references to Icelanders travelling to many locations, but the proximity and ecclesiastical connections with Norway were probably of particular significance, and it was likely the most frequent location visited. As a form of adult education, not directly related to training for a particular vocation, some comparison can also be made between the travels abroad of laymen and of priests. For both groups it is key to point out that such an expensive, elite practice as travelling abroad for education is not necessarily tied to the functions of a clerical or administrative career, but must have had complex motivations, including prestige, curiosity, or piety.²³⁵

From the sagas and narrative sources, beyond Lárentius' trip to Norway there are seven names of Icelanders who went abroad for education for the period before 1400, five of whom were bishops of Skálholt.²³⁶ Three of these went abroad in the eleventh century, two in the twelfth, one in the thirteenth, and one in the fourteenth.²³⁷ In addition to the narrative sources, Sverre Bagge and Jónas Gíslason have used European sources to track Icelanders and Norwegians going to universities from the end of the Middle Ages and later, and Jónas Gíslason notes that from these sources significantly more Icelanders are known to have been educated abroad from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.²³⁸ In contrast to the

²³⁵ Example 26 in Appendix 1 is indicative of this: The letter from 1532 shows Gizurr Einarsson travelling abroad all the way to Hamburg, but he appears to be primarily involved in learning Latin, which he certainly could have done at home in Iceland. It is certainly possible, however, that one could gain a better education in Latin abroad.

²³⁶ These are: Ísleifr Gizurarson, bishop of Skálholt (1056-80) educated in Saxony; Sæmundr *fróði* Sigfússon (1056-1133), educated in France and possible elsewhere; Gizurr Ísleifsson, bishop of Skálholt (1082-1118), educated in Saxony; St. Þorlákr Þórhallsson, bishop of Skálholt (1178-1193), educated in Paris and Lincoln; Páll Jónsson, bishop of Skálholt (1195-1211), educated in England; Jón Halldorsson, bishop of Skálholt (1322-1339), educated in Paris and Bologna – though it should be noted that Jón grew up in Norway and was probably Norwegian. Finally, it is seldom mentioned that *Heiðarvígur saga* mentions that the famed Snorri *góði*'s son, Guðlaugr, went to a monastery school in England around 1015 (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 6), possibly because the saga is only extant in a summary made from memory, and as such is even more questionable in its details than most saga sources. The primary sources for the other figures are mainly *Hungrvaka*, *Kristni saga*, *Þorláks saga helga*, *Páls saga*, and the Icelandic annals. As noted earlier, it is also possible that St. Jón Ögmundarson was educated abroad.

²³⁷ To these seven, Jónas Gíslason has speculated several more about whom the sources are not quite so clear. In addition figures which he mentions purely speculatively, based on how learned the narrative sources present them, he notes several figures who are said to go abroad but not specifically to study: Bishop Jón Ögmundsson, who did travel abroad, though it is not explicit that this was in order to go to school; Gizur Hallsson who went to Rome in twelfth century and wrote a travelogue, but again may have been only a pilgrim rather than a student; Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, Bishop Magnús Gizurarson, and Björn Einarsson Jerusalem-farer (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 123, 126-7).

²³⁸ Jónas gives nine names of Icelanders who travelled abroad for education for the period 1450-1520,

handful of known Icelanders, Bagge gives eighty-one Norwegians known to have studied abroad between 1200 and 1350, and argues that it was quite normal for Norwegian canons to study abroad, and that during the period 1305-69 all Norwegian bishops had a university education.²³⁹

None of these accounts give much more than the names of cities or countries to which the students went. The emphasis on bishops and on the eleventh century must at least in part be due to the nature of the *biskupasögur*, and it is impossible to know how representative these numbers are. The scarcity of sources, and the rather brief and incidental way they tend to mention foreign education means that it is nearly impossible that these were all the Icelanders who traveled to schools in Europe, and uncertain whether they were even the majority of them. At the same time, it is possible that such travel was in fact quite rare, whether because of expense or lack of sufficient motivation or some other factors. This is further problematized by another key piece of evidence, a passage in *Páls saga* regarding Bishop Páll making a survey of the priests and churches in the diocese of Skálholt:

Páll byskup lét telja í þeim þrim fjórðungum lands, er hann var byskup yfir, kirkjur þær er at skyldu þurfti presta til at fá, ok hann lét presta telja, hve marga þyrfti í hans sýslu, ok váru þá kirkjur tveir tigur ok tvau hundruð tíræð, en presta þurfti þá tíu miðr en tvau hundruð tíræð. En því lét hann telja at hann vildi leyfa útanferð prestum, ef ærnir væri eptir í hans sýslu, en hann vildi ok fyrir sjá um þat at aldregi yrði presta fátt í hans sýslu meðan hann væri byskup.²⁴⁰

Bishop Páll, in those three quarters of the country which he was bishop over, had those churches counted which needed to have priests, and he had the priests counted, how many were needed in his diocese, and there were two

presumably from documentary evidence, though he is not clear as to his sources (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 127-9).

²³⁹ Bagge 1984, 8-9. For 1350-1530 Bagge suggests some 219 Norwegians in the universities that had developed east of the Rhine, and no Icelanders (Bagge 1984, 13). However, it is not certain that Icelanders would not have simply been grouped with Norwegians or Danes during this period in the university records.

²⁴⁰ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 313.

hundred and twenty churches, and there were thus one hundred and ninety priests needed. And therefore he had it set forth that he would give leave to priests to go abroad, if there were sufficient left in his diocese, but he also wished to see to it that there would never be a lack of priests in his diocese while he was bishop.

While much has been made of this passage,²⁴¹ it is not clear that priests going abroad was strictly a matter of education: pilgrimage or political interests in Norway or elsewhere could have been other major motivations. The passage is likewise not actually explicit that the lack of priests is entirely due to going abroad, and a lack of priests in Iceland could have been caused by a number of other factors: a lack of interest in the priesthood, insufficient or ineffective educational resources, or even simply an overly high demand because of the scattered population. However, it remains that this is a rare piece of evidence for Icelanders outside the highest clergy potentially going abroad for schooling – the only other example seems to be Þorlákr, and he had the patronage of the Oddaverjar to lean on – and supports the idea it did at least sometimes happen.

It is likely that education abroad was quite expensive – the cost of the journey, living abroad, along with books and whatever fees the schools or teachers might have charged – and for most clerics and educated laymen it would not have much practical use, though it not certain that this cost was significantly more than an education in Iceland.²⁴² Thus it is unlikely that it ever could have been a particularly widespread practice, at least not for the essential vocational tradition of a priest, and scholarly speculation about the frequency, or increase at certain periods, of Icelanders going abroad for education is generally unfounded.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Jónas Gíslason argues that so many priests leaving to be educated outside Iceland was the very reason for Páll making the survey (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 122). Orri Vésteinsson uses it as evidence for the idea of a particular dearth of priests in the twelfth century (Órri Vésteinsson 2000, 181).

²⁴² The costs of education for students is discussed in section 1.3.2.

²⁴³ Sverrir Tómasson suggests it would be common for Norse students to go abroad to study, and cites Alf Önnarfors for the idea that an education abroad would have been the summit of an Icelandic education (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 23; Önnarfors 1977, 211). Peter Foote has argued for an increase in Icelanders going abroad in the late thirteenth century, while Jónas Gíslason and Sverre Bagge suggest a decrease in the same period (Jónas

Therefore, the most important question is not how many Icelanders went abroad to learn, or when there might have been increases and decreases in the number, but rather what might have motivated them to make the journey. There could have been some pragmatic motivations, for a small and ambitious number of clergymen: there are certain topics of higher education for which there were probably very limited resources for in Iceland, particularly for Ísleifr and Gizurr going to Saxony in the eleventh century, but prestige, ideology, and cultural norms were likely more significant factors. It does not seem coincidental that the *biskupasögur* so often deal with men who were educated abroad, and thereupon had successful enough careers to become highly influential bishops. This success could in part, as *Lárentius saga* seems to suggest, be attributable to the actual skills offered by this learning, but the prestige and cultural significance of a foreign education, whether or not it involved a university degree, is an undeniable aspect of these narratives.²⁴⁴

Norway, as the closest location to Iceland, must have held a special status, particularly after the Norwegian takeover. The political and ecclesiastical relationship as well as the shared vernacular would have made it significantly easier for Icelanders to obtain an education there.²⁴⁵ Certainly more priests travelled to Norway than are known in the narrative and documentary sources, and in evidence of this Erika Sigurdson has pointed to a 1392 entry in *Flateyjarannáll* showing ten priests from Skálholt dying of the plague in Norway.²⁴⁶ *Lárentius saga* describes Lárentius' trip to Níðaróss as an education in canon law, but simultaneously as a method of creating a social bond with the archbishop, gaining experience

Gíslason 1981, 122, 126; Bagge 1984, 6-7; Foote 1984, 257-58).

²⁴⁴ Orri Vésteinsson, while speculating that Ísleifr Gizurarson being educated abroad represents a distinctive career move beyond just becoming a priest, argues the missionary bishops present in Iceland should have been able to provide such learning (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 20-23). Bagge argues that university education was more linked to cultural norms than to practical Latin and liturgical learning that could occur at a local level (Bagge 1984, 11-12). Erika Sigurdson has argued, in the context of discussing travelling to Norway in the fourteenth century: "Facility with a foreign country, with travel, and with a different ecclesiastical structure were highlighted as necessary elements of an Icelandic clerical education, as much or more important than facility with local parochial concerns, the maintenance and development of ecclesiastical estates, or episcopal politics" (Sigurdson 2016, 149).

²⁴⁵ Sverrir Tómasson argues that education in Norway must have increased after the takeover, speculating that Norwegian bishops would have sent promising scholars from Iceland to Níðaróss (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 27). Jónas Gíslason agrees, and also suggests that Óblauðr Hallvardsson, who was school-master at Skálholt during the time of Bishop Árni Þorláksson, was in service of the archbishop at Níðaróss and may have been educated there (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 127).

²⁴⁶ Sigurdson 2016, 159.

in ecclesiastical administration, and obtaining a broader worldview. The *biskupasögur* always describe the bishop's journey abroad to be confirmed by the archbishop, and this episode can be seen as an expansion of this idea, a detailed expression of the type of prestige which travels abroad must have meant to bishops and clerical elite.

Here the clerical experience of combining education, vocation, and prestige while abroad may intersect with the secular one. There is some evidence for what can be characterized as educational contexts among adult Icelandic poets travelling abroad. There are references to learned discourse with poets which have had enough of an impact to produce literary works. Without knowing how many Icelanders are indicated, both Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* and Theodoricus' *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium* make reference to their authors learning history from Icelandic poets, about ancient Danish and Norwegian kings, respectively, sometime in the late twelfth century.²⁴⁷ More specifically, the author of the *3GT*, Óláfr Þórðarson, references discussing runes and language with the Danish king Valdemar II, during the first half of the thirteenth century, and says specifically that he learned an *orðtæki*, a word-formula for memorizing the *fupark*, from the king.²⁴⁸ The continuing education of adults who are invested in a field of learning intersects with an formal education abroad; Óláfr's experience in Denmark might be compared to Lárentius' experience at Níðaróss, and while there is no known narrative describing how Óláfr's experience might have aided his career like Lárentius', it is difficult to imagine that such an interaction with the king had no value to his career, and if nothing else it at least lent a certain authority to his treatise.

Almost nothing can be said for certain about specific influences on Iceland's culture and learning from these journeys abroad.²⁴⁹ All that is clear is that it that it must have had an

²⁴⁷ McDougall and McDougall, eds., 1998, 1; Friis-Jensen and Fisher, ed. and trans., 2015, 6-7.

²⁴⁸ Wills, ed., 2001, 88-9.

²⁴⁹ Scholars, however, have speculated extensively along these lines. Bagge argues that extant sources from St. Victor indicate that Norwegians, particularly the higher clergy at Níðaróss, regularly went there to study, and that the influence from Northern France was high in the twelfth century (Bagge 1984, 3; see also Mortensen 2000(a)). Sverrir Tómasson emphasizes that it is not known what St. Þorlákr studied, while noting that Lincoln was known for theology and law, and speculates on that basis that Þorlákr went abroad to study theology (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 23, note 85). But as Gizurr Einarsson's 1532 letter – see Appendix 1 – suggests, students could potentially have gone abroad for something as basic as Latin learning.

impact: bringing in new intellectual movements, books and pedagogical trends, functioning as an option when the available Icelandic educational resources were not sufficient for certain purposes, and generally connecting Icelandic and European learning. Taken together, references in the extant sources to Icelanders being educated abroad strengthen the idea that education for medieval Icelanders was durable and adaptable. For students in need of only practical learning to become a priest, as has been shown, there were copious resources available outside the major monastic and episcopal institutions, and all that was really needed was a priest willing to do the teaching, and the social connections to obtain ordination. Education abroad, in turn, allowed those wealthier Icelanders to go obtain whatever education was not available locally, and though the references are few, there are enough to suggest Icelanders never stopped entirely going to a variety of places for extended educations.

The potential contexts for education in medieval Iceland were numerous. As elsewhere in Europe, children were certainly educated in the home. In addition to this, fosterage represented an established secular institution for sending students from the home to be raised and taught whatever skills were appropriate to their future career. Fosterage helped to instigate the collection of students at church-schools where particular resources and educators were available, in a wider context where any priest, or perhaps even literate laymen, could provide an education. Cathedral schools and monasteries represent adaptations of European educational institutions to the particular circumstances of Iceland. Yet many students must have been educated elsewhere, certainly at wealthy church farms like Haukadalr, Oddi, Vellir, and Hof, but likely at many more locations too minor to be mentioned in the sources. These multiple varieties of education suggest that while there were certainly chronological changes and developments, educational practices in Iceland were both extremely durable and adaptable, and not prone to sudden rises or dips in quality. The vast majority of evidence here is for clerical learning, and there is little evidence that the contexts of secular learning were distinct, except that presumably they were more likely to have been within the household or a part of fosterage relationships than at the more institutional schools at the monasteries and cathedrals.

1.3 Teachers, Patrons and Students

Having gone over the sources and the variety and interaction of educational contexts and institutions, it remains to explore more deeply the experience and dynamics of education for the key people involved in education: teachers, patrons, and students. Addressing the social and economic aspects of being involved in education can improve our understanding of the significance of education in Icelandic society and the decision-making process behind a student, parent, or patron paying to obtain learning, and thus provide a better historical grounding for understanding and contextualizing pedagogical and grammatical texts. It can also expand upon the observations made so far in this chapter, by showing the variety of ways teaching and learning could take place.

1.3.1 Teachers and Patrons

Education intersected with many aspects of Icelandic society, and a wide variety of people could be involved with it as teachers, but even more as patrons, facilitating education by providing funding and support. As has been suggested, almost anyone with an education and an interested student in Iceland could potentially be a teacher, in the sense of someone who provides an education. The economic and social aspects of being a teacher are unclear and complex, but it is certain that they overlapped to a certain extent with those who patronized education. Patron, here, is used to designate people who supported education through financial or social means; clarifying the roles of patrons is vital to showing the wider ways education intersected with, and was perceived by, Icelandic society as a whole.

The narrative sources suggest that teaching in Iceland was not restricted to Icelanders, that foreigners could teach as well. This is important to a wider discussion of language use in education, as it would necessitate translation and oral interaction between languages. As already noted, *Jóns saga helga* mentions several foreign teachers, and Lárentius is said to learn canon law in Latin from a Flemish man in Níðaróss. However, the largest known group

of such teachers were the missionary bishops, and the narrative of the missionary Friðrekr in *Kristni saga* offers a potentially useful indication of how they could have been involved with teaching.²⁵⁰ The narrative suggests that Friðrekr's preaching on the whole went poorly but that he taught a certain Þorvaldr Koðránsón, who had met him abroad, how to preach, since Friðrekr did not know Norse well, and that the two traveled together through Iceland.²⁵¹ Friðrekr's main purpose was preaching, but Þorvaldr must have been learning Latin to be able to interpret Friðrekr for the Icelanders. Religious ideas and words would have come into the vernacular,²⁵² and Þorvaldr would have had to develop some of his own hermeneutic of vernacular translation, using whatever skills Þorvaldr had developed while learning Latin, and in that sense *grammatica* must have played a role in this context. The case of Friðrekr and Þorvaldr also suggests that the importance of social connections to education was not confined to Icelanders, and was likely even more important for foreigners and missionaries.²⁵³

The broad swathe of society which could participate in education through teaching also may have included very poor priests. In the section of *Grágás* dealing with priests who have been indentured to a church to provide themselves with an education, it allows that a priest could free himself by teaching a replacement who is found suitable by the bishop.²⁵⁴ The phrasing is explicit that the indentured priest would do the teaching himself; such a priest would not have the resources to provide for an external education, and his own learning would likely be the most valuable resource he had. At the same time, the ability to teach could be a point of praise apart from any institutional associations, as shown not only

²⁵⁰ These is also a version of this narrative in *Vatnsdæla saga* and *Þorvalds þátrr ens víðförla*. The latter goes into more detail about the acts of these Friðrekr and Þorvaldr, and unlike *Vatnsdæla saga*, was potentially not a direct source for *Kristni saga* (Duke 2001, 350), and thus may be an independent witness.

²⁵¹ The detail of Þorvaldr meeting Friðrekr abroad in itself suggests that some Icelanders did in fact receive at least the minimum Christian education needed for conversion in Europe before the official conversion in 1000, and that such educations did affect cultural, pedagogical, and religious development in Iceland, even if perhaps only in very small ways.

²⁵² For the influence on Latin, in addition to Anglo-Saxon, vocabulary and Christian ideas on in Icelandic and Scandinavian terminology, see Astås, 2002, 1046-9.

²⁵³ Garipzanov has recently noted that “prior to the establishment of parish systems across the early Christian north, Christian rites and practices were disseminated via personal, rather than institutional, channels”, and often in the Middle Ages priestly education was an apprentice-master relationship. Garipzanov 2012, 11.

²⁵⁴ Finsen, ed., 1852, 18.

in the *biskupasögur*, but also in *Sturlu saga* where the priest Rúnolfr Dálksson is praised as being a great teacher and scholar.²⁵⁵ This supports the conclusion of the previous section, that the diversity of contexts and conditions for Icelandic education was greater than has hitherto been admitted.

The role of Ingimundr as a teacher in *Guðmundr saga góða* is an instance where fosterage could result in the sort of apprentice-master relationship described in *Grágás*, but for a wealthier class of priests,²⁵⁶ as well as a teacher who, like many of the missionaries, seemed to need to be mobile. As was mentioned earlier, while Guðmundr was educated by his foster-father Ingimundr they moved between farms. In this case, the means of Guðmundr's education may have travelled with them: Ingimundr is noted as having a private collection of books, which he passed down to Guðmundr upon the latter's ordination. The saga also notes that Guðmundr himself studied from and took extracts from books of the men he visited.²⁵⁷ While these may have been primarily liturgical books, as these would be the most essential for clerical duties, such books could be used for teaching, and it is possible that there were at least some pedagogical texts among them. The existence of personal collections of books, and the mobility of Ingimundr and Guðmundr, suggest that at least some teachers could function independently of any location. The distinctiveness of this apprentice-master relationships is the lack of a group dynamic, with a single student and a single teacher/patron, which could create and emphasizes different types of social bonds from schools involved with larger numbers.

The issue of paying teachers, and priests finding time to teach, can reveal more about the conditions of Icelandic teachers. Though explicit payment for paying a priests directly for teaching is not mentioned until the sixteenth-century reference in *Búalög*, *Grágás* describes payments that could be made to priests for singing Mass and other practices.²⁵⁸ Orri Vésteinsson argues that these references pertain to *þingprestar*, or district priests, who sold

²⁵⁵ Jón Jóhansson et al., eds., 1946, Vol. I, 103. It should be noted that the term used for teacher is *kennimaðr*, which does not only refer to teachers, but can also generally refer to any priest or cleric.

²⁵⁶ Fifteenth-century manuals point to the idea that generally priest-apprentice relationships were common for students elsewhere in Europe (Bellitto 2005, 41-2).

²⁵⁷ Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 59-63.

²⁵⁸ Finsen, ed., Vol. I, 9, 20-21.

their services on open markets, and made up the majority of priests during the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁵⁹ If teaching occurred as *Búalög* describes, with teachers sometimes hired to teach particular subjects, it seems likely that it would have functioned much like payments for singing Mass. Such teaching could have provided particular skills to very young children, to prepare them for more advanced education, or even to laymen interested only in particular parts of a general education. This sort of limited lay education, not orientated around a particular career, may be what is referred to in a 1507 document which calls for the teacher to *kenna honum novkut áá bok* ‘teach him something out of a book’.²⁶⁰

Naturally, priests who were independently wealthy or beneficed would not have depended on such payments as much as poorer priests, but would still have liturgical duties, and teaching must have primarily been a part-time practice. *Skólameistarar* and whatever staff they may have had must have been maintained by the bishop, and it is possible that monasteries may have had the wealth for certain monks to teach as their primary task – as Lárentius appears to have done for a time – but there is little indication that being a teacher was lucrative. The *biskupasögur* support the idea that being a teacher could have a certain prestige, particularly if one educated important, aristocratic students, but this is a very narrow context for a very select number of teachers, and the vast majority of teachers seem to have gained little or no prestige from their work.

This apparent lack of prestige or concern for who was actually doing the teaching suggested by the documentary sources, where only patrons of education and students are mentioned, never teachers. The deals are usually made with a student’s parents, though other parties could represent the student and provide the payment, and another patron who would supply the teacher. This could be a bishop, abbot or abbess, or it could be another third party; it is not always clear in the documents that the person has any particular qualifications related to education. While obfuscating the role of the teacher, the documents suggest the number of people that could be involved in paying for and providing an education. The bishops, abbots, parents, guardians, and even third parties of unclear relation to the student were involved in

²⁵⁹ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 195.

²⁶⁰ Example 19 in Appendix 1.

the negotiation and implementation of an educational contract. The legal disagreement over the payment of an educational contract from 1519 to 1522 shows how serious such patronage roles could be.²⁶¹ The fact that patrons were not always teachers emphasizes how wide a social significance formal education could have had in Icelandic society.

This primary, prestigious role of the patron is supported by the *biskupasögur*, where the focus is usually on the bishop as an administrator providing education, rather than as a teacher. This may in part be related to the virtuous role of an educational patron potentially providing charity, and such charity would also be a fundamentally important social and economic factor in Icelandic education. *Lárentius saga* references a priest, Rúnólfr, who paid for his education by the patronage of the Abbot Þorlákr,²⁶² and further examples will be discussed in the next section. The educational section of *Grágás* also shows the close connection between teacher and patron, in that in such an agreement the church owner had to pay for and provide the education of the indentured priest. Such a church owner would need to have some social relationship to the educational communities of Iceland, and potentially to the bishop as well, to ensure that the indentured priest would be ordained. This church owner would thus become fundamentally a patron of education, both providing the resources to allow for it and reaping the rewards.

Finally, parents, relatives, and perhaps even certain indentured servants could provide a free education within the household, as the example of Þorlákr's mother indicates. Much elementary and secular learning was probably done on this level. *Búalög* does indicate, however, that some households would not even have had the resources to teach children the alphabet, and payments could come into play there. Taking into account such at-home learning, the role of teachers and patrons were clearly as variable and multifaceted as the contexts of education, and this role supports the general idea of the complexity and durability of Icelandic education.

1.3.2 Cost and Function of Education for Students

²⁶¹ Example 21 in Appendix 1, see also example 19. Erika Sigurdson has also discussed the 1385 educational contract included in Appendix 1 in terms of the role of wealthy relatives as patrons (Sigurdson 2016, 134-5).

²⁶² Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 309.

The experience, cost, and motivations of students are some of the most underexplored aspects of Icelandic education, and are also one of the most important areas for understanding the ways different types of learning could interact, yet remain distinct. From a vocational perspective lay students had fundamentally different goals from students intending to be ordained, prioritizing different topics, and yet they likely sometimes shared schools and teachers. A lay student would not have the same motivation as an aspiring priest to invest a serious amount of money in an education. Above all, the evidence shows that there must have been a wide and multi-layered class division between individual clerics, which likely affected how laypeople were educated as well. We have evidence that some priests were forced into indentured servitude to pay for schooling, some paid the price of a farm or more for their education, and some paid for their education but found means to defray costs. Some education may have even been attainable for free, under the right circumstances. These economic issues would in turn have fundamentally affected who chose to be educated, and for what reasons.

The documentary evidence taken as a whole suggests a fairly high cost of education, and the difficulties and costs which could arise when someone failed to pay.²⁶³ While these documents are all from the late fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries, the cost of education suggested by *Grágás* – both the passage on the cost of fosterage and on students becoming indentured priests – gives some grounds for speculating that the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries may not have been that different. Within the documents, there is no indication that costs varied based on teacher or location: specific teachers are never mentioned, and there is no clear differentiation in cost between monasteries, bishoprics, or

²⁶³ In 1507, Óláfr Eiríksson promised to teach the son of Loptr Magnússon (*DI VIII 205*), but the case is brought up again in several other documents, and in 1512 Loptr claims that Óláfr never provided the teaching (*DI VIII 638-9*). In 1519, Bishop Góttskálk of Hólar attempted to make a case against the priest Egill Hallsson, because his kinsman Teitr Þorleifsson had failed to pay for his upkeep at Hólar, though it is claimed that the church covered the cost of the education itself, but the priests judging the case determine that Teitr is responsible (*DI VIII 688-9*). This case is brought up again in 1522, and Teitr is judged over several issues, including his continued failure to pay for Egill, and is to be sent to the Archbishop Eiríkr in Trondheim for final judgment (*DI IX 90-2*). In a somewhat more confusing example, in 1422 a certain Þorvarðr Ólafsson appears to have been legislated against for holding onto a valuable cloak which his mother had promised would be used to pay for his maintenance and education (*DI IV 298-300*).

deals where the school is not specified. Though there is some variation, the exact valuations are not always clear, and the sample size is small. Magnús Már Lárusson – the only scholar who has dealt seriously with the cost of Icelandic education – estimates that for a priest to be trained costs around four hundreds per year for four to five years, and for a sub-deacon or Mass-deacon only two hundreds per year for around two years.²⁶⁴ There are only five documents in Appendix 1 which mention the length of education and the cost per year, however, and these show that there could be even more variety in cost and length of education than Magnús suggests.²⁶⁵ A hundred is a unit of value, generally considered to be equivalent to a hundred ells of wool, or to one *kúgildi*, ‘cow-value’. The value of the poorest farms in Iceland was around 12 hundreds or less, middle-sized farm 25-36 hundreds, and very large farms at over 60 hundreds.²⁶⁶ It thus seems clear that the education has a serious value, and for all but the wealthiest Icelanders it would involve giving up a serious portion, or even all, of their wealth.

Who or what exactly this payment went to, what was the most financially valuable part of an education, is uncertain. On the one hand, the apparent differentiation between the cost of educating priests and sub-deacons suggest the guarantee of ordination itself was of the greatest value, and indeed ordination was what could lead to an income and career, while the passage from *Þorláks saga* suggests that an inferior education was not always a serious barrier. *Lárentius saga* states that Lárentius’ own ordination as a priest happened more quickly because of the quality of his education.²⁶⁷ On the other hand, however, ordination is not always guaranteed, and the cost of maintenance – or food and board – may have been the

²⁶⁴ Magnús Már Lárusson 1967, 127. Magnús does not attempt to speculate about costs of learning abroad. However, Jónas Gíslason notes an example from around the Reformation: the first Lutheran bishop of Skálholt, Gizur Einarson, studied in Hamburg for two years, funded by Bishop Ögmundur Pálsson, and eventually paid the bishop back with one ton of fish, around 1440 fish (Jónas Gíslason 1981, 128). For the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, this quantity of fish would convert to around 268 *aurar* (Gelsinger 1981, 187), which according to standard estimates could have been between 6.7 and 13.4 hundreds (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 289).

²⁶⁵ The 1380 Viðey document, example 3 in Appendix 1, also indicates an aspiring priest being educated for six years. The 1440 document, example 8, suggests that 50 hundreds are being paid to have a boy educated as a priest in three years or less. The 1463 document, example 10, seems to suggest 12 years of education, but this may be a corruption in the text or some particularly unusual circumstances. The 1495 document, example 15, suggests a Mass-deacon being educated for a full five years.

²⁶⁶ Orri Vésteinsson 2007, 124-5.

²⁶⁷ “Vígslur hans fóru fram eftir setningu ok skipan. Ok því fljótara sem hann var betr kunnandi en aðrir, ok svá sem hann var vígðr infra sacrum officium” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 229).

more important factor. If maintenance were the most important factor, this could suggest the idea that cost of education may have developed out of the cost of legal fosterage, and the payment required there. Finally, it should be kept in mind that teachers themselves needed to be maintained, so some of the student's cost may have gone directly to them – though the decrees of Lateran III and IV show that the ideal was to have teachers paid independently, by benefice, so that they could teach poor students.

In the *biskupasögur* the cost of education is never explicitly mentioned. Both *Lárentius saga* and *Árna saga* describe what seems to be a sort of part-time education: Lárentius spends part of the year at Vellir being taught by the priest Þórarinn, and sometimes at home with his family, which would have reduced his maintenance fee at the school, if not the price of ordination or education itself.²⁶⁸ Árni's situation was even more complex, when for a time he spent part of the year at school in Þykkvabær with abbot Brandr, part at Skál with his in-laws, and part of the year in Kálfafell with Þorsteinn, the son of abbot Brandr, and he both appears to have obtained resources from his extended family and to have worked as a craftsman of some kind, which must have helped fund his education.²⁶⁹ *Þorláks saga*, as already noted, suggests that Þorlákr's family was incorporated into the household at Oddi, which would presumably involve selling all their land to the Oddaverjar.²⁷⁰ There is no indication of the cost of education abroad in the *biskupasögur*, and it has to be assumed it was paid for by the respective families or patrons of those who travelled.²⁷¹ The cost of education earlier, in the eleventh and twelfth century, must be inferred from the costs associated with fosterage in *Grágás*, as well as the idea of a priest becoming indentured to pay for his education, though a dearth of priests and a high demand may have encouraged more patrons to charitably support students.

While the cases of Lárentius and Árni suggest that there was potential for moderating the high costs, *Grágás* shows the potential to completely mitigate them. As discussed earlier, the legal text describes a means for poor priests to gain education and ordination without any

²⁶⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 226.

²⁶⁹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 6.

²⁷⁰ See section 1.2.1.

²⁷¹ The bishop, for example, as in example 26 in Appendix 1.

cost, by indenturing himself to a church owner. Some scholars have suggested that this mode of education was chronologically limited. Ernst Walter has argued that eleventh-century priests in Iceland were indentured to their patrons, but gained independence through the establishment of the tithes.²⁷² As noted earlier, Orri Vésteinsson makes the opposite argument, that the law was not applicable until after the middle of the twelfth century.²⁷³ However both of these arguments depend on the uncertain claim that the Icelandic priesthood somehow varied chronologically between being entirely wealthy and entirely poor. There is copious evidence for eleventh-century aristocratic priests, as *Íslendingabók* argues that the sons of wealthy aristocrats were sent to Ísleifr to be educated and ordained, and the documentary evidence shows that education continued to be extremely expensive, long past the establishment of the tithes, and so there would have continued to be a potential need for a way around the cost. Likewise, while he attempts to marginalize their importance, even Orri admits the poor priests must have existed before the mid-twelfth century.²⁷⁴ Taking the documentary evidence and *Grágás* together strongly suggests the existence of multiple classes of priests and a heterogeneous priesthood, continuing throughout the Middle Ages.

In light of the expense of education, the mention of poor students and clerics in the *biskupasögur* takes on new significance, suggesting the ideal of making education more widely available than it actually was, and an ambivalent or even negative attitude towards the potential financial and social barriers to learning. *Lárentius saga* mentions that when Lárentius made Óláfr Hjaltason schoolmaster at Hólar, “að kenna grammaticam,” that he took both the sons of rich men and poor and taught them both well.²⁷⁵ Lárentius himself, at

²⁷² See Walter 1971, 200.

²⁷³ See section 1.1.1.

²⁷⁴ Orri Vésteinsson discusses this passage of *Grágás* entirely from the perspective of the church-owners, emphasizing the importance of wealthy chieftain-priests, and arguing that while the evidence of *Grágás* cannot be dismissed, “we cannot suggest that these servile priests were in any way characteristic of the conditions of Icelandic priests”, and he further speculates that the whole ideal of servile priests was potentially a response to a dearth of priests in the twelfth century (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 179-81). Suggesting that a single type of priest could be characteristic of the entire Icelandic priesthood is, however, misleading, and references to poor priests in the narrative sources show that there is no reason to marginalize the evidence of *Grágás*, nor confine the potential for servile priests to the twelfth century.

²⁷⁵ The A version of the saga says “Tók hann marga klerka til kennslu, ríkra manna sonu ok jafnvel marga fátæka” while the B version phrases it “tók hann marga klerka til kennslu, góðra manna sonu, ok svá fátæka klerka” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 372-3). The B version hints at the possibility that poor boys may have tended to obtain whatever education allowed them to be ordained, and then once their career had begun,

the very end of his life, is said to have taken several clerics from the harsh conditions of their poverty and taught them the Psalter, singing, and Latin, so that they became far better priests.²⁷⁶ In this latter example, it is clear that this is presented as a form of charity on Lárentius' part, an attempt to assist both these clerics and the general condition of Christianity in Iceland. In *Jóns saga*, as was noted earlier, Ingunn is said to teach anyone interested in learning, and students were sometimes expected to help teach each other in the Middle Ages.²⁷⁷ *Þorláks saga* and its mention of Þorlákr's ordination of unqualified students is clear that their poverty was among his motivating factors. This glorification of teaching poor students stands in contrast to the more common emphasis on aristocratic students, as in *Íslendingabók*, and the naming of particularly well-known clerics in many of the educational passages in the *biskupasögur*. It suggests an ideological confrontation of the issues of class inherent to expensive education, and a mixture of clerical ideals of providing services to the poor with perhaps a somewhat more aristocratic prestige in educating famous and powerful men. Charity could have a negative social impact as well, however: upon his return to Iceland in the service of the archbishop, Lárentius is criticized for his pretensions to authority, when he appears to have taken the bishop's charity to obtain his education in Hólar.²⁷⁸ For all the idealization of charitably providing education for poor students, then, there still could be class issues with trying to engage with the clerical elite after coming from a poor background, and a social backlash when a priest does not show due deference to his former teacher. Of course, there is no way of knowing what level of poverty is really being referred

and they were already *klerkar*, they could continue their education as part of the community of priests, with no or lesser cost. But this may simply be a coincidental variation in phrasing – the differentiation between teaching *klerkar* and young students is never particularly clear in the *biskupasögur*.

²⁷⁶ “Vóru þat átta eða níu fátækir klerkar er hann hafði tekit af fátækt ok húsgangi ok látit kenna saltara ok söng ok latínu, svá at þeir urðu síðan prestar mjök svá allir til Þingeyrastaðar ok Munkaþverár” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 438) (*There were eight or nine poor clerics who he had taken from poverty and begging and had them taught the Psalter and song and Latin, so that afterwards they all became great priests at Þingeyrar and Munkaþverá*).

²⁷⁷ Grotans 2006, 65-6. See section 1.2.2, passage is also quoted in section 2.1.2.

²⁷⁸ “Höfðu frændmenn herra byskups allt í skuppi við hann ok athlátri, brigslandi honum um sína fyrri daga er Jörundr byskup tók hann fátækan ok lét kenna honum, en nú þykkiz hann hafa vald yfir honum ok mega af setja hann sínu byskupligu valdi með erkibyskups boðskap” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 276) (*The kinsmen of the lord bishop mocked and laughed at him, upbraiding up about his former days when Bishop Jörundr took him as a poor man and had him taught, but now he thinks himself to have authority over him and to be able to depose his episcopal authority with the order of the archbishop*).

to in these passages, and more research would be needed to speculate what level of social mobility an education might have offered.

These issues of poverty, wealth, and the cost of education affected how students developed their goals, and the overall purpose and function of education for them. For the vast majority of priests education must have been vocational and practical, a means of enabling a stable social position with an income, perhaps also performing a service to their families or patrons. *Þorláks saga* and *Lárentius saga* both attest to poor priests functioning with a minimum of education, and the latter argues that under Lárentius' tutelage they were able to significantly improve their position. If there is any truth to this passage, such improvement would in part have been no doubt partly due to social factors – the patronage of Bishop Lárentius – but also in part due to the education itself. Education which was important to clerical duties could not only obtain an ordination, then, but could also enhance one's career after having become a priest or deacon.

The motivations of chieftain-priests and elite clerics are more complex. Orri Vésteinsson has emphasized that being ordained priests created political power and influence for chieftains and secular leaders, which there is no reason to doubt. However, he dismisses the question of whether such great chieftains would have sung masses and performed regular clerical duties,²⁷⁹ even though this question is fundamental to the issue of what motivated their education, and thus what they actually learned in preparing for ordination. If the chieftain-priests were primarily patrons of the church, it is entirely possible that poor priests, possibly even indentured servants, sung the mass and dealt with the other duties which requires the sort of clerical skills praised in texts *Jóns saga helga* and *Lárentius saga*: Latin, liturgical reading, singing, and exegesis. The skills attributed to Klængr Þorsteinsson, bishop of Skálholt 1152-76, in *Hungrvaka* might describe the set more necessary for such a patron figure: eloquence, wisdom, skill in mediation, and a thorough knowledge of secular law.²⁸⁰ A

²⁷⁹ “We do not of course know whether the likes of Sæmundr *fróði* or his pupil Oddi Þorgilsson actually had ministered to a flock and had sung masses regularly or if they had some completely different sense of what their pastoral duties involved. In this context it does not matter much; it is clear that in the early and mid-twelfth century aristocrats attached significance to being ordained and we can with confidence assert that this also meant that they found it expedient to be, or be seen, as patrons of the Church” (Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 193).

²⁸⁰ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 37.

similar issue can be applied to other twelfth- and thirteenth-century priests who were also secular leaders, and gained their ordination primarily for political reasons, as the class which Orri refers to as householding priests.²⁸¹ *Kristni saga* does claim that around the beginning of the twelfth century, most powerful men in Iceland were both educated and ordained as priests, even though they were chieftains,²⁸² but it is unclear what such an education might have entailed. Even if a chieftain-priest did not intend to perform services, he may have received a heterogeneous education, learning topics like secular law alongside Latin and other clerical skills. This uncertainty regarding the motivations of chieftain-priests in being educated, and the precedent they may have set for later elite clerics, provides a context for multiple types of education to interact, and potentially for simpler, more vernacular versions of a full clerical education to gain prominence.

Also for wealthy priests, going abroad for learning could have been encouraged by a related motivation to enhance one's career on a political level, though we must assume that such learning was highly clerical and based in Latin.²⁸³ For bishops like Ísleifr, Páll, and Þorlákr and the patrons who paid for their journey, going abroad was an investment, a decision based on wealth and ambition for a higher position. This is not to say that intellectual curiosity or piety could not have played a part in their decisions, but that it is essentially impossible to untangle such motivations from more pragmatic ones for men who would become bishops. During Ísleifr's day, when multiple missionary bishops were still active in Iceland, it is possible that an education abroad put Ísleifr in a position to compete with them, and profit economically and socially both from his services as a priest and as a teacher. This may even be true of later examples of Icelanders obtaining education abroad; a school run by a man with a prestigious foreign education could potentially attract the sons of rich men as students, who would have had a choice of where to obtain their education. In *Lárentius saga*, though Lárentius only made it as far as Norway, and clearly worked in

²⁸¹ Orri Vésteinsson 2000, 203.

²⁸² Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., ed., 2003, Vol II, 42. Caution should also be taken with this statement, as the author of *Kristni saga* appears to be characterizing a golden age in Icelandic history with some hyperbole, as well as specifically noting a historical difference between the author's time period, when the ordination of chieftains was illegal, and the past.

²⁸³ The only document in Appendix 1 which related to an education abroad, example 26, also is the only one written in Latin.

exchange for his education, the learning of canon law and his social connections to the archbishop are fundamental to his career as bishop, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. It seems probably that advanced education, and connections made to clergymen abroad, could have served similar functions for other wealthy Icelandic priests.

The needs and motivations for laypeople to become educated are even more variable than with clerics. On the one hand, more abstract ideas of cultural prestige and identity could encourage learning in poetics and history, while on the other, administrative tasks and political or social dynamics could call for legal learning and administrative literacy. There were also certainly some laypeople who possessed some part of a clerical education, on account of being failed priests: men who had begun an education for the priesthood, but because of some issue, including simply deciding against it, were never ordained. Many of the educational agreements contain stipulations for the death of the student before the completion of their schooling, and some of these also mention the possibility of the student quitting school, or simply choosing not to be ordained. The education passage in *Grágás* notes the possibility of a student deciding to give up on their education in a very similar manner. There does not appear to be any evidence for what these former students tended to do afterwards, whether their partial education proved of any use, or how many of them there were, but they must have existed. Finally, at least one fifteenth-century document suggests the education of a boy in a cathedral school with no intention of being ordained, though it is not certain whether he would be provided with the same sort of education as other boys.²⁸⁴

The experience of Icelandic students at any given point in time thus had the potential to be quite varied. Priests existed at both the top and the bottom of the social and economic scales, and depending on the wealth and motivations of the student education could serve many different functions, yet there was significant room for overlap. Chieftain-priests provide an important example of Icelanders who could be interested in a highly heterogeneous form of learning, involving both clerical and secular topics, and as prestigious figures they could have been influential on other forms of education. The legal and documentary evidence for students who failed a clerical education suggest the possibility of

²⁸⁴ *DI* VII 109, example 14 in Appendix 1.

laypeople obtaining partial educations. At the same time, the vocational function of being a priest demanded certain skills, and when many priests were poor and undereducated, there must have also been minimalist forms of clerical education which met needs with minimum resources. This complex economic and social situation of being a student intersects with the prestige and other benefits that came from being a patron or a teacher.

Conclusion

Education in medieval Iceland was diverse and variable, affected by numerous cultural, institutional, economic, and social factors. It cannot be understood by simply pointing to major European models, nor by focusing entirely on the unique aspects of Icelandic culture and society. The distinctiveness of particular contexts of schooling and the interactions between them, the numerous potential experiences of students, teachers, and patrons all offer context for better understanding the different forms the curriculum could take and the wider intellectual culture of medieval Iceland. This chapter also suggests the broad relevance education could have to the study of medieval Icelandic society and culture.

There is a variety of documentary, legal, and narrative sources available which pertain to Icelandic educational practices, and no survey of the topic can ignore any of them. The documentary sources only appear in the mid-fourteenth century, but provide evidence for the costs and formal arrangements of educational agreements which do not appear in any other source. These help contextualize the educational regulations in the law code *Grágás*, which provides a route for poor students to indenture themselves in order to obtain education and ordination. The narrative sources are problematic, in that their rhetorical hyperbole and emphasis on particular figures can skew a broader view of Icelandic education, but they provide key details about education ideals, cathedral and monastic schools, social aspects of teaching and learning, and journey abroad to European schools. It would be extremely problematic to establish exactly when the references to education in many of these sources would be applicable, and thus set up a complete chronology of Icelandic education practices. Therefore, this chapter has focused on showing the range of possibilities in the social,

economic, and institutional dynamics of education.

Education could take place in a variety of locations, and many contexts could be understood as schools. The established practice of education during fosterage provided a link between pre-Christian practices and the new practices of Christian education. Education could take place at home, on the road, and at a variety of church-farms, not only in the core monastic and episcopal institutions of the medieval Church. There was a spectrum of formality between such contexts: no education can be said to have been entirely informal and the dichotomy so often used, of education being inside or outside the classroom, has little meaning when the ‘classroom’ was such a variable thing. The potential for heterogeneity, flexibility, and the interaction between vernacular and Latin traditions which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters was to a large extent based on how other modes of learning functioned, intersecting with and coexisting alongside major institutional schools.

Going to school or getting an education was not a single, uniform process, or even a simple dichotomy between religious and lay education. It depended highly on motivation, wealth, and social connections, and different types of education for different types of students must have taken place in shared spaces. The example of two of the most famous students at Oddi is telling: Snorri Sturluson and St. Þorlákr both obtained some education at Oddi, but made use of different traditions for two different lifestyles. Þorlákr became a priest who would need Latin, liturgical and exegetical training, while Snorri was a secular leader who could make use of training in law and genealogy, but was also a professional poet. The fundamental difference in the concerns of the two careers means that the two students had different priorities in what they learned, and in a sense went to different schools. But the close proximity created a space, both physical and intellectual, for ideas to be exchanged and traditions to interact, while still allowing some level of separation.

2: Latinity and Bilingual Education

The previous chapter showed the potential complexity of the social, institutional, and economic contexts which shaped Icelandic education. There was no homogenous model of Icelandic schools, and little indication of sharp distinctions between formal and informal education. This chapter will begin to explore what was taught in those schools, focusing on forms of learning which involved Latin or prepared a student for Latin learning, which thus inherently related more to clerical than lay education: elementary topics including song and computus, *grammatica*, canon law, and the relationship between these different forms of learning and language use within them. The evidence for this type of learning can give hints as to how topics of education could both diverge and overlap with a complexity parallel to that shown in the previous chapter. This will include suggesting that much Icelandic clerical education was bi-lingual and multi-layered, with few certainties but many possibilities in how Latin and Old Norse interacted within pedagogical contexts.

The first section will address the fundamental question of the significance and presence of Latin in Iceland society, to set up the larger discussion of linguistic dynamics in education and *grammatica*. Icelandic Latin use has often been marginalized or even dismissed, based on the fact that the surviving manuscript corpus is almost entirely vernacular. However, three factors can be added to existing arguments to show the relevance of Latin in Iceland: the importance of the Latin liturgy to Icelandic society, the extensive presence of Latin books in Icelandic booklists, and the importance of Latin for intellectual prestige and international communication.

From there the chapter will examine the evidence for different types of education and their use and social significance. A clear body of elementary topics was significant to the core duties of priests, and was likely the most widespread form of education. The liberal arts, the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, were important ideals, but apart from *grammatica* there is little evidence for their relevance to actual educational practice, which centred around skills important to clerical careers. Elementary learning contributed to the learning of *grammatica*, and *grammatica* in turn contributed to the learning of advanced topics like canon law and

theology. Breaking down the levels of education in turn affects how the idea of literacy – the most immediate and basic effect of education – is examined and understood, both the relationship between levels of literacy, and the difficulty in making any assumptions about the extent of medieval Icelandic literacy. Given that most topics of education were learned using some combination of Latin and ON, the final section of this chapter will examine one possible way in which technical terminology can be used to show the use of ON in learning the Latin language. By examining the ON sources in the wider discussion of the history of medieval educational and reading practices, potential parallels and models can be better understood.

The focus in this chapter, as of the dissertation as a whole, will be on the complexity and plurality of Icelandic educational practices and their relationship to *grammatica* as a discipline. The importance of this argument can be understood in light of sometimes dismissive attitudes of previous scholars, such as Halldór Hermannsson's generalization of education practices in 1932:

All these schools were, of course, modelled upon foreign schools, where the usual subjects of quadrivium and trivium, the seven liberal arts, were taught. There is no reason to believe that Icelandic history, literature, or language formed a regular part of the curriculum. If the pupils received any instruction in those subjects, it must have taken place outside the schoolroom, and been of a more informal character.²⁸⁵

The assumption of the centrality of the seven liberal arts, the existence and nature of a regular curriculum, and the separation of informal vernacular topics from a classroom setting, must all be questioned. As the previous chapter argued, educational contexts could be fluid and overlapping, and forms of learning were more likely to be divided based on their use and function, rather than their relationship to wider medieval educational practices, which could

²⁸⁵ Halldór Hermannsson 1932, 30. Stephanie Würth has much more recently repeated this argument, translating this passage almost word-for-word (Würth 1998, 197-8).

themselves be quite flexible and informal. More purely vernacular and secular topics will be examined in the next chapter, but here the complexity and linguistic interaction within Latin, bilingual, and clerical learning can be shown.

2.1 The Significance of Latin

Latin was an essential language in Iceland, as in the rest of Europe. However, so little Latin writing survives in Iceland, primarily liturgical fragments, that a surface glance at the evidence has led some scholars to believe that Old Norse had largely replaced it.²⁸⁶ However one must keep in mind that the extant manuscripts are largely collections obtained by early modern antiquarians, who often had very specific cultural interests in mind. Conditions were not always ideal for preservation, particularly of Latin liturgical and theological books after the Reformation, and there are historical mentions of fires destroying major libraries that must have substantially reduced the extant corpus of texts, both Latin and vernacular.²⁸⁷ Likewise, while Old Norse was certainly a scholarly language that at least sometimes fulfilled the same functions as Latin, the existence of vernacular translations of major Latin texts does not mean that the Latin version was replaced, but only that its subject matter had spread into vernacular discourse.

²⁸⁶ “Latin passed, it would seem, like a meteor across the Icelandic sky; it was never an end in itself but a mere vehicle for acquiring new knowledge and achieving the written mastery of the local language” (Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 310-11); “We know Icelanders wrote some history and hagiography in Latin but they must have found they had little use for it . . . the learned literature was the work of men who obviously read Latin but thought and wrote in Icelandic” (Foote 1984, 251). Some comments have been more moderate or implicit, but still tended to be dismissive towards Icelandic Latinity: “While the monasteries produced a number of preeminent Latinists, those fluent in the language were never numerous enough to support a Latin culture” (Cormack 1994, 9); “In order to educate the clergy themselves, schools were set up and the rudiments of a Christian education were taught. For this to take place in Iceland and in Norway, many Latin texts had to be translated into the vernacular languages” (Clunies Ross 2005, 119). Gunnar Harðarson has recently speculated that there was a general Latinity among the Norwegians of the thirteenth century, but a contrasting vernacularity among the Icelanders (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 43).

²⁸⁷ The annals mention a burning of Haukadalr in the fourteenth century (Storm, ed., 1888, 408). *Jóns saga helga* has the first church at Hólar burning at the beginning of Jón’s bishopric, along with everything inside the church (Foote, ed., 2003, 16, 82). *Lárentius saga* mentions a burning of Skálholt in 1309 (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 304), which is also noted in the annals, which say specifically that many books were lost in the fire (Storm, ed., 1888, 391, 487). For a general discussion of the destruction of, and disinterest in, liturgical and Latin manuscripts, including Árni Magnússon’s own admission that he destroyed them for binding materials, see Gjerløw, ed., 1980, 2-8.

While Gottskálk Jensson has pointed out that even our limited knowledge of lost Latin works composed in Iceland suggests a fairly respectable corpus,²⁸⁸ the use of Latin texts composed elsewhere cannot be discounted in assessing the importance of the language. The vernacular translations of Latin texts and the simple necessity of performing a Latin liturgy both offer some evidence for this use. The booklists surviving in the church charters, the *máldagar*, shows the extent of the sheer quantity of written Latin present in Iceland, something which has been neglected by scholars. Numerous miscellaneous *máldagar* survive, usually with only brief references to liturgical books, or even just the stated value of the books at a given church. However, from the fourteenth century onwards more detailed lists survive, many of them collected into large *máldagabækur*,²⁸⁹ and it has been suggested that these Icelandic lists are unique among the medieval documentary corpus, and thus should certainly be examined.²⁹⁰

The general significance of the liturgy overlapped with and contributed to Latin's role in clerical identity. The language had both pragmatic and prestige value, and *Lárentius saga* and *Jóns saga helga* both suggest the extent to which Latin defined the clergy in medieval Iceland. This is not to say that there were no laypeople literate in Latin, but rather that its social and cultural significance was primarily in clerical contexts.

2.1.1 Liturgy, Booklists, and the Missing Latin Corpus

The importance of the liturgy to the position and use of Latin in Icelandic society, and to education, cannot be overstated. While certain aspects of preaching, particularly sermons,

²⁸⁸ Gottskálk Jensson 2004; see also Cormack 1994, 31-2. Gottskálk has also argued for viewing Latin writing of *formaldarsögur* as a necessary precondition for the development of the genre in the vernacular (Gottskálk Jensson 2009).

²⁸⁹ The major booklists and their contents are discussed in Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 29-32. The only full book-length study on the larger corpus of medieval Icelandic booklists is Olmer 1902, but Tryggvi Oleson also wrote a series of articles dealing with the booklists and other records of book ownership in Iceland. See Oleson 1957(a), 1957(b), 1959, 1960, and 1961. Oleson found the work of Olmer and other earlier scholars on the lists introductory and inadequate (Oleson 1957(a), 502, note 2). Significantly more work remains to be done on analyzing the contents of these lists, the distribution of books, and the relationship between libraries and other aspects of church property and function.

²⁹⁰ Oleson 1957(a), 502.

could often be based in the vernacular, the Mass and the Divine Office as a whole were Latin services, and there is no evidence of a lack of normal liturgical Latin.²⁹¹ Medieval Icelanders who regularly attended services would thus have heard Latin spoken and sung aloud on at least a weekly basis. The fundamental social and cultural importance of the Mass in particular would have made the use of Latin as both a spoken and a written language a foundation of the education of any type of cleric, whether the poorest sub-deacon or the wealthiest elite priest.

Prescriptions regarding the liturgical functions of priests can emphasize the social significance of Latin liturgical performance from the earliest available sources. A *máldagi* for Stafaholt, thought to originally date from around 1140, prescribes that in addition to three priests, there must be a deacon available to perform Matins; another of the earliest *máldagar*, from Húsafell around 1170, gives a prescription for the full year of services, focusing on the Mass but again noting that Matins should be sung every feast day.²⁹² Similar prescriptions continue from the 1170s through the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, mentioning most often Mass and Matins, but also sometimes Vespers and additional *vigilia*;²⁹³ within the variations between individual churches, presumably the full Divine Office was only performed at the cathedrals and monasteries.²⁹⁴ More specific prescriptions about the context

²⁹¹ All of the fragments in Gjerløw's *Liturgica Islandica* which would be performed as part of Mass or the Divine office are, as expected, in Latin. There is no evidence from the prescriptions of bishops or archbishops of a controversy over the use of the vernacular in unorthodox ways in the liturgy. While biblical translations like the ON text *Stjórn*, a translation of the historical books of the Old Testament, were often made, particularly for royal patrons, it has been argued that such texts were not widely used, and not in education. In sermons and other accepted categories of vernacular liturgical texts care was taken to rewrite biblical material into the authors' own words (Deanesly 1920, 20-21). This is important in relation to the ubiquity of Latin in the Mass and Divine Office. For example, when king Vratislaus of Bohemia wrote a letter to pope Gregory VII asking for permission for his monks to perform the Divine Office in Slavonic, Gregory replied in 1079 rejecting the request, on the basis that holy scripture should not be made readable by unlearned people, i.e. those ignorant of Latin (Deanesly 1920, 23-4).

²⁹² *DI I*, 178-80, 217-18.

²⁹³ For examples over the full course of the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, see the *máldagar* of Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallson from c. 1179-1185 (*DI I*, 249-79), one of Bishop Páll Jónsson from 1211 (*DI I*, 269-72), those of bishop Magnús Gizurarson from c. 1224 (*DI I*, 401-23), Bishop Árni Þorláksson in the later thirteenth century (*DI II*, 64-66, 257-61), the 1318 *máldagabók* of the Hólar diocese (*DI II* 423-89), the 1397 *máldagabók* from the Skálholt diocese (*DI IV* 27-240), and the 1461 *máldagabók* of the Hólar diocese (*DI V*, 233-314).

²⁹⁴ While there is no room here for a thorough search for evidence for the more extensive liturgies at Icelandic monasteries and cathedrals, a 1226 *máldagi* for Viðey offers an example of a more extended prescription: “þar skvly vera þrjú messu songs men hit fæsta. diaknar. ij. oc kanokar sem til verða. messu songr oc tíða holld oc lysing epter því sem regla byðr oc allt kirkiv halld epter því sem abote vill at se” (*DI I*, 489-90) (*There shall be*

of Latin liturgical performances, intended for the full dioceses, were made by Bishop Magnús Gizurarson in 1224, Bishop Jón Sigurðarson in 1345, and Bishop Jón Stephánson in 1464.²⁹⁵ Further liturgical prescriptions are written into *Grágás*.²⁹⁶ While there is variation among these prescriptions, and a more in-depth study could reveal very interesting patterns and relationships, for the purposes here they provide evidence for the continuity of the effect and importance of Latin liturgy in medieval Iceland.

While this evidence is entirely prescriptive, the sheer quantity of liturgical and Latin books present in Icelandic churches suggests that the prescriptions were at least partly followed. The expense and difficulty in making or importing such books strongly suggests that they must have been read and used, though of course some books could be used primarily for display or symbolic value, particularly in wealthier churches and bishoprics. The booklists, however, are also not entirely unproblematic sources. They do not appear in all *máldagar*, the reasons for their being included are not explicit, and the functions of the lists themselves may have varied. The earliest inclusion of books in *máldagar* are those of Bishop Þorlákr Þórhallsson from 1179-1181. They are extremely short, usually only a few liturgical texts or Psalters mentioned, suggesting that for the eleventh and twelfth centuries either very few books existed in churches outside of cathedrals, monasteries, and private collections, or else the lists are very incomplete.

At the very least it seems certain that the collections of books owned by most churches steadily increased over time, when the evidence is considered for the importance of personal collections of books for priests. The 1096 tithe law notes that priests in particular do not have to pay tithe on books which they own, and the contexts suggest that primarily liturgical books are being referenced.²⁹⁷ The educational passage of *Grágás* stipulates that the

three clerics reading mass at the fewest, two deacons, and the canons who are there. Mass-singing and the performance of divine service and lighting according to that which the Rule commands, and all the upkeep of the church according to that which the abbot wishes to be).

²⁹⁵ *DI I*, 423-37; *DI II*, 789-94; *DI V*, 413-15.

²⁹⁶ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol I, 21.

²⁹⁷ “Þat fe þarf eigi til tiundar at telia er aðr er til guðs þacka laget. hvárz þar er til kirkna laget eða til brúa eða til sælo scipa hvarz þat fe er i lqndom eða i lausom áurom. Prestar þvrfo oc eigi at tiunda þat fe er þeir eigo I bçcom oc í messo klæðom oc þat allt er þeir hafa til guðs þionosto. tiunda sculo þeir annat fe” (*DI I*, 77) (*That property does not need to be counted for the tithe which already is given to please God, whether it is given to churches or to bridges or to ferry-boats, whether that property is in land or in loose money. Priests also do not*

patron of the student-priest should purchase books and vestments along with the education, suggesting the personal ownership of liturgical materials was expected; the discussion of the ranks of cleric in AM 238 XXIII fol. specifies what books different levels of clerics were expected to be given upon their ordination;²⁹⁸ as noted in the previous chapter, *Guðmundar saga góða* mentions the private collection of Ingimundr being passed on to Guðmundr, and there are a few other references to private book exchange in the saga;²⁹⁹ according to *Íslendinga saga*, in 1241 there was a division of property left by Hallveig, wife of Snorri Sturluson, between her two sons by his first marriage and Snorri, including a division of her private book collection;³⁰⁰ several passages in *Lárentius saga* mention books owned by Lárentius, including canon law books seized while he was imprisoned in Norway, and his bequeathing of his full collection to Þingeyrar upon his death.³⁰¹ Most telling, however, are the extensive number of book donations from private individuals to churches, from both clerics and lay people, showing an active exchange of manuscripts and an extensive quantity of books under private ownership, particularly during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁰²

The more extensive lists from the 1318 *máldagabók* forward suggest the size of book collections in churches had increased significantly over the course of the thirteenth century. With the changes in the nature and extent of church property created by the establishment of the benefice-system in the late thirteenth century, it seems safe to assume that these larger collections are related. The evidence for private collections noted above suggests that they did not diminish, rather there were simply more books in Iceland as a whole, and above all Latin liturgical books. Tryggvi Oleson counted 733 books altogether in the 1318

need to pay tithe on that property which they possess in books and in vestments and all that which they have for divine service; they shall pay tithe on other property).

²⁹⁸ *Lectores* are to be given a *lesturbók*, presumably a book of *lectiones*; exorcists are to be given a *særingabók*, a book of exorcisms; deacons are to be given a Gospel book (Kolsrud, ed., 1952, 108-9).

²⁹⁹ At one point Guðmundr is given the gift of a book while is travelling (Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 112), and at another Guðmundr actually steals books from Möðruvellir (Stefán Karlsson, ed., 1983, 155).

³⁰⁰ Jón Jóhannesson et al., ed., 1946, Vol. I, 452.

³⁰¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 305, 439. There is a brief mention in the description of Bishop Guðmundr's death, only included in some manuscripts, that he had made all the arrangements for his death except for the distribution of his books among his fellow clerics, which suggests that libraries were not always passed on as single collections, but could be broken up (*Biskupa sögur*, Vol. I, 1858, 584-5).

³⁰² Oleson 1957(b) and Oleson 1961.

máldagabók, 689 of them being service books; for the 1394-99 *máldagabók* he counts 1095 books, 1008 of them being service books,³⁰³ the 1459-95 *máldagabók* shows 1104 books, 1062 of which were service books.³⁰⁴ The larger, wealthier churches show larger collections, which correlates roughly with the *máldagar* of some wealthier church prescribing a larger number of priests and deacons, and a greater frequency of liturgical performances. It is perhaps no surprise that Vellir in Svarfaðardalur, the church which Lárentius decreed should be the benefice of the *skólameistari* of Skálholt, continuously showed the largest number of books in these lists.³⁰⁵ These books were intended to be used, and it can be assumed that in the wealthier churches, as in the monasteries and cathedrals, more Latin was read and heard by both the clergy and the congregation.

The lists collected by Oleson show only the diocese of Hólar, and do not count books where the *máldagar* list only the value of the books owned by the church, or where they are incomplete and do not mention books. Neither do these lists include what were likely greater collections in the far larger diocese of Skálholt,³⁰⁶ nor the major libraries of the monasteries and the two cathedrals themselves. There are a handful of booklists which do, however, give some indication of the extent of monastic and cathedral libraries, though they are only from the very end of the fourteenth century and later.³⁰⁷ While the 1397 *máldagi* of Helgafell does not list the names of many books, it does state that in addition to some 24 named liturgical

³⁰³ Oleson 1959, 119-23.

³⁰⁴ Oleson 1960, 102-3.

³⁰⁵ Vellir lists 57 books in 1318 (Oleson 1957(a), 509), 68 in 1394, just ahead of Grenjaðarstaður at 53 and Múli at 57 (Oleson 1959, 116-17), and while the 1461 *máldagi* of Vellir names only 21 books, the phrasing suggests this may be in addition to the 68 from the previous list, which puts it even further ahead of the 54 at Grenjaðarstaður (Oleson 1960, 97).

³⁰⁶ Most of the collection of *máldagar* for Skálholt which survive are incomplete, and while 1397 *máldagar* of Bishop Vilchin are extensive, their booklists references a lost collection of *máldagar* made by the previous Bishop Mikael, and so not even a rough count can be made from them for the full diocese.

³⁰⁷ Hermann Pálsson suggests that a 1186 document giving the property of the Helgafell monastery at its foundation records that the monastery had a hundred books at this point (Hermann Pálsson 1967, 133; *DI* I 282). However, the phrasing is ambiguous, and it is possible that the hundred is referring only to the value of a very small number of books. There is a *máldagi* for Helgafell from 1378 (*DI* III, 329) and for Viðey in 1367 (*DI* III, 213) that only mention a small number of liturgical books, but these are lists almost certainly incomplete, and may be recording certain books kept outside the main library of the monasteries. Sverrir Tómasson has argued that both liturgical books and schoolbooks must have existed at Skálholt in the eleventh century for the bishopric to function (Sverrir Tómasson 2002, 793), but there is no way of knowing who owned such books, or how many there might have been.

books, the monastery had nearly 120 Latin books and 35 ON books, approximately 179 in total.³⁰⁸ Three other lists contain named books from before the sixteenth century. One for Hólar in 1396 contains several lists, and it is difficult to say how many there are in total; it says that 45 bound and 60 unbound books, along with uncountable fragments and loose leaves, were in the *fyrsta sacristia* ‘first vestry’, but then 37 more books were the books of the bishop, and a final collection stored in the *fataburi* ‘wardrobe’, which is divided into four sections – theological and liturgical books, law books, school books, and saga books – and totals 53 books.³⁰⁹ Thus the Hólar list could suggest nearly 200 primarily Latin books at the cathedral, though a portion of these seem to have been owned by the bishop. A list for Viðey in 1397 shows 75 books, of which perhaps 17 are Norse and the rest Latin; in addition, there is no indication of the usual large collections of liturgical books in the list, and Gjerløw has speculated that this might indicate these were kept in the church, separate from the main monastery library,³¹⁰ which would be supported by the division of books by where they are stored in the 1396 Hólar list. A list for the monastery of Möðruvellir divides liturgical, Latin, and Norse books, and totals 114 books, with the first 100 all being Latin.³¹¹

The 1525 *Sigurðar register*, which contains *máldagar* for Hólar, Munkaþverá, Þingeyrar, Möðruvellir, Reynistaðir as well as the benefices of the Hólar diocese, suggests that the number of books owned by churches might have diminished right before the Reformation.³¹² The Hólar list shows 79 books, many of which are different from the 1396 list. However, like the 1397 Viðey list, this appears to omit all or more of the liturgical books. The 1525 Hólar books are also noted as being stored specifically in the *timbrstofa* ‘timber-

³⁰⁸ *DI* IV, 170-71.

³⁰⁹ *DI* III, 611. Caution should be taken with all these book count, both my own and Oleson’s, as it is not always clear when the *máldagar* are speaking of individual separate codices or when they might be listing texts which are actually contained in a smaller number of codices, or even in loose unbound quires.

³¹⁰ Gjerløw, ed., 1980, 4, note 5.

³¹¹ *DI* V, 286-90. While all these counts are rough approximations, this list is particularly uncertain in its count, because the Latin texts are listed for the most part as if each text is a separate book, while the list of Norse books is explicit that a significant number of sagas are collected into each volume. While I have tried to follow the suggested distinctions between different collections, it is possible that there were several more than fourteen ON books in the Möðruvellir list.

³¹² Oleson counts the books for eight of the churches in the *Sigurðar register* and shows a general decline in the number of books from 1461 to 1525, but notes that the sample size is too small to be particularly confident in such a decline (Oleson 1960, 100).

hall', a location not mentioned in previous lists, which is potentially further evidence that it is not a complete survey of the books kept at, or owned by, the bishopric.³¹³

A 1542 list gives books which Bishop Gizurr Einarsson of Skálholt brought with him abroad from Iceland, and others which he obtained while abroad: it shows 47 books, around ten of which show some indication of being in the vernacular.³¹⁴ While this is post-Reformation and thus not fully applicable to the period of this study, it does give some scope to the potential size and composition of particularly wealthy private books collections, even if it must be assumed that earlier collections from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were probably much smaller.³¹⁵ There do not appear to be surviving records of the size of these earlier collections, but Tryggvi Oleson's survey of book donations show three fourteenth-century donations from laypeople of seven to eight books; the earliest reference he found is to a priest of Húsafell c. 1170 donating two books to the church there.³¹⁶

Taken as a whole, the prescriptive evidence of the liturgical references and the descriptive evidence of the booklists provide a solid basis for the argument that Latin was far more important to medieval Iceland on social, financial, cultural, and intellectual levels than the extant manuscript corpus would indicate. Liturgical prescriptions appear consistently in the *máldagar* and other documentary sources, as well as a reference in *Grágas*. The appearance of liturgical books in the *máldagar* from the 1170s onwards, alongside the evidence for private ownership of liturgical books from the 1096 tithe law onwards, suggests that these prescriptions were not empty. By the later fourteenth century, taking Oleson's numbers together with those of Hólar and the probable numbers of the monasteries, there were over 1500 books owned by churches in the northern diocese alone, the vast majority of which were Latin, and most of those were liturgical texts. If we take into consideration the diocese of Skálholt, it seems likely that at least twice this number were owned by Icelandic churches as a whole. While there were likely significantly fewer books in Iceland in the

³¹³ *DI IX* 298-9. The Möðruvellir list here from 1525 only has 77 books, but nothing seems to be listed besides liturgical texts, so it is almost certainly incomplete.

³¹⁴ *DI XI* 190-92.

³¹⁵ On the other hand, it is worth noting that this collection contains only the books which Gizurr travelled with, and his whole collection may have been much larger.

³¹⁶ Oleson 1961, 92-3; Oleson 1957(b), 10. As with his discussion books owned by the churches, for book donations Oleson draws references from the *Diplomatarium Islendicum*.

eleventh, twelfth, and early thirteenth centuries, there is no reason to assume that there were fewer Latin or liturgical books proportionately speaking, even if more of them might have been privately owned.

The liturgical use of Latin is particularly significant for the discussion of education and the role of Latin in education, because of its widespread and frequent use, and because of its distinctly oral and performative nature. Nearly everyone in Iceland would have regularly heard Latin in the performance of the Mass, on feast days and probably more often for those who lived near particularly wealthy churches. Many likely heard parts of the Divine Office as well, particularly Matins, for it to be so often prescribed. For clerics at monasteries, cathedrals, and wealthier churches where services were performed more often, this would mean that some Icelanders, particularly the clerical elite, would have heard and spoken or sung Latin on a daily basis. As performing the liturgy was one of the core duties of the priesthood, this means that being able to pronounce and sing Latin was in many ways a more fundamental, elementary skill for clerics than being able to understand or interpret it, and thus that more advanced language skills – such as formal *grammatica* – would be approached with Latin already established in the student’s mind as a spoken language. Liturgical education and performance thus provides a context wherein Latin was important to a very wide spectrum of Icelanders in general, and students in particular, and also demonstrates that Latin was far from being a strictly written language.

There are far too many references to the performance of the liturgy in the *biskupasögur* and other narrative sources to even attempt account or interpret all of them here. As a corpus, the narrative sources which mention liturgical performance further ground the centrality of the liturgy, and thus Latin, to Icelandic clerical culture, and so its presence as performance, sound, and social activity to Icelandic culture more broadly. One particular reference in *Lárentius saga*, however, is an important reference to the fundamental importance of the liturgy to priests’ careers, and provides a significant counter-perspective to St. Þorlákr’s forgiving attitude towards undereducated priests. Upon his return from Norway, while in the service of the archbishop, Lárentius checks the abilities of priests in the Southern and Western Quarters, testing them on their singing and reading of Mass, and, finding them

incompetent, banned them from singing Mass.³¹⁷ As discussed in the first chapter, priests could be paid based on individual performances, and so livelihood could potentially be based on their Latin ability.

This liturgical Latinity is also not isolated from other types of learning or performance. On the one hand, sermons and homilies could often be in the vernacular and read out alongside the Latin parts of the liturgy. By far the most frequent type of vernacular text in the booklists are saints' lives, which could themselves serve as sermons, particularly on particular saints' own feast days, and would be a major source of religious knowledge for most Icelanders.³¹⁸ All church-going Icelanders would regularly be hearing their native tongue alongside Latin, and priests would be using the languages together. On the other hand, liturgical Latin use for the Mass and Divine Office is not the only type evidenced in the books lists. There is a significant amount of Latin theological and legal material, as well as some schoolbooks, and the lists suggest that homilies and sermons were read in Latin as well as in ON.³¹⁹ Here vernacular texts and translations did not replace Latin ones, rather they could be used together, juxtaposed in any context where both the authority of Latinity and the comprehensibility of ON had value.³²⁰

The liturgy is also a key point of interaction between learned Latin culture and the wider community. The 1345 prescriptions of Bishop Jón Sigurðarson emphasized this communal aspect of Latin reading, and the dialogical nature of the Mass, commanding that no priest should sing Mass unless there are at least two people in attendance and at least one of them knows how to reply to priests in the performance of the Mass.³²¹ This interaction includes aspects of grammatical discourse, exegesis, and ideology. The *Icelandic Homily Book*, for example, records a very complex allegorical of musical modes at the beginning of

³¹⁷ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 275.

³¹⁸ Cormack 1994, 31-3.

³¹⁹ For example, the 1394-99 *máldagabók* notes some sixteen books which are identified specifically as books of sermons or homilies, and some if not most of which were probably in Latin; most certain is the instance of a church explicitly noting that it has a copy of *Nicholas saga* in Norse as well as one in Latin (Oleson 1959, 114).

³²⁰ Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2005 is an excellent example of the work that has been done on the vernacular aspects of preaching and liturgy, but it remains that there is tendency to view this vernacular material in isolation from the necessary Latin parts of the liturgy.

³²¹ *DI* II, 792.

the manuscript.³²² While it is not certain that this text was ever used in actual performed homilies, it does present the possibility that the liturgy could be a context for aspects of grammatical ideology and learning to be more widely disseminated, and to intersect in very complex ways with different aspects of Icelandic culture.³²³ In a very recent article on the *Messuskýringar*, the Old Norse *expositions missae*, Hareide has called attention to this fact that the Mass provided a key link between the intellectual, Latin culture of the clergy and the popular culture of the wider Christian community.³²⁴ Even those with almost no knowledge of Latin, perhaps only a handful of words picked up from attending the Mass, experienced and learned something from the culture of liturgical Latinity.³²⁵

2.1.2 Elite Latinity: Teaching, Communication, and Personal Devotion

The evidence of the liturgy and the booklists show how widely Latin could be used and heard in Icelandic society. To an even greater extent, however, Latin could be significant to highly learned individuals and elite groups. The most widespread use of Latin may have been the liturgy, but it was not the only use: literature, law, non-liturgical rhetorical performance, and administrative writing all could involve the use of Latin in certain contexts. Furthermore, liturgical Latin should not be treated as purely pedestrian and formulaic: it too could be a source and target of prestige. For those Icelanders with the interest and ability to obtain a thorough education in *grammatica*, skill and fluency with Latin could have several benefits beyond the basic performance of clerical duties. The complex nature of this benefit could depend on many contextual and individual factors, but some general categories through

³²² For the transcribed text, see Van Weenen, ed., 1993. For a translation and discussion of the passage, see Marchand 1975.

³²³ This is also suggested by the complex symbolism and allegory of the *Kirkjudagsmál*, the so-called Stave Church Homily, which survives among other places in both the *Icelandic Homily Book* and an even earlier fragment (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 52-4).

³²⁴ “Considered from this wider theological angle, the Old Norse expositions of Mass do not contribute to the making of an intellectual culture in Old Norse society merely through vernacular translations. More importantly, the expositions bear witness to the interrelatedness of intellectual and popular culture through the common ritual of the holy Latin Mass – with all its possible interpretations and levels of participations and translation” (Hareide, 2016, 368).

³²⁵ Hareide also has emphasized the pedagogics of the liturgy, and has critiqued some earlier scholars for a lack of appreciation of what common people could learn from the Latin liturgy (Hareide 2016, 367).

which the higher level use of Latin can be characterized: communication and rhetorical performance, teaching and education, personal devotion, and literary production. This list is not meant to be exhaustive nor exclusive; liturgical Latinity, for example, can overlap with all four categories. This division is rather only presented as a point of argument for the diverse and complex types of significance Latin could have in medieval Iceland.

The main narrative evidence for elite Latinity is *Lárentius saga*. The references to the use of Latin in *Lárentius saga* are so distinctive that they give the impression that Latinity became much more important in fourteenth-century Iceland, among the intellectual circle which produced the saga. This so-called Northern Icelandic Benedictine School will be discussed in the next chapter. For the moment it is only important to note that while the prestige value of Latin may have had particular importance to this group at this point in time, it cannot be exclusively relegated to such a narrow and late context.³²⁶ The discussion of Latinity in vernacular texts is limited, and it must always be understood that the missing Latin corpus prevents any full understanding of the significance and use of the language.

Jóns saga helga, moreover, is also particularly useful evidence for the connection between Latin in teaching, liturgy, personal devotion, and elite prestige and identity. As the saga was originally written by the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson in Latin around the end of the twelfth century, it offers a hint of how these ideas may have been expressed in a purely Latin discourse, and from the perspective of twelfth-century monastic culture. However, as the saga only survives in later translations, it is uncertain what aspects of it can be dated back to the origin of the text, and the saga as a whole should be taken as a product of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.³²⁷ Quotations and references here are to the S-recension

³²⁶ For an important recent example, Erika Sigurdson's conclusive remarks on the development of fourteenth-century clerical identity marginalizes somewhat the value of Latin to the elite in Iceland, not least by separating Latinity from Biblical knowledge and theology: "Over the course of the fourteenth century, these benefice holding clerics, together with the younger priests who aspired to this status, developed an elite clerical culture, one which excluded lower-status clerics as much as it did the laity. This culture was relentlessly learned, upholding to the point of fetishising aspects of Christian learning such as Latinity, knowledge of canon law, the legal process, and ecclesiastical administration. Unlike previous generations of Christian scholars, who valued elements of Christian learning such as Biblical knowledge of theology, fourteenth-century clerics valued the jargon and the processional apparatus of the law and of ecclesiastical bureaucracy" (Sigurdson 2016, 180).

³²⁷ With one exception which will be pointed out, however, all the passages relevant to this discussion appear to be fairly consistent between the three versions of the saga, with the extra rhetorical flourishes expected of the more Latinate L-recension, and there is no evidence that they do not go back in some form to the original Latin

of the saga, thought to be the earliest extant version, except where otherwise noted.

Jons saga's description of the teachers at the newly founded Hólar places Latin at the centre of both teaching and learning, and strongly emphasizes liturgy as a point of prestige. Gísli Finnason is said to be the wisest and most eloquent man of Gautland, and the saga places particular emphasis on the fact that when reading and preaching he trusted to books, not to his own memory, which suggests a fundamentally grammatical approach to textual authority.³²⁸ As the schoolmaster it would have been Gísli's responsibility to teach *grammatica*, showing how the teaching of Latin is the most important role for an educator to take in the school. In the S-recension, his assistant Rikini teaches song and verse-making, which, whether or not Rikini existed or taught, suggests a conceptual connection between teaching priests to perform the liturgy and teaching them grammatical skills like poetics.³²⁹

The presentation of these teachers and their skills as prestigious and important to the saga's glorification of Bishop Jón is tied to the presentation of Hólar itself as a centre of learning which impacts its community. These elite clerics are described in hyperbolic rhetoric, Hólar as an ideal bishopric, yet by means of its perfection it is effective at spreading knowledge and Latin learning to unlearned, even non-clerical Icelanders. The bishopric during Jón's time is described as being in perfect harmony, without conflict, and as a part of that all the older clerics are said to teach the younger, and the younger to spend their time writing when not otherwise learning.³³⁰ All three versions of the saga suggest that just being in contact with this situation could spread knowledge of Latin and grammatical learning, as in the passage on Þóroddr Gamlason building the new cathedral:

hann valði þann mann til kirkivgiorðarinnar er þaa þotti einhver hagra
vera. saa het Þorodr ok var bæði at hinn helgi Ion sparði eigi at reiða honvm
kavpit mikit ok gott enda leysti hann ok sina syslv vel ok goðmannliga. þat er
sagtt fra þessvm manni at hann var sva næmr þaa er hann var J smiðinni. þaa

text.

³²⁸ Foote, ed., 2003, 17.

³²⁹ Foote, ed., 2003, 21.

³³⁰ Foote, ed., 2003, 21.

heyrði hann til er prestlingvǫm var kennd iðrot sv er gramatica heitir. En sva loddí honvǫm þat vel í eyrvǫm af mcklem næmleik ok athvga at hann giorðizt enn mesti iðrotta maðr í þesskonar nami.³³¹

He chose for the building of the church that man who was thought at that time to be one of the most skillful, he who was called Þóroddr, and it happened both that the holy Jón did not withhold from paying him a large and good fee, and that he did his work well and like a good man. It is said about this man that he was so quick in learning that when he was at work, he listened to that skill which the students were being taught, that which is called grammatica. And it stuck in his ears so well from great quickness in learning and attention, that he became the most skilled man in this type of art.

This story clearly has a legendary, hyperbolic quality in its hagiographic context, and should not be taken as indicative of any actual learning practices. However, the nature of this hyperbole is fundamentally important: not only is Þóroddr presented as a man of amazing ability, *grammatica* itself is presented as something of great value, something that would be worthwhile for even an architect with no interest in a clerical career to learn. It is taken for granted that Þóroddr would both to listen to the students and teachers at work. Latinity here has an intrinsic value, unrelated to use or context, which suggests its value to the prestige of the bishopric, as well as to the personal devotion of Þóroddr himself. Latinity and *grammatica* are here also purely oral skills, which Þóroddr gains simply by overhearing, and thus are presented as fundamentally related to the liturgy and its role in spreading Christian knowledge and personal devotion to society. The extent and universality of this prestige is highly propagandistic, however, and the value of Latin education must also be considered in light of its context and the intended use of the language.

This relationship between personal religious devotion and the free spread of Latinity and *grammatica* is expanded by the character of Ingunn included in the L-recension of *Jóns*

³³¹ Foote, ed., 2003, 17.

saga:

þar var ok i fræði næmi hreinferdug iungfru er Ingun het. Ongum þessum var hon lægri i sogðum boklistum. kendi hon morgum gramaticam ok fræddi huern er nema uillði. Vrðu þui marger ual menntir undir hennar hendi. hon retti miok látinu bækr sua at hon lét lesa fyrir ser enn hon siaalf saumaðe Tefldi. eða vann adrar hannyrðir meðr heilagra manna sogum kynnandi monnum guðs dyrd. eigi at eins meðr orðum munn naams. helldr ok meðr uerkum handanna.³³²

There was also a chaste young woman at study there who was named Ingunn. She was lesser than none in the afore-mentioned book-lore. She taught grammatica to many and educated everyone who wished to learn. Thus many became well educated under her hand. She held Latin books very highly, so she had them read before her while she sewed, played at chess, or laboured at other fine works, becoming acquainted with the glory of God by means of the sagas of holy men, not only with words of the mouth, but also with works of the hand.

Like Þóroddr, Ingunn represents the idealization of the free spread of Latin knowledge. She has no formal role at the bishopric, but is highly learned and a teacher to everyone who wished to learn. The extent of this idealization is deeply significant when the economics of education discussed in the previous chapter are taken into account: there is no evidence for public schools in medieval Iceland, and education particularly at the bishoprics must have been quite expensive. As noted in the previous chapter, medieval students were often expected to help teach other students, and Ingunn may be related to this dynamic, but she is not actually identified as a student. Þóroddr's learning and Ingunn's teaching represent an ideal of Christian education emanating from Hólar, of learning that exists without financial or

³³² Foote, ed., 2003, 88.

social barriers, one that almost certainly never existed. Latin knowledge is also equated with personal devotion here. Ingunn learns of the lives of saints through Latin books, not vernacular ones, and thus her deliberate acquisition of Latin learning or *bóklíst* becomes a means of expressing religious devotion. In the context of the rhetorical and cultural value of the saga, this devotion can be seen as both a source of prestige and identity, both a general Icelandic clerical identity and a specifically historiographical identity for the diocese of Hólar.

In *Lárentius saga* the character of Lárentius himself embodies the values of elite Latinity, and does so in a diverse number of ways. Unlike Þóroddr and Ingunn in *Jóns saga*, here the discipline of *grammatica* is understood only implicitly: Lárentius's skills are in writing, reading, and reciting Latin texts, which lead to more advanced learning in canon law. Upon his ordination, he is noted as being particularly skillful in composing Latin verse, a skill which he appears to have gained through his practice as a teacher.³³³ This in turn becomes fundamentally useful when his skill in composing and reciting Latin verse allows him to obtain a position with the archbishop. Upon meeting the archbishop, this exchange occurs, which is one of the most telling narratives in the Icelandic corpus for the ideological value of Latin:

“Mikla þökk kunnum vér Jörundi byskupi fyrir þat er han sendi þik til vár. Skaltu vera Guði velkominn með oss, en kom til vár á morgin ok sýn oss letr þitt, ok ef þú kannt nokkot at dikta.”

Næsta dag eftir kom síra Laurentius til erkibyskups haldandi á einni rollu. Erkibyskupinn leit á ok lofaði letrit ok mælti: “Les fyrir oss þat er þú hefir diktat.” Hann las þar af vers er hann hafði gjört til frú Hallberu abbadísar at Stað.

“Er hon góð kona,” sagði erkibyskupinn, “er þú hefir svá lofat hana?”

³³³ Svá sem Laurentius hafði tvá vetr ok tuttugu var hann vígðr til prests af herra Jörundi byskupi. Helt hann þá skóla. Svá gjörðiz hann þá framr í klerkdómi at dikta ok vera at hann gjörði svá skjótt vers sem maðr talaði skjótast latínu (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 229) (*When Lárentius was twenty-two he was ordained a priest by lord Bishop Jörundr. He then ran the school. He became prominent in learning to compose verse, and it was that he composed verse as quickly as a man could speak the quickest Latin*).

“Þat halda menn satt á Íslandi,” sagði Laurentius.

“Legg af heðan af versagjörð,” sagði erkibyskupinn, “ok studera heldr í kirkjunnar lögum, eðr veiztu ei quod versificatura nihil falsa figura? Vita munu þér ok quod versificatura nihil est nisi maxima cura.”

Þá lét erikibyskupinn kalla Jón flæmingja ok mælti til hans: “Þenna mann, síra Laurentium, felum vér þér á hendi, bjóðandi at þú leggir alla stund á at kenna honum kirkjunnar lög, skulum vér þér þat góðu launa . . .”³³⁴

“We are much obliged to Bishop Jörundr that he has sent you to us. You shall be welcome by God with us, but come to us in the morning and show us your writing, and if you know something of composition.”

The next day after master Lárentius came to the archbishop, holding onto a scroll. The archbishop looked at it and praised the writing and said: “Read for us that which you have composed.” He read that from the verse which he had made for lady Hallbera, the abbess at Stað.

“Is she a good woman,” said the archbishop, “that you have praised her so?”

“Men hold that true in Iceland,” said Lárentius.

“Lay aside the verse-making henceforth,” said the archbishop, “and rather study church-law, or do you not grant quod versificatura nihil est nisi falsa figura (that verse-making is nothing but false figures)?”

“You may also know quod versificatura nihil est nisi maxima cura (that verse-making is nothing but the greatest care).”

The archbishop then had Jón the Fleming called and said to him: “We entrust this man, master Lárentius, to your hand, bidding that you spend all your time to teach to him church law, we shall reward you well for that . . .”

Here Latin is Lárentius’ entry into the service of the archbishop. His knowledge of

³³⁴ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 239-40.

grammatica is shown first by his technical ability to compose verse, and then by checking the moral quality of that verse as well, by asking after the character of the abbess, which at the same time implies that the archbishop is impressed by the quality of Lárentius' praise.³³⁵

The Latin aphorisms are ambiguous, but are absolutely key to the significance of this episode. It is possible, and it has generally been assumed to be the case, that the archbishop is speaking both lines. However, this episode is a test of Lárentius' Latin skill, his understanding of *grammatica*, which is required for him to enter into the more advanced study of canon law. It would thus be more fitting for the second line to be spoken by Lárentius, to show that he can speak in the same code, the same language and high register, as the archbishop, and thus match him on an intellectual level. On a surface level, it appears that the archbishop is denigrating poetry and poetics,³³⁶ but this makes little sense, as he asked for poetic composition from Lárentius in the first place. Rather, the aphorisms themselves are a test of linguistic understanding, and a call that it is time to move from an intermediate topic like Latin poetics into the advanced level of canon law, requiring even greater linguistic and intellectual ability. It is possible that there is even a certain amount of tongue-in-cheek irony intended here: the idea of poetics as *falsa figura* is a standard critique of complex, obfuscating forms of language, yet the archbishop says it by switching into Latin, by deliberately obfuscating his speech in a higher register.

Lárentius saga ties itself to earlier sagas in how it presents this narrative of higher learning and elite Latinity. First, Lárentius' teacher of canon law, Jón the Fleming, is presented as among the most learned men in Norway, limited only by his inability to speak Norse.³³⁷ Jón's excellent education and inability to speak Norse suggest the saga author

³³⁵ The type of poetry discussed in this passage is not entirely unsupported by the literary corpus, as a Latin panegyric for St. Þorlákr from the mid-fourteenth century is extant in AM 382 4to (Fahn and Gottskálf Jenson 2010). *Lárentius saga* seems particularly concerned with linguistic interactions, and in addition to the relationship between Latin and ON, there are several interesting passages involving the linguistic interaction between Low German and ON, see Hall 2013.

³³⁶ See for example Sigurdson 2016, 168.

³³⁷ Var þá kominn fyrir litlu klerkr einn mikill, Jón flæmingi, hafði lengi til París staðit til Orliens at studium. Var hann svá mikill juriste at enginn var þá í Nóregi hans líki; hafði ok erkibyskuðinn þar við at styðjaz sem hann var, því að allir mestháttar kórsbræðr vóru honum mótstaðligir . . . Mátti því Jón flæmingi miðr gagna erkibyskupi í deilum þeira kórsbræðra at hann kunni ekki norrænu at tala, ok skildi alþýðan ekki mál hans því at hann talai allt á latínu, fransisku eðr flæmsku (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 238-9). (*A little while before there came forth a great cleric, Jón the Fleming; he had stayed a long time at study in Paris and Orleans. He*

intends this to mimic an education abroad in France, where the famous bishops of older sagas like St. Jón and St. Þorlákr had studied. Oral communication in Latin is key, as Lárentius requires it to be able to learn law from Jón, just as those earlier Icelanders would have depended on their Latin to function abroad. Second, when Lárentius arrives in Norway, his Latin ability is tested: his patron Lord Pétr wishes to propose to a kinswoman of the king, and the king agrees to put his seal on a letter that Pétr presents to him. Pétr has Lárentius compose and write out the letter, and the king marvels at the skill of the letter.³³⁸ From here the king asks Lárentius to stay in his service, but Lárentius says that he must make a pilgrimage to Saint Óláfr in Níðaróss. The narrative here deliberately shows Lárentius presenting his clerical, Latin skills in the same formalized way as an Icelandic skald would present in one of the *konungasögur* or *Íslendingasögur*. As Erika Sigurdson has noted, the trope of the talented Icelfander abroad is here adapted for an elite cleric showing off his Latin abilities.³³⁹ As with that trope, and the characterization of teaching in *Jóns saga*, the presentation of Latinity in *Lárentius saga* is doubtlessly hyperbolic: at one point it is stated that Bishop Lárentius and Jón Halldórsson were the best Latinists Iceland could have had.³⁴⁰ Yet the very hyperbole here is evidence that, for the author and audience of *Lárentius saga* at least, Latinity could be as prestigious as any other skill.

Lárentius saga thus suggests that intellectual community that produced the saga had a

was such a great jurist that there were none in Norway of his like; the archbishop also had to lean upon him there where he was, because all the most distinguished canons were hostile to him . . . Jón the Fleming was less able to be of use to the archbishop in quarrels with the canons, because he could not speak Norse, and common people could not understand his speech, because he spoke entirely in Latin, French, or Flemish).

³³⁸ Þá kallaði herra Pétr Laurentium til sín, ok bað hann dikta ok skrifa þetta bréf á latínu sem hann kunni bezt. Síra Lafranz mæltiz undan; sagðiz ekki til færri þess, “en þó at ek sé lítt til færri at gjöra þetta, þá em ek þó,” sagði hann, “skyldugr at gjöra hvat þér vilið.” Næsta dag eftir sýndi hann herra Pétri bréfit skrifat ok diktat. Gekk herra Pétr þá til konungsins með bréfit ok sýndi honum; konungurinn lofaði mjök letr ok diktan bréfsins, eftir spyrjandi hverr gjört hefði. Hann svarar honum at íslenzkr prestr einn hafði gjört, hvern hann flutti af Íslandi. Konungurinn bað hann segja honum, prestinum, at hann væri í boði hans um daginn; gjörði ok Laurentius svá. (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 236-7) (*Then lord Pétr summoned Lárentius, and asked him to compose and write that letter in Latin, as best as he knew. master Lárentius declined; he said that he was not capable of this. “Yet though I am hardly able to do this,” he said, “still I am bound to do what you wish.” The next day after he showed to lord Pétr the letter, composed and written. Lord Pétr then went to the king with the letter and showed it to him; the king greatly praised the writing and composition of the letter, after asking who had made it. He answered him that an Icelandic priest had made it, who he brought from Iceland. The king asked him to tell the priest that he should be in his service during the day, and Lárentius did so).*

³³⁹ Sigurdson 2016, 166-7.

³⁴⁰ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 383.

particular conception of the value of elite Latinity, but the ideologies of *Lárentius saga* cannot be confined entirely to the fourteenth century. *Jóns saga* shows an elite conception of Latinity connected to a place, rather than an individual, and as a hagiographic work ties Latin more closely tied with liturgy and religion than *Lárentius saga*. These works are not unique, however: near the end of *Þorláks saga* Þorlákr's schedule of Latin prayers is described in great detail,³⁴¹ when Guðmundr is dying in *Guðmundar saga góða*, he sings, and has saints' lives read to him in Latin, in an act of personal devotion reminiscent of the reference to Ingunn;³⁴² this trope of reading Latin or having it read as a form of devotion, as well as entertainment, is used in *Lárentius saga* when Lárentius is dying.³⁴³ Fourteenth-century elite clerics were thus clearly aware of these earlier uses and conceptions of Latinity and made use of them; the L-recension of *Jóns saga helga*, where Ingunn appears, was produced in this era. In the mid-fourteenth century D-version of *Guðmundar saga* there is a discussion of a Latin letter Bishop Guðmundr had received from the pope, which Lárentius saw and read while he was in Níðaróss.³⁴⁴

Latin was absolutely vital to communication abroad, particularly among the elite clergy, and though it is a very late source this use is exemplified by the 1532 letter from Gizurr Einarson to Bishop Ögmundur of Skálholt, discussing Gizurr's education in Hamburg.³⁴⁵ Here Gizurr is writing to his patron with praise, thanks, and assurances that his education will justify the investment Ögmundur has made in his education. His description of the progress of his learning suggests that it is still very early in the process, that he can understand Latin speech, but he claims that he has not progressed to writing and reading practice. Yet he is writing the letter in Latin, presumably in an attempt to physically show his patron Ögmundur his Latin skill and the value of the bishop's investment in Gizurr's education.

The prestige value of a Latin education thus could intersect with the prestige of an

³⁴¹ Ásdís Egildóttir, ed., 2002, 75-8.

³⁴² *Biskupa Sögur* 1858, Vol I, 584.

³⁴³ Lárentius has the *Expositiones* of Gregory as well as Augustine read to him while he is dying (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 439);

³⁴⁴ *Biskupa Sögur* 1878, Vol II, 125. *Guðmundar saga* is also referenced in *Lárentius saga* (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 323-4).

³⁴⁵ Example 26 in Appendix 1.

education abroad, and this fits neatly with the presentation of Lárentius' own educational experience and the value of his Latinity. However, this dynamic was not restricted to the fourteenth century and later, as the conceptions of elite Latinity in *Lárentius saga* depended on continuity with earlier uses of the language, and while the hagiographic nature of *Jóns saga* presents Latinity in a different light from the more political narrative of *Lárentius saga*, the uses of Latin overlap and intermingle. The religious uses of liturgy and personal devotion are dependent on skillful teaching, and ecclesiastical culture as a whole made use of Latin as a tool of both oral and written communication. Prestige and ideological value are closely intermingled with practical value, and while the social and economic barriers to higher education meant that Latinity has a distinct value to the elite clergy, the conception of education in *Jóns saga helga* suggests that there remained an ideal that Latin should be available, and valuable, to all Icelanders.

2.2 A Bilingual Educational System: Elementary Education and Grammatica

Having established that Latin was an important language in Iceland in both the public and elite spheres, it remains to explore what topics were actually taught and learned which involved Latinity. This primarily pertains to clerical, rather than lay, education, but still involves an interaction between the use of Latin and the vernacular in education, and an interaction between elementary and more advanced learning. Bilingual clerical education thus involved complex interactions between many topics, both functional skills like reading, writing, singing, etc., and ideological or disciplinary concepts like *grammatica*, *rhetorica*, and the rest of the *septem artes liberales*. *Grammatica* in its purest sense was clearly thought of as the learning of Latin.³⁴⁶ All of these relationships must be kept in mind when trying to understand how education took place in medieval Iceland.

³⁴⁶ The only direct and explicit glossing of the term *grammatica* that appears to survive is in the L recension of *Jóns saga*, where the term *grammatica* is directly glossed as *latinulist*, 'the skill/art of Latin' (Foote, ed., 2003, 82).

The evidence for Iceland must be gathered piecemeal from *biskupasögur*, documentary sources, grammatical treatises and other pedagogical texts. For the most part this evidence is anecdotal, and as with the topics in chapter 1 can only suggest possible education practices, not general trends or developments. In order to suggest what was widely practised, and how different types of learning related to each other, it is important to compare the Icelandic evidence with better understood situations elsewhere in Europe. With that said, the Icelandic sources do suggest a clear conception of basic topics, necessary to the function of a clerical career, and more advanced types of learning which were primarily available at the bishoprics or abroad, and which were potentially more significant to elite clerics. While education could have ideological and prestige value, the function of an education must be continually kept in mind, particularly considering the cost and difficulty of formal learning, when speculating about which Icelanders would learn which topics.

2.2.1 Elementary Education: Alphabets and Music

All education has to begin with elementary topics, essential skills upon which more advanced forms of learning could be based. Determining what was elementary learning in medieval Iceland, and how it took place, is important for several reasons. It can show what forms of learning were most widespread, what sort of learning might have taken place in the home and potentially without cost, depending on the learning of the parents or other members of the household. These economic and social factors mean that elementary education can suggest what was learned by poor priests, most educated laypeople, failed students, and other members of society who did not have any need for the highest forms of learning. Finally, elementary learning can provide a glimpse into what partial literacy looked like, and what sort of functions it could have served.

The two most basic skills were the learning of the alphabet, leading eventually to basic reading, and the learning of *söngur* ‘song’, as the ability to sing was important for participating in the liturgy. As noted in the previous chapter, a reference in *Búalög* suggests that even the most basic learning of the alphabet could involve paying a fee to a particular

teacher, even after the Reformation, when educational reforms began to be felt. In medieval education letters were learned by pronouncing them aloud, which could be accompanied by several different types of tools: letters written on a wall, on a slate, or increasingly from the thirteenth century, a piece of parchment attached to a wooden tablet.³⁴⁷ There is one reference to such tools being used in *Lárentius saga*, where Lárentius' daily activities are being described, and it is noted that while studying he would make notes on a wax tablet, and then have a deacon transcribe them for him so that he could return to them.³⁴⁸ While not an explicitly pedagogical reference, it seems very likely that if such tablets were available to Lárentius, they would have also been teaching tools.

In late Anglo-Saxon England the teaching of the alphabet in a bilingual learned culture had meant that it was sometimes, but not always, written with additional characters, the thorn, eth, and wynn. An alphabet, in other words, could be written to prepare a student for reading Latin or for reading Old English.³⁴⁹ It is very unlikely to be coincidental then, that among the earliest missionaries – and thus teachers – in Iceland in the eleventh century were Anglo-Saxon, that the þorn, ‘þ’, and eth, ‘ð’, were both borrowed into ON use,³⁵⁰ and that the *IGT*, originally written in the middle of the twelfth century, presents English as the model for a distinctly Icelandic vernacular alphabet.³⁵¹ Alphabetical education in Iceland, then, seems almost certainly to have been based at least in part on an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon model, a model that will be discussed in more detail below. At the same time, like the Anglo-Saxons, the Icelanders must have also studied a pure Latin alphabet in certain educational contexts. The *IGT* is a highly complex and ideological text, as will be discussed further in the chapter 3, but as it is concerned with the use and learning of the alphabet, it is also relevant to the most basic level of learning. Ideologically it is part of an advanced grammatical discourse, but its subject matter reflects the elementary educational practices which contributed to its creation.

³⁴⁷ Orme 2006, 56-8.

³⁴⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 279.

³⁴⁹ Orme 2006, 55-6.

³⁵⁰ Additionally, as both Wills and Raschellà have noted, the *MG* gives the name *venð* for u/v, which may derive from the OE character *wynn* (Wills, ed., 2001, 124-5).

³⁵¹ Haugen, ed., 1972, 12-13.

The other two orthographic treatises, the *2GT* and the *MG*, are equally mixed in their relevance to advanced and elementary learning. As the tool of a capable teacher, either text could be used for elementary learning – conceivably the alphabet could be taught using any text as an aid – but both include more advanced grammatical thinking. Of the two, the *2GT* seems more clearly related to accompany specifically alphabetical learning, while the *MG* seems more orientated around developing students’ metalinguistic range, as will be discussed later in this chapter. After a prologue discussing sound on a more philosophical level, contextualizing the treatise in *grammatica*, the *2GT* shows the alphabet by means of two figures. The first figure is a segmented circle showing consonants, vowels, ligatures, as well as abbreviation marks. This is a much more thorough method of alphabetical learning than simple listing the core characters, and may be related to the tendency of Icelandic manuscripts to use an unusually high number of abbreviations. The figure may also be derived from Ramon Llull’s *Ars Demonstrativa*, which, as Wills has noted, argued for concepts of a universal grammar, which relates to the use of grammatical ideas to teach vernacular language.³⁵² After describing the letters and how they are used, the second figure is a rectangular grid describing an aspect of word and syllable construction, showing how each vowel can be pronounced before and after each consonant, and it appears to also show which consonants are only used word-initially and word-finally.³⁵³

This rectangular figure seems to be an elaboration of the basic idea of a syllabary as a pedagogical tool. While there does not appear to be any extensive scholarship on ancient or medieval syllabaries, Knirk has noted in the discussion of surviving Norwegian runic syllabaries:

The use of rows of simple syllables consisting of all possible and impossible combinations of consonants and vowels has been part of learning to read and write with alphabet scripts for as long as one has any information on the

³⁵² Wills, ed., 2001, 65-7.

³⁵³ See Raschellà, ed., 1982 for the full text, translation, and fully emendated illustrations of the two figures. It is also important to note that this discussion relates only to the *Codex Upsaliensis* version of the *2GT*, and what Raschellà presumes the original version must have looked like. The *Codex Wormianus* version does not include these two figures, and includes some additional interpolated text not in the *Codex Upsaliensis* version.

subject.³⁵⁴

Like the *IGT* and *MG*, the *2GT* is still a fairly in-depth and grammatical discussion of letters, and the *2GT* may not in fact have been actually used to teach students their first lessons in reading, but it still must have been influenced by the pedagogical environment of elementary learning.³⁵⁵ This includes the overlap between disciplines: the *2GT* makes several analogies to music, including comparing its rectangular figure to a hurdy-gurdy. This, combined with the fact that visual learning like the two figures was more common in musical than grammatical manuscripts, suggests that the treatise originally arose in an elementary context that taught both reading and song.

Musica in a formal, disciplinary sense was a part of the *quadrivium*, the most advanced levels of learning, but practical learning of song, usually expressed in ON sources as *söngr*, was as elementary as the alphabet, and was an important link to more advanced forms of learning. Functionally, singing the liturgy was related to forms of personal devotion like the memorization of prayers and Psalms, in that it could provide anyone who performed services regularly with a basic vocabulary of Latin, a memorized internal store, and a basic sense of the aural/oral shape of Latin words around which a more thorough grammatical education could be based.³⁵⁶ The very universality of listening to liturgical Latin as a part of attending church was a core Christian educational activity which all Icelanders could take part in,³⁵⁷ providing a basis for students to then more formally learn song.

Whether any of the laypeople attending church sang for any part of the service must remain uncertain, as there is little clear evidence to what extent Icelanders participated in congregational or choral singing, or even how often congregations gathered for services, rather than priests performing alone. The popular Latinity discussed above in section 2.1.1 would be lesser if there were in fact minimal congregations, but the evidence is unclear and

³⁵⁴ Knirk 1994 192-7.

³⁵⁵ While there is no space to discuss the differences here, the fact that the two extant versions of the *2GT* are fairly divergent, with the *Codex Wormianus* version lacking the two figures, could perhaps suppose the idea of the text being actively used in pedagogy, and thus being heavily adapted to suit particular teachers' needs.

³⁵⁶ Ruff 2012, 53.

³⁵⁷ For a full discussion of the liturgy as a major form of education, in the broader sense of the term, in the Middle Ages, see Vitz 2005.

more research is required in this area. As noted in the previous chapter, the description of Jón Loptsson's learning and singing ability in *Þorláks saga* B may indicate his performance as a deacon, but it may also suggest congregational singing. If there was some congregational singing, moreover, its Latinity is not entirely certain: in fifteenth-century Germany, for example, there is evidence for vernacular paraphrases and songs creeping into the Mass, and vernacular songs being sung before the sermon as early as the thirteenth century.³⁵⁸ The evidence for this, however, consists largely of complaints and prescriptions against such practices, which do not appear to exist for Iceland, even among extensive liturgical prescriptions.

In *Jóns saga helga* the role of Rikini suggests a teacher wholly devoted to teaching song, and the fact that he is a sort of assistant teacher, a *kapulanprestr* beneath the *skólameistari* Gísli, supports the idea of song as a very elementary form of learning. The oldest S-version of the saga says that he teaches *savng eða versagiorð*³⁵⁹ 'song or verse-making'. While *versagiorð* hints at the relationship between music and grammatical learning, as will be discussed later, here it seems very likely that it referring more to liturgy than to other types of poetics; the term *vers* is used in the liturgical prescriptions in the *Icelandic Homily Book* in a comparable way, to refer to liturgy which is sung.³⁶⁰ Nothing is said of Rikini's students, but as an oral practice, song had the potential to be taught at the most elementary level, while or before the students were learning the alphabet.

2.2.2 Elementary Learning: *Computus* and Calendrical Lore

As *musica* could be both an elementary topic and an advanced quadrivium topic, equally *computus* was a basic form of learning which paralleled mathematical quadrivium skills. The medieval *computus* referred specifically to the calendrical dating of Easter, but more generally it could refer to calendrical lore, and was closely related to the various

³⁵⁸ Herl 2004, 24-8.

³⁵⁹ Foote, ed., 2003, 21.

³⁶⁰ See for example Kolsrud, ed., 1952, 42-3, where the same text and usage of *vers* is also written in the fifteenth century AM 625 4to.

mathematical and astrological skills which related to calendrical learning. In Iceland, the manuscript evidence for *computus* is among the clearest evidence for bilingual learning, and for the teaching of calendrical lore alongside other topics. More study is needed on these manuscripts and their potential uses, but a brief survey here can suggest their significance to education and clerical intellectual culture.

A significant number of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Icelandic manuscripts survive containing computistical, astronomical/astrological, and mathematical texts, usually as part of very broad encyclopedic contents. A large amount of this material has been argued to come from three core treatises, though the ultimate dating of these original writings is uncertain.³⁶¹ Several of these texts contain both Latin and Old Norse passages, sometimes including quite extensive pieces of Latin: AM 194 8vo, for example, dated to c. 1387, contains an entirely Latin section on lunar prognostication which runs to five pages in the modern edition.³⁶² While such divination is not strictly the *computus*, something which would be involved with elementary learning, it does show the link between the field of learning and the use of Latin in bilingual contexts. In the fifteen-century portion of AM 625 4to, the follow passage explains the mixing of languages:

Enn af því ath boktali verdr ath taka rimtalet, enda verdr þar vid ath blanda islenzkre liodęrsku i sumum stodum, til þess ath her meghi skyrt verda olerdum monnum, þa skal sia skra þadan af nafn taka ok heita Blannða, fyri því ath saman er blandat skylldu tale ok oskylldu. Enn til marks hvar þeir þętter ero, er osynt er, ath sva se iafnt sem talit er, þa er giorth yfer uppi i þatta talino merkingh sia ÷, ok heiter hun obelus. Þa merkingh gerdu menn forðum þar yfer, er þeir efudu, hvort satt vęre sagth edr eigi.³⁶³

And because book-language (Latin) is needed to use the calendar, and yet one needs to blend in Icelandic idiom in some places, so that [what is] here might

³⁶¹ See the edited texts in Kålund and Beckman, eds., 1914-16.

³⁶² Kålund, ed., 1908, 84-9.

³⁶³ Kålund and Beckman, eds. 1914-16, 4.

be explained for unlearned men, therefore this manuscript shall take a name thence, and be called Blend, because necessary and unnecessary language is blended together. And for a sign of where those sections are, where it is uncertain, so that what is recorded might be always be thus, then there is marked above in the listing of sections that mark, ÷, and it is called obelus.³⁶⁴ Men made that sign thereupon in former days, when they doubted whether the truth might be said or not.

The passage describes a process of computistical learning which is entirely bilingual: Latin is the language of necessity, from which *computus* cannot be entirely separated, but those who are not literate in Latin must also learn the calendar, so the vernacular must also be used.³⁶⁵ The immediate discussion of the obelus and its use suggests the author's linguistic anxiety about the conveyance of truth, and it is possible that there is some uncertainty implied about the inherent ability of the vernacular to communicate truthfully. Why, it must be asked, is the calendar impossible to translate entirely? The decision to name the manuscript after its mixed linguistic make-up also suggests a certain level of uncertainty, though as already noted, this mixing of Latin and ON occurs elsewhere.

The unlearned men referred to here may be laypeople, or priests with insufficient Latin skills, or both. It is very likely that at least some members of religious communities did not know a significant amount of Latin. While generally the calculation of Easter was the domain of priests, it is worth noting two instances where calendrical learning seems to approach the domain of laypeople. In *Grágás* it is noted that at the close of the assembly at the Alþing, the lawspeaker is required to recite the calendar, as well as announce preparations for Ember Days and Lent.³⁶⁶ This suggests that knowledge of some calendrical lore could be

³⁶⁴ Isidore of Seville's comments in *Etymologiae* seem likely to have influenced this passage. Isidore states that "The *obolus*, that is, a horizontal stoke, is placed next to words or sentences repeated unnecessarily, or by places where some passage is marked as false . . . an *obolus* with a point above it is put next to those places, about which there is some doubt as to whether they ought to be taken out or kept" (Barney et al., trans., 2006, 50).

³⁶⁵ Discomfort with the vernacular juxtaposed with a need to use it in the *computus* has also been discussed in terms of Philippe de Thaon's early twelfth-century *Comput* (Damian-Grint 1999, 349).

³⁶⁶ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol I, 209. It must be noted that the term used in *Grágás* for calendar is *misseristal*, not *rím* or *rímtal*, the usual translation for *computus*. The relationship between different types of calendrical

important for lay leaders, for general administration.³⁶⁷ In this context, the passage of *Íslendingabók* which mentions the calculation of the length of the year, as well as its dating of the settlement of Iceland, take on new significance, as an intersection between *computus*, chronology, and historiography like *Íslendingabók*, which appears to be within the intellectual milieu of both elite clerics and laypeople.³⁶⁸

There is solid evidence for knowledge of the *computus* in Iceland in the twelfth century as well. The oldest fragment of an Icelandic manuscript, AM 732 a VII 4to, is a single leaf containing an Easter table, and is thought to date from the first half of the twelfth century. The oldest part of the manuscript GKS 1812 4to, dated to the end of the twelfth century, deals mostly with calendrical and astronomical material, primarily in the vernacular. More in-depth study is needed to determine to what extent any of the surviving computistical manuscripts represent pedagogical texts, or what types of pedagogical methods might have contributed to their formation. However, even from this survey, it is clear that the Icelandic treatment of *computus*, calendrical lore, and related material is key evidence for the bilingual dynamic of their educational practices.

2.2.3 Elementary to Intermediate: Basic Reading, *Grammatica*, and the Clerical Curriculum

Having learned the alphabet, a medieval student would practice pronouncing the letters aloud, connecting them into syllables, and finally forming them into whole Latin words, often using the Paternoster as an initial focus, before moving on to complete texts, of which the Psalms were among the most important. Singing intersected with reading here, as Psalms were sung rather than simply recited in church.³⁶⁹ At this level, liturgical books could be important to practice reading, serving the dual function of expanding a student's Latin

learning and lore, however, remains to be studied.

³⁶⁷ Gunnar Harðarson has recently made a similar point, that the *Grágás* passage suggests that religious and computational learning influenced the training of lawspeakers (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 41-2).

³⁶⁸ For a discussion of the mix of secular and ecclesiastical concerns in *Íslendingabók*, see Grønlie, trans., 2006, xiv-xxviii.

³⁶⁹ Orme 2006, 27.

knowledge and preparing them for clerical duties.³⁷⁰ According to one English commentator writing in about 1200, students would begin Donatus' *Ars minor* soon after learning the alphabet.³⁷¹ Medieval students would then tend to memorize the very short text of the *ars minor* in its entirety, well before they actually understood Latin, imprinting the metalinguistic terminology and analytical modes of *grammatica* on their minds at the most basic levels of learning.³⁷²

The significance of memorizing Latin Psalms in this multi-disciplinary field of elementary learning is emphasized in *Þorláks saga helga*, and the observation that Þorlákr studied the Psalter at home, notably before the breakup of his parents' household, so presumably when a stable household and resources meant some books were available to him.³⁷³ The interaction between *grammatica* and the various types of elementary learning could be complementary, inclusive, but also hierarchical. As Orme describes, with reference to England:

Reading and song were often considered to be part of grammar, since they centred on two of its elements: the letter and the syllable. In practice, however, grammar meant the study of Latin words and phrases. In this narrower sense it had more status than reading or song, because it was more difficult and required more sophisticated teaching . . . It was taught by full-time masters, more experienced and therefore more expensive than elementary teachers, and its schools attracted more support from patrons and

³⁷⁰ Up to the thirteenth century in England, Latin church-books most commonly used basic reading material after a student graduated from the tablet and the Paternoster, particularly the psalter, antiphonal, and hymnal (Orme 2006, 58).

³⁷¹ Orme 2006, 88.

³⁷² Ruff 2012, 53.

³⁷³ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 48. Áslaug Ommundsen has recently emphasized the importance of learning Psalms by heart in a Norwegian and Icelandic context, and particularly the largest number of Psalters surviving among Norwegian Latin manuscripts. Of 10-15 medieval Latin manuscripts surviving from Norway, five are Psalters, and fragments from some 75 additional Psalters also survive (Ommundsen 2016, 245-6). This provides some confirmation that of the idea that Iceland did not vary from general European model of using Psalms in education, and that even within its rhetorical praise of the saint *Þorláks saga* may not be entirely unrealistic here.

benefactors.³⁷⁴

It is important to emphasize both the relationship and the distinction between the basic levels of reading – learning the alphabet and how recognize words on a page – and the longer and more difficult process of actually learning Latin. While Orme’s discussion of a financial incentive cannot be uncritically applied to Iceland, it does invite speculation as to the potential relationship between education, prestige, and wealth. While the previous chapter emphasized that education could take place in any number of contexts, the pedagogical difficulties of a true grammatical education could have helped justify the expense of education described in the documents and *Grágás*. The difficulty in obtaining a complete mastery of Latin, while still obtaining enough skills to perform many clerical duties, also explains the undereducated clerics described in both *Þorláks saga* and *Lárentius saga*. The fact that so many clerics managed to obtain education and ordination while still being deficient in some skills supports the idea that while laypeople may have often been educated in the same environment as clerics – such as Þorlákr and Snorri Sturluson at Oddi – it is unlikely that it was normative to go through the trouble of teaching lay people Latin. As discussed in the previous section, as both a pragmatic and a prestige skill, Latin was primarily of concern in a clerical curriculum, but it was absolutely central to that curriculum.

There is some evidence for the most general outlines of what this curriculum might have looked like, which supports the idea of there having been a set of basic skills that are related to and culminate in *grammatica*.³⁷⁵ For a broader European perspective, it is worth noting the *Admonitio generalis* issued by Charlemagne in 789, which called for elementary schooling at every monastery and bishopric in the Frankish kingdom, which was to involve the teaching of psalms, *notas*, singing, computation, and grammar; *notas* could be understood here as any type of writing, musical notes or just normal characters.³⁷⁶ For Iceland there is a very similar set of skills mentioned in a 1504 document from the monastery of Skriða, which

³⁷⁴ Orme 2006, 66.

³⁷⁵ As Thompson and Perraud describe: “To prepare for the grammar course, they learned the shapes of letters, how to read the psalter and chant it (if they were choristers), and, finally, to write the letters” (Thompson and Perraud, trans., 1990, 5).

³⁷⁶ Grotans 2006, 71.

alone among Icelandic educational documents mentions specific skills to be learned. Here the prior at the monastery of Skriða promises to teach the son of Ásgautr until he is able to be ordained as a priest, and uniquely among the education agreements mentions topics: reading (*lés*), song (*söng*), writing (*skrif*), and *computus* (*rím*).³⁷⁷ This gives the impression of a particularly basic, pragmatic perspective: when, at the end of *Lárentius saga*, Lárentius is said to educate poor clerics in order to become successful priests, he is said to teach them the Psalter, song (*söng*), and Latin, focusing like *Jóns saga helga* on the dual ideal of grammatical and liturgical skills.³⁷⁸

A more deliberately communicated idea of a slightly more advanced set of clerical skills is given in the fifteen-century manuscript AM 238 XXIII fol.³⁷⁹ The manuscript describes the duties of all the levels of cleric, from the *ostianus* or doorkeeper to the pope himself, primarily focusing on their liturgical duties, but in the section on priests there is the best indication of education and grammatical ideals:

Prestur skal kunna tíða skípvn alla ok latínv suo at hann víte hvort hann kveðr kall mann eða konu. Prestur skal kvnna þýðing guðspialla suo at hann kunne þaðann af at kenningar ok omíli ur Gregorij. ok hann skall kunna misseris tal. Prestur skall kvnna at skilia skripta bok. ok barnskirn lík sauns ok olíum ok laga savngua. Prestur þýðízt ollðungr at voro male. firir þui hann skal suo vera at víte sínnu ok at skynseme.³⁸⁰

*The priest shall know the arrangement of all divine services, and know Latin so that he knows whether he is stating a man or a woman.*³⁸¹ *The priest shall know the translation of the Gospels so that he might know therefrom how to*

³⁷⁷ *DI VII* 714-15. See Appendix 1.

³⁷⁸ Gunnar Harðarson has recently made a similar note, that *Jóns saga helga* does describe a liberal arts curriculum, and compares the skills describes to Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian forms of learning (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 40).

³⁷⁹ This passage is also referenced in Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 22. Sverrir does not offer much interpretation of the passage, except to suggest that it fits with the liturgical prescriptions in *Grágás*.

³⁸⁰ Kolsrud, ed., 1952, 110.

³⁸¹ I.e. whether he is using the masculine or the feminine.

*understand the teachings and homilies of Gregory, and he shall know the reckoning of seasons. The priest shall know how to understand scriptural books and the baptism of children, funeral services and oils and the low-chant.*³⁸² *Priest translates to elder in our language, because he shall be thus in his intelligence and in his reason.*

While in this text lower levels of clergy are described as having reading duties, only with a full priest is there an explicit expectation of understanding and comprehension, emphasizing the different levels of literacy expected for different levels of cleric.³⁸³ The priest must know Latin well enough to distinguish grammatical gender, but the expectation is that he shall read translations to improve his understanding, not only of biblical materials, but also of patristic commentary. *Grammatica*, then, is here presented as fully bilingual, the vernacular used as a tool to better understand core Latin texts. This fits with the suggestion of some scholars that translation should be seen as a fundamental aspect of *grammatica*,³⁸⁴ as here translated texts seems to be a key component of interpretation, presumably because it is expected that a young priest's Latin skills would be too limited to fully understand difficult texts. That this grammatical learning is the provenance of the priest, rather than the deacon or sub-deacon, is emphasized by the explanation of the title *prestr* in a sort of translated etymology: a grammatical technique, thus, gives a linguistic foundation to the connection between priests and a bilingual understanding of *grammatica*.

The links between the elementary clerical skills and *grammatica* can also be seen in some texts, showing the cohesiveness of this core curriculum. As already mentioned, the discussion of language use and the obelus in AM 625 4to shows two related grammatical processes being applied to the text: a justification of language use and translation with a critical apparatus for judging the certainty and truthfulness of passages. A more tangible connection between *computus* and the language arts is borne out on a manuscript level by a

³⁸² The *canon* or *secreta*, the part of the liturgy sung during the elevation of the Host.

³⁸³ For the most part, levels of clergy lower than sub-deacon or Mass-deacon are almost never mentioned in the Icelandic. One cleric named Skæringr in *Íslendinga saga*, however, is mentioned in 1208 as being *acoluthus at vígslu* 'an acolyte in ordination' (Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, Vol. I, 246).

³⁸⁴ Grotans 2006, 26.

passage in GKS 1812 4to. Sandwiched between the computistical lore and a series of glosses is a single passage written entirely in Latin. This explains the term *vesper* ‘evening’ or ‘west’, including its declinations, and the differentiation between different words based on the term.³⁸⁵ That the discussion is in Latin and grammatical, but the subject matter is computistical, offers a tiny glimpse into how grammatical learning could provide commentary and interpretation for many other topics.³⁸⁶

Finally, in the expanded L-version of *Jóns saga helga*, a more thorough description of Rikini emphasizes the links between grammatical learning and song, with an interesting conclusive remark:

Enn einn franzeis sæmiligan prestmann er Rikini het Capalin sinn feck hann til at kenna. saunglist ok versgiorð. Rikini var klerkr godr bædi dictaði hann ual ok verssaði. ok sua glauggr uar hann I songlist ok minnigr at hann kunne utanbokar allann song aa tolf maanvðum bæði i dagtidum ok óttu songum meðr orugre tóna settning. ok hlioða grein. ok þi reðuzst margra godra manna born undir hond þessum tueim meistarum. sumir at nema latinu enn aðrir son, eða huaarheggia.³⁸⁷

And an honorable French priest, who was called Rikini, his chaplain, he obtained to teach the art of music and the making of verse. Rikini was a good cleric: he both composed Latin and made verse well, and he was so clever in the art of music and had such a good memory that he knew without a book all the songs of the twelve months, both in day-service and matins, with resolved arrangment of tone and distinction of sounds, and thus the children of many

³⁸⁵ Ludvig Larsson, ed., 1883, 41.

³⁸⁶ The miscellany AM 732 b 4to from c.1300-1325 is also notable, in that it preserves some of the only surviving examples of Latin and macaronic poetry in Iceland, alongside a significant amount of computistical and astronomical material, and as great number of illustrated figures. It includes a significant amount of Latin text, and is also an excellent example of bilingual learning, and the mixing of different material reflecting different pedagogical disciplines, though there is no way to know whether it was actually ever used as an educational text.

³⁸⁷ Foote, ed., 2003, 86.

good men were put under the hand of these two masters, some to learn Latin and others song, or both.

Within the characteristic florid style and hyperbole of the L-version, the grammatical category of *lectio* and one of its key applications is characterized: the correct speaking and pronunciation of Latin and its particular usefulness for the performance of the liturgy. This passage contextualizes the pragmatic aspect of the discussion of sound in grammatical treatises. In a pedagogical context, a student would thus ideally be learning aspects of *grammatica* through song, and vice versa, and thus would be contributing to the ideal Rikini is representing here. This characterization can be compared to the ideal of liturgical performance shown in St. Jón's performance at the Danish court.

Pronunciation and memorization also link song, *grammatica* and other pedagogical disciplines through the simple fact that medieval education was highly oral. Lárentius' own oral Latin skill has already been noted. In the passage of *Lárentius saga* which discussed Óláfr Hjaltason's teaching at Hólar, there is a very rare glimpse of the actual structure of education at the bishopric:

Lét hann jafnan, meðan hann var byskup, skóla halda merkiligan; kenndi ok mörgum bróðir Árni. Gengu til skóla jafnan fimmtán eður fleiri. Skyldu þeir sem lesa áttu hafa yfir um kveldit áður fyrir skólameistara ok taka hirting af honum ef þeir læsi eigi rétt eður syngi.³⁸⁸

While he was bishop, he always had a distinguished school kept; brother Árni also taught many. There were always fifteen or more attending the school. Those who would have to read were obliged to repeat it during the evening before, in front of the schoolmaster, and take punishment from him if they did not read or sing correctly.

³⁸⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 373.

Here reading and singing correctly are the two key aspects which the schoolmaster is checking for, and thus *grammatica* and song are juxtaposed, and the lesson paraphrases the end goal of liturgical performance. There is a comparable Norwegian document from 1327, an education agreement, wherein a student agrees to read to the canons at Niðaróss when they are at the table, as part of his obligations and education.³⁸⁹

Elementary learning thus intersects and overlaps with *grammatica*, but there is clearly an extensive amount of education involved before a student would actually gain the proficiency to understand, use, and interpret Latin with nuance and skill. *Grammatica* was essential for a priest to perform his vocation fully, but clearly some poor priests, and likely many more deacons and sub-deacons, managed to get by with a much more minimal education. While *grammatica* is generally understood as the most basic and elementary of the *septem artes liberales*, in the sources discussed so far it is a high goal, a prestige skill. Sometimes, as with the characterization of Ingunn in the L-recension of *Jóns saga*, *grammatica* and Latin reading is characterized as a superlative form of personal devotion. There is no doubt that, as a discipline, *grammatica* had a significant place in the medieval Icelandic worldview.

The other *artes*, and even the general concepts of *trivium* and *quadrivium*, are almost never mentioned in the Icelandic sources.³⁹⁰ In a pedagogical, practical sense, even Icelandic education targeted entirely towards priests should therefore not be understood as a simple adoption of one archaic and idealized educational model. There is little evidence that any understanding of a basic trivium education existed in Iceland, except in purely philosophical terms, nor that even *grammatica* in its traditional Latin sense had particular prestige value outside of clerical circles and clerical conceptions of identity.³⁹¹ There is an intriguing narrative of learning in *Mirmanns saga*, in which the main character learns the Latin alphabet, then *grammatica*, then other, higher disciplines. This, however, as a saga about

³⁸⁹ DN II, 137.

³⁹⁰ Björn Bandlien has argued that the association of what he calls a mathematician, Bjarni tolvísi, and an astronomer, Stjorni-Oddi, with Hólar indicates that the *quadrivium* was taught there (Bandlien 2016, 162). While these nicknames suggest the possibility of *quadrivium* learning, more would have to be known about these two men, their actual skills, and the question of whether they might have travelled about, to give any certainty to the idea.

³⁹¹ In contrast to the arguments of Würth 1998, 197.

Christianization should still be seen as reflective of clerical ideals, and more research is needed to speculate how the saga might reflect educational realities.³⁹² Latin was primarily of use within ecclesiastical culture, and the *IGT* shows that it did not take long for a purely vernacular model of reading education to develop, which could and almost certainly did allow laypeople to learning to read in the vernacular without the trouble of a full Latin education.

2.2.4 Grammatica, Booklists, and Advanced Learning

Having shown the links between *grammatica* and more elementary learning, other sources can be used to show the full complexity that could be involved in grammatical education and the links between it and more advanced topics. The extant booklists can be used alongside *Lárentius saga* and some other sources to give a sense of what characterized *grammatica* in a broader sense than has previously been discussed for Latin, as well as the uses of *grammatica* for more advanced types of Latin learning, above all canon law and the reading of Scripture. These sources are representative only of the fourteenth century and later, however, and some general trends in medieval pedagogical materials may suggest that earlier periods were different, at least in the type of books they used.

The longer booklists available for Hólar and several monasteries for the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth century are the only real indication of the sort of books used in Latin education in Iceland, and thus what it what might have involved. While different books, and probably a smaller number, were used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their absence is no basis for arguing that Latin education was not available in previous centuries; this would involve Iceland going in a completely opposite linguistic direction than the rest of Europe. As with the discussion of liturgical books earlier in this chapter, it is important to note here that these lists do not represent private collections, which were probably quite substantial, or the library of Skálholt, which may have contained even more books than

³⁹² Mírmann learns the Latin alphabet from his mother at the age of eight, then she gives him Latin books from which it is specifically noted that he learns *grammatica*, among other unnamed skills and then spends five more years studying Latin books, with no specifically named disciplines, with a master (Slay, ed., 1997, 3-4).

anywhere else. Even the surviving lists, however, evidence a more complex form of *grammatica* and education in Iceland than has hitherto been appreciated.

To proceed by location, the 1396 Hólar list has a section labelled *Iure* ‘law’, and a section labelled *skólabækur* ‘school-books’, both of which are relevant to present purposes. In the school-books, there are two copies of the *Doctrinalia*, the verse grammar of Alexander of Villa Dei written c. 1199, and one *Græcismus*, the verse grammar of Eberhard of Béthune, written c. 1212. Not only were these the basis of the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise* and potentially influenced on the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, but they were the most important and popular basic grammars of the thirteenth century, and representative of the rise and predominance of verse grammars in the late medieval west. They continued to be used and heavily commentated upon for some three hundred years until they were largely rejected by the humanists.³⁹³ These would have formed the backbone of Latin education in thirteenth- and fourteen-century Hólar. The identity of two other books is uncertain, *Proprietarius* and *Streptus iudicii*, but from their titles seem very likely to be legal texts. The final three *skólabækur* represent the more encyclopedic and lexicographic side of grammatical learning: Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, a *Brito* in two books, which must be the *Expositiones vocabulorum biblie* of William Brito, a dictionary of biblical terms written c. 1248-1267, and finally a *Hugvicio*, the *Derivationes* written by Hugutio in the late twelfth century. Hugutio was probably the most famous medieval lexicographer, though he taught in the law schools of Bologna and was also known for his juridical work.³⁹⁴

These last three works are fundamental for understanding the wider discipline of *grammatica*. Learning the Latin language was not simply a matter of gaining the basics of grammar and metalanguage from a text like the *Doctrinale*, or practising poetic composition and interpretation. It involved gaining a certain amount of proficiency with a diverse lexicon which could vary between texts. Isidore’s etymological encyclopedia represents one of the most foundational works of dealing with that problem, being largely intended to provide all the relevant information for a literal, historical reading of the Bible. Hugutio and Brito

³⁹³ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 573-76.

³⁹⁴ Weijers 1989, 142-5. Hugutio was one of three main dictionaries used in late medieval England, all of which were written in Italy (Orme 2006, 89).

represent two approaches to the simple problem of vocabulary: the *Derivationes* was an attempt at a vast, comprehensive reference work, while Brito's *Expositiones*, which itself used Hugutio as a source, took a focused approach and deals with rare and difficult biblical terms. While there is no vernacular adaptation or extant manuscript evidence for these works,³⁹⁵ their importance for late medieval Icelandic learning is unquestionable. In addition to those at Hólar, several other copies of these works are attested. Among the donations of Halldór Loptsson, an extremely wealthy priest, in 1403, were a copy of Hugutio and of Brito, left to Munkaþverá.³⁹⁶ A copy of Brito is listed among the books at Möðruvellir monastery in 1461.³⁹⁷ Another Hugutio is mentioned as being in the will of Sigurður Jónsson, another very wealthy priest of Hítardalur, in 1503, donated to the church at Hítardalur, with the proviso that it should be offered first to any of Sigurður's close kinsmen for whom it would be useful.³⁹⁸ This last reference in particular suggests that Latin grammatical books could be circulated among private collections, and were not only kept in monastery and episcopal libraries.

The 1461 Möðruvellir list does not identify school-books, but among its *latinubækr* – which are distinguished both from *norrænubækr* and simple *bækr*, with the latter referring to liturgical books – are several texts which could have pedagogical and grammatical use. In addition to the Brito, it notes the *Minus volumen* of Priscian, the commonly used title of the last two books of the *Institutiones*, dealing with syntax, and was less widely used than the rest of the text, the *Maius volumen*.³⁹⁹ Two texts of Isidore appear, the *Synonyma* and *De summo bono*, the former of which can be considered simultaneously a grammatical and a spiritual work.⁴⁰⁰ The entry titled *vita thobie*, while it may refer to the apocryphal *Book of Tobit*, has generally been thought to refer to the poem *Thobias* written by Matthew of Vendôme c. 1174-

³⁹⁵ Tryggvi Oleson and Guðbrandur Jónsson argued that these references to Brito match the Latin grammatical text in AM 203 4to (Oleson 1957b, 90; Guðbrandur Jónsson 1915-1929, 413). Jonna Louis-Jensen in 1979, however, argued that the text in AM 203 4to was another grammatical text, Johannes de Garlandia's *Tractatus de aequivocis*, and moreover that there is no evidence that that manuscript was ever actually in Iceland (Louis-Jensen 1979, 105).

³⁹⁶ *DI* III, 685.

³⁹⁷ *DI* V, 288.

³⁹⁸ *DI* VII, 472.

³⁹⁹ Percival 1987, 66.

⁴⁰⁰ Di Sciacca 2008, 17-20.

1206, a standard work for reading practice for students,⁴⁰¹ and can be compared to the *Tobias Glosatus* in the 1397 Viðey list and to an early fourteenth-century Norwegian booklist.⁴⁰² Taken in isolation, the Möðruvellir list is intriguing in that it contains grammatical and pedagogical works without any basic grammar, no copy of the *Doctrinale*, but does contain something as specialized as Priscian's *Minus volumen*. Many of the sixteenth-century booklists, including the one for Hólar, do not contain any schoolbooks, so it is certainly possible that this list is simply incomplete. However, it is also possible that Möðruvellir depended on certain pedagogical books in the private collections of particular teachers, or even that basic Latin grammar was taught primarily through example texts, with a minimum of reference materials. In a completely different way from the Hólar list, Möðruvellir in 1461 forces us to consider the different ways *grammatica* could be taught, when there was no standard curriculum or regimented oversight.

The 1397 Viðey list is in many ways the most complete one. It certainly gives the strongest impression of having an established body of basic reading materials for the students of the monastery. Among its *skólabækur* the grammatical textbooks are represented by the *Doctrinale* and the *Graecismus*, but the rest of the section appears to be basic reading materials: *Aurora* was an extremely popular collection of elegiac couplets dealing with biblical material, written by Peter Riga with additions from Aegidius of Paris between 1170 and 1200;⁴⁰³ *Alexander Magnus*, which could either be the twelfth-century Latin epic poem *Alexandreis* by Walter of Châtillon, or perhaps Quintus Curtius Rufus' first- or early second-century *Historia Alexandri Magni*;⁴⁰⁴ the already mentioned glossed *Thobias*, but also a glossed *Cato*, referring to the late antique wisdom poem the *Disticha Catonis*, by far the most popular and enduring pedagogical poem of the Middle Ages,⁴⁰⁵ and translated into ON verse

⁴⁰¹ Thomson and Perraud, trans., 1990, 237-45.

⁴⁰² See Foote 1984, 264-5.

⁴⁰³ Thomson and Perraud, trans., 1990, 269-72.

⁴⁰⁴ While the *Alexandreis* was a popular poem, and would fit with other twelfth-century pedagogical poems like *Tobias* and *Aurora* in the booklists, the *Historia Alexandri Magni* was included in the English schoolmaster Alexander Neckam's list of textbooks from the beginning of the thirteenth century (Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 537).

⁴⁰⁵ The *Disticha Catonis* are probably third or fourth century, and unlike most popular medieval textbooks it survived the Renaissance humanists, largely because of its age (Thomson and Perraud, trans., 1990, 49-58).

in *Húgvinnsmál*; and, alongside these works, the *skólabækur* section mentions nine other books of verse, a collection of miracles of Mary, a *Vita* of St. Margaret, and two breviaries. Isidore's *Etymologiae* is also listed at Viðey, but unlike Hólar it is not in the *skólabækur* section, which may suggest different uses for the text at the two locations. Several other texts commonly used in pedagogy are also mentioned outside the *skólabækur* section: Augustine's foundational text of Christian rhetoric, *De doctrina Christiana*, and the late eleventh-century encyclopedic *Elucidarius*.

The Viðey list is very important in showing the extent to which not only grammars and reference works, but many types of Latin poetry were fundamental to the teaching and learning of *grammatica*. Poetry was also an important meeting point for intermediate trivium learning, particularly between *grammatica* and *rhetorica*: the discussion of figurative language overlapped between the disciplines, and the extremely influential corpus of thirteenth-century poetic treatises known as the *ars poetriae* are fundamentally a mix of grammatical and rhetorical discourse.⁴⁰⁶ While none of the *ars poetriae* survive for Iceland or are mentioned in the booklists, Peter Foote in 1984 made a very convincing argument for their general influence on ON poetry, and in particular for the direct translation of part of the influential *Poetria nova* of Geoffrey of Vinsauf into the fourteenth-century ON poem *Lilja*.⁴⁰⁷ This may indicate that the work was extant in Iceland, potentially as a part of private collections, even though it is missing from our lists. It can also be noted that Latin metrics are discussed in at least two unedited fragments: AM 732 b 4to, which discusses the Greek alphabet and Latin metrics in Latin, and AM 792 4to, which has Latin grammatical and metrical notes.⁴⁰⁸

One general feature among this sample of pedagogical books from these three lists, representing something of northern Iceland in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, is the lack of classical works. While Ovid is mentioned as having been read in twelfth-century Hólar in *Jóns saga*, and is mentioned again in the 1525 booklist,⁴⁰⁹ he does not

⁴⁰⁶ For a thorough discussion of the genre and development of the *ars poetriae*, see Purcell 1996.

⁴⁰⁷ Foote 1984, 259-68.

⁴⁰⁸ Frank 1909, 145, note 1.

⁴⁰⁹ *DI IX*, 298.

appear in any of the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century lists, nor do any of the classical authors which were standard in twelfth-century English schools, apart from Cato. This can perhaps be linked to the movement against many of these authors in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which brought a rise in more recent poetry dealing with wisdom, morality, and worship, including the reading of hymns and sequences. A classic list of six key elementary texts often compiled together was replaced by a new lists of eight, though the *Disticha Catonis* and Theodolus' *Ecloga* appear on both lists.⁴¹⁰ Áslaug Ommundsen has recently identified two pre-fourteenth-century Icelandic fragments which appear to contain the *Disticha Catonis* and *Aesop's Fables*, which are both a part of the new list of eight others, and she points out that this suggests Iceland may have been following the general trend in the thirteenth century.⁴¹¹ Another classical revival characterized English schools at the end of fifteenth century, and this may in turn be linked to the appearance of both Ovid and Aristotle in the 1525 Hólar list.⁴¹²

While for many of these works and aspects of learning the booklists are the only evidence, some glossaries and paradigms give evidence for the teaching of Latin *grammatica* through bilingual texts. The most prominent extant grammatical fragment is AM 921 III 4to, a paradigm of the verb *amo* with Old Norse glosses, very likely based on Ælfric's *Excerptiones*.⁴¹³ Written and glossed paradigms are an essential part of grammatical education which are not evidenced in the booklists or the vernacular treatises, and AM 921 III 4to almost certainly represents a much larger corpus of lost pedagogical manuscripts.

Glossaries are a central component of grammatical learning that have tended not to be treated as such in Icelandic scholarship, and their significance can be better appreciated in the light of the frequent appearance of Brito and Hugutio in the booklists. The oldest section of GKS 1812 4to, from the end of the twelfth century, contains a small glossary of approximately 190 Latin terms, mostly nouns, glossed by about 150 Old Norse terms on a

⁴¹⁰ Orme 2006, 97-105.

⁴¹¹ Ommundsen 2016, 252-4.

⁴¹² An interesting point of potential knowledge about or interest in Aristotle appears in *Alexanders saga*, where it is said that Aristotle's book is called *dialectica* in Latin, but *þræto boc* 'book of litigation/quarrels' in Norse (Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1925, 3).

⁴¹³ Gade 2007.

broad range of topics.⁴¹⁴ This list was probably originally longer: the fragment AM 249 I fol is written in the same hand and belonged to the same manuscript, and probably the same glossary, bringing the total to 260 Latin terms.⁴¹⁵ Scardigli and Raschellà have suggested three possible uses for this glossary: as an exercise in Icelandic *orðspeki*, “wisdom and versatility in the use of word”, comparable with the *pulur* often compiled in manuscripts of the *Snorra Edda*; an isolated attempt to introduce Latin as a language of daily use in a particular religious community; or as notes, possibly made for teaching purposes, of an Icelander who had travelled abroad in areas where Latin was used in daily life.⁴¹⁶ Raschellà has more recently elaborated on the third point, suggesting that the glosses were potentially “vocabulary exercise” made by a teacher or student.⁴¹⁷ Würth has cited the second point, the failed attempt to teach Latin for daily spoken use, when discussing the same manuscript.⁴¹⁸

None of these points, however, show sufficient awareness of the widespread use elsewhere of glossaries in classrooms as a teaching aid in *grammatica* and other disciplines, and of the widespread use of Latin in an oral context. Scardigli and Raschellà argue from their conclusion as to the nature of the glosses, that its lack of religious terminology shows its secular nature and “imprint of eminent practicality, almost as though it were a manual of expressions to be used in the most mundane circumstances of daily life.”⁴¹⁹ The comparison with the *pulur* ignores the linguistic difference between them, and the fact that the glossary has no apparent connection to poetry of any kind, much less skaldic poetry. There is no doubt that Latin was used orally in Iceland to at least some extent, and there are no grounds for the idea that daily spoken use of Latin would be something exotic or unsustainable.⁴²⁰ Moreover, the idea that the seemingly secular and everyday quality of this glossary separates it from the learned, clerical tradition ignores the nature of glossaries, *grammatica*, and encyclopedic

⁴¹⁴ Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 299.

⁴¹⁵ Raschellà 2001, 588-89. Raschellà here also notes several other, short Latin-Old Norse glosses: three pairs of terms written in the margins of AM 671 4to from the fourteenth century, and a blank page of the Codex Wormianus, AM 242 fol, which filled in the fifteenth century with Icelandic and Latin verses, along with six pairs of terms (Raschellà 2001, 590).

⁴¹⁶ Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 311.

⁴¹⁷ Raschellà 2001, 589.

⁴¹⁸ Würth 1998, 199.

⁴¹⁹ Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 309.

⁴²⁰ See section 2.1 above.

learning. It was quite common for medieval lexical works to deal with everyday topics, for numerous reasons;⁴²¹ there is nothing so exceptional about the Icelandic glossary that suggests it was not a normal bilingual glossary, comparable to Latin-Old German and Latin-Old English ones.⁴²² The juxtaposition between everyday and astronomical words is not strange, when the calendrical and astronomical contents of the rest of the GKS 1812 4to are considered, and emphasizes the application of grammatical techniques to other disciplines. *Grammatica* was not simply a collection of books and abstract ideas: it was the application of language-learning in wider social and disciplinary contexts, and this application in Iceland can often show Latin and Old Norse interacting together in both intellectual and quotidian discourse.

In one section of the glossary, in fact, a standard grammatical technique known as *derivatio* can be seen. Among the words in the GKS 1812 4to glossary is the group *catellus* ‘small dog’, *catulus* ‘puppy’, *cattus* ‘cat’ and *catus* ‘shrewd’,⁴²³ suggesting a lexical *derivatio*: a method of grouping words according to their stem, sometimes an alternative to alphabetical order, which had didactic functions in some texts.⁴²⁴ While there is no analysis accompanying the words which argues for a shared stem, the grouping in an otherwise non-alphabetical list is conspicuous. Moreover, the discussion of the distinctions between forms of *vesper* immediately preceding the glossary emphasizes the grammatical function of the glossary itself.

There is clear evidence for the existence of many of the books involved with different

⁴²¹ Isidore’s *Etymologiae* covers a huge number of seemingly everyday topics, and yet was fundamentally concerned with modes of interpretation. For the explanation of the *Etymologiae* as a vehicle of grammatical learning see Barney et al., trans, 2006 21-4. See also Irvine 1994, 210; Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 232-3. Ælfric’s Latin-Old English glossary, written to accompany his grammar, deals with a wide variety of topics relevant to everyday monastic life, and was both widespread and working within an established tradition (see Hall, 2009, 203-4). Several medieval texts gave lexicons of Latin words for everyday objects, functioning at the most basic level of Latin teaching, presenting the words within paragraphs of descriptive prose clustered around semantic themes. Alexander of Neckam’s *De nominibus utensilium* (c. 1177-1217) was often transmitted with the related texts like the *De utensilibus* (mid-twelfth century) of Adam of Petit Pont and the *Dictionarius* (c. 1220) of John of Garland (Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 531-2). Use of example sentences known as *latina*, from Ælfric onward, contain examples of terminology of daily life juxtaposed to other types of terminology, as a grammatical/educational exercise, later also called a ‘vulgar’ (Orme 2006, 109-12).

⁴²² Weijers 1989, 140.

⁴²³ Scardigli and Raschellà 1988, 302.

⁴²⁴ Weijers 1989, 147-49.

aspects of grammatical learning, but there are gaps, particularly where more advanced forms of learning might be expected, though a few key elementary texts like Donatus' *Ars minor* are conspicuously lacking.⁴²⁵ Taking the English author Alexander Neckam's list of textbooks from c.1200 as a useful comparison, the introduction of reading is followed by a series of texts representing disciplines and stages of learning: first classical works, then formal grammatical texts, rhetorical, music and arithmetic, medicine, ecclesiastical law, civil law, finally culminating in the study of the scriptures.⁴²⁶ The lack of classical texts may, as already suggested, have been a trend by the fourteenth century. The creation of *Rómverja saga*, an ON translation of Sallust and Lucan, around the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, may be evidence of the greater importance of classical texts to education before the fourteenth century; Sallust and Lucan, it can be noted, are both mentioned in Neckam's list. Civil law, naturally, would have been replaced by the study of vernacular law. There is some evidence of medical learning in ON translations of medical treatises, but little work has been done on these manuscripts and at least one major one is based on translations made first in Norway and Denmark,⁴²⁷ so their relationship to any Latin or bilingual Latin-ON education in Iceland is uncertain.

Arithmetic and music as forms of advanced learning, rather than elementary *computus* and *söng*, are entirely absent in the booklists, as are any rhetorical treatises.⁴²⁸ There is excellent evidence in the *Old Icelandic Homily Book* for the more philosophical study of *musica*, and its overlap with *grammatica*, in the already-noted extended allegory involving musical modes, comparing the eight modes to the eight ages of the world.⁴²⁹ Such an isolated piece of evidence is difficult to contextualize in wider educational and intellectual practices,

⁴²⁵ It may be that the *Ars minor* was too short and insignificant of a text on its own to have been mentioned in the booklists, and that copies which existed were compiled with the *Doctrinale* and other lengthier and more advanced grammatical treatises. Åslaug Ommundsen has found a fragment of the *Ars minor*, as well as of the *Doctrinale* and *Graecismus*, which may have been in use in medieval Norway, though none appear to have actually been written in Norway (Ommundsen 2016, 247-51).

⁴²⁶ Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 536-41.

⁴²⁷ The late-fifteenth-century medical miscellany contained in MS. Royal Irish Academy 23 D 43 is thought to have gone through separate Norwegian and Danish translations after its ultimate Latin origins (Larsen 1927, 174).

⁴²⁸ See Irvine 1994, 170, for the argument that *De doctrina Christina* was more of a grammatical than a rhetorical text.

⁴²⁹ See Marchard 1975.

however. The fact that such a complex allegory was written in the vernacular suggests something about the vernacular adaptation of *grammatica* and thought about figurative language and, in this respect, it can be compared to the rectangular figure used in the *2GT*, which is described in terms of a musical metaphor.⁴³⁰ However, unlike the *2GT*, the *Homily Book* text seems to assume some musical knowledge on the part of the audience, and so may suggest some amount of theoretical musical learning, though perhaps still contextualized in the discussion of *söng* rather than as a discipline of the *quadrivium*.

This is not to say that there was no conception of the *septem artes liberales* in medieval Iceland. Gunnar Harðarson has recently pointed out a *divisio philosophiae* in the youngest, fourteenth-century section of GKS 1812 4to. There the *septem artes liberales* are presented as divisions of *philosophia*, and the trivium as the three categories of *logica*. All the branches of *philosophia* are defined in Latin, and the classification used fits with the systems prevalent in the late eleventh and early twelfth century.⁴³¹ This is an abstract, philosophical context for the *artes*, however, not an educational one. There is an explicitly educational context for the teaching of the *artes* given in *Pétrs saga Postola*, which includes some explanation for what each of the *artes* involve, but the saga places these skills and their significance firmly in the Roman past, as an educational paradigm with a distant historical context.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Specifically, the keys of a hurdy-gurdy. See the discussion of the figure in Raschellà, ed., 1982, 103-7.

⁴³¹ Gunnar Harðarson 2015, 18.

⁴³² “Annan dag eptir let Petrus postoli Clemens koma til mals við karl þenna, þvíat hann þotti algjörri at ollum .vii. iþrottum, þeim sem Romverium voru i þann tima kiærar. Toku þeir þa at kannaz við um iþrottir sinar, ok reyndiz sva, at hvartveggi þeira kunni allar iþrottir, þær sem spekingar voru vanir at kunna i þann tima. Eptir þat lögðu þeir fram hinn fyrsta dag at disputera sin i milli af þeiri iþrott, er gramatica heitir; hun segir, hversu rettliga skal hvert orð fram segia, ok hversu aull orð skal hneigia aa latinu tungu. Annan dag lögðu þeir fram fyrir sik þa iþrott, er retorica heitir; hun kennir malsnilld alla. Þriðia dag geck fram dialectica, er þrætur kann skilia. Fiorða dag foru þeir yfir musicam, er songiþrott er. Hinn fimta dag var kōnnut arithmetica, er taulvisi alla greiðir. Hinn seta dag geck fram geometria, en hun kennir, hversu mæla skal hæð eða dypt, lengð eða breidd vel hvers lutar. Sva kannaðiz til, at allar þessar iþrottir kunni þessi hinn gamli maðr noçkuru framarr en Clemens, ok kunnu þo baðir vel. Siþarst toku þeir at tala um stionurims iþrott, er astronomia heitir” (Unger, ed., 1874, 57-8) (*The second day after the apostle Peter had Clemens speak to this man, because he was thought to be perfect in all the seven skills, those which were dear to the Romans at that time. They then began to become acquainted with their skills, and it proved to be thus, that each of them knew all the skills, those which wise men were accustomed to learn at that time. After that they started forth the first day to dispute between themselves concerning that skill, which is called grammar; it says how each word shall be spoken correctly, and how all words shall be inflected in the Latin tongue. On the second day they laid forth for themselves that skill, which is called rhetoric; it teaches all eloquence. The third day dialectic went forth, which can settle litigations. The*

The forms of advanced learning which the booklists evidence are primarily theological, in the sense of scriptural reading and interpretation, and canon law, which fit remarkably well with the evidence of *Lárentius saga*. For canon law the greatest concentration is, unsurprisingly at the bishopric: the 1396 Hólar list gives nine books of canon law, separated in their own list *de iure*, which oddly included a Book of Job and four Psalters. The 1461 Möðruvellir list includes at least five books which appear to be canon law books.⁴³³ Lawbooks are also mentioned among the booklists for normal churches, presumably for dealing with legal disputes and other matters: the 1318 booklists mention four churches each owning a copy of the *Kristinn réttur*, the ON vernacular church law, though it is not clear which version;⁴³⁴ in 1394 the church of Grenjaðarstaður, with one of the largest collections of books outside the monasteries and bishoprics, owned a single *dextera pars at sinistra*,⁴³⁵ in the 1461 list for Öxnahóll a single *lögbók* is mentioned.⁴³⁶ The significance of such a distribution of lawbooks for education is unclear, but at the least it suggests that such learning primarily occurred at the bishoprics, but perhaps not always.

Lárentius saga gives some detail and context to the practice, prestige, and learning of canon law in Iceland. As mentioned above, the description of Lárentius' learning of canon law in Norway links *grammatica* with a more advanced, prestigious legal education abroad, from a foreign teacher who had himself been educated at Bologna, the centre of canon law education in Europe. This education is particularly pertinent to Lárentius' career, and the progress from a grammatical Latinity to a higher legal Latinity reflected his rise from schoolmaster to bishop. Lárentius learns, moreover, while working for the archbishop, helping him in his legal conflicts with the cathedral chapter of Niðarós; this neatly parallels

fourth day they went over music, which is the skill of singing. The fifth day arithmetic was explored, which unravels all numerical skill. The sixth day geometry went forth, and it teaches how one shall measure well the height or depth, length or breadth of any thing. It was thus acknowledged that this old man knew all these skills somewhat better than Clemens, although they both understood well. Last they began to speak about the skill of the computation of stars, which is called astronomy).

⁴³³ *Textvs quinque librorum decretalium, glosa decretalium magistri godfridi, casus quinque librorum decretalium, sumula reymundi, and pars dextre partis* (DI V, 288).

⁴³⁴ Oleson 1957(a), 507.

⁴³⁵ Oleson 1959, 116. Oleson speculates that this may either be the late-thirteenth-century *Constitutiones Clementinae* or the thirteenth-century *Compendium theologiae veritatis* of Hugh of Strasburg (Oleson 1959, 115).

⁴³⁶ Oleson 1960, 95. Oleson speculates that this is another *Kristinn réttur*.

and foreshadows Lárentius' own future legal conflicts and the necessity of a legal education there.

However, the saga does not confine education in canon law to Norway. An earlier episode has Lárentius beginning to learn canon law from Árni Þorláksson, bishop of Skálholt, which, even more explicitly than the Norwegian episode, foreshadows Lárentius' later career and the need for an advanced education to survive it:

Kallaði herra byskup Laurentium síðan í sitt studium ok setti fram fyrir hann lektara ok þar á kirkjulögbækr; bað hann þar skemmta sér viðr.

Laurentius talaði þá til byskupsins: “Minn góði herra, Guð umbuni yðr fyrir yðvart lítillæti sem þér sýnið á mér fátækum ok ókunnum.”

Byskupinn svaraði: “Ef þú hefir ei áðr fullnumit kirkjunnar lög, skalt þú nú þat iðna hegan af. Muntu ok margar þrautir þola verða áðr þínir dagar eru endaðir.”⁴³⁷

The lord bishop called Lárentius then into his study and set before him a lectern and thereupon books of canon law; he told him to entertain himself there.

Lárentius spoke then to the bishop: “My good lord, God reward you for your condescension which you show me, poor and unlearned.”

The bishop answered: “If you have not already fully learned the canon laws, you shall now work at that henceforth. You will also suffer many hardships before your days are ended.”

The prestige of canon law and its place in the hierarchy of education is shown here, in a different way from the Norwegian episode, in Lárentius personally being brought into Bishop Árni's place of study, and personally being shown the books of learning. There is a rite of

⁴³⁷ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 235.

induction here, but unlike the archbishop's intellectual test, it is here more a matter of social connection, and Bishop Árne's ability to see the quality of Lárentius' character as a part of being able to see the path of his life. When Bishop Auðun on his deathbed chooses Lárentius as bishop, he is said to single out Lárentius' scholarly ability and skill in canon law.⁴³⁸ The extent and particular discipline of one's education can thus intersect with the social issues, particularly the issues of patronage, discussed in chapter 1.

This emphasis on books of canon law as things of particular value continues through the saga. When Lárentius is imprisoned for a time by the cathedral chapter of Níðaróss, his property is seized, and it is noted that they let him keep the one item most precious to him, the books of canon law; this also suggests the existence of such books in private collections.⁴³⁹ During the conflict between Bishop Lárentius and Bishop Jón Halldórsson, canon law books are brought north to Hólar as a part of the legal dispute.⁴⁴⁰ Finally, a book by the famous legal scholar Tancredus of Bologna (1185-1236) is given to Lárentius by Archbishop Eilífr of Níðaróss.⁴⁴¹ There is thus a strong connection between the bishopric and canon law books, but the saga suggests that they would have existed in private collections as well. The end of the saga states that Lárentius will leave his private collection, which presumably included canon law books, to Þingeyrar,⁴⁴² which, as with the 1461 Möðruvellir list, shows that monasteries kept such books. Cathedral schools may not have been the only places where canon law was learned – it is possible that this saga is trying to exaggerate the social connection between the bishop and legal learning – though they certainly seemed to have the best resources for such teaching.

Lárentius saga presents canon law as the advanced discipline *par excellence* of Icelandic Latin scholars. It should be kept in mind, however, that the apex of Neckam's list of

⁴³⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 345-6.

⁴³⁹ “Var hann sviptur öllu sínu góðzi, utan þat sem hann vildi gjarnast hafa, vóru þat bækur hans er á vóru lög heilagrar kirkju, varð þeim undan skotið” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 305) (*He was stripped of all his property, except that which he wished to have most eagerly, that was his books in which were the law of the holy church, those escaped*).

⁴⁴⁰ “Höfðu sunnanmennirnir mikla byrði af kirkjunnar lagabókum hverjar þangat vóru bornar” (Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 403) (*The southerners had a great load from the lawbooks of the church, which were brought there*).

⁴⁴¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 423.

⁴⁴² Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 423.

textbooks is not any *quadrivium* discipline, but scriptural learning. Scriptural books appear scattered through the booklists, not only at Hólar and the monasteries, but also at churches. In addition to the copies of the gospels necessary for liturgical purposes at most churches, there are several instances of *Acts* and *Wisdom* in the fourteenth-century lists, most of which are in the large libraries at Vellir and Múli.⁴⁴³ Here it is worth noting again the prescriptions for a good priest in AM 238 XXIII fol., where the priest is required to know the teachings and homilies of Gregory – presumably the larger body of patristic writing and commentary is meant – and to understand holy scripture. As noted earlier, the emphasis on understanding and interpretation here links it to *grammatica*, but a *grammatica* focused on the pursuit of theology. While there is no narrative evidence for advanced theological learning comparable to *Lárentius saga* and canon law, the booklists suggest that such learning would have been entirely possible.

Of course, Icelanders travelling abroad and foreign teachers coming to Iceland could add to the types of learning discussed in the section, which as with Lárentius' knowledge of canon law could intersect with the social benefits of education and patronage discussed in chapter 1.⁴⁴⁴ The main purpose here, however, has been to suggest what and how the Icelanders taught themselves, particularly their clergy, using Latin and bilingual forms of education. The elementary forms of education discussed here – the alphabet, reading before full understanding of Latin, singing and liturgical performance, and calendrical skills – could be learned with a minimum of resources, and probably represent the sort of education that could occur at smaller church-schools and many fostering relationships. *Grammatica*, in the full sense of learning to understand Latin and interpret Latin texts, and more advanced topics were likely confined for the most part to cathedral and monastery schools. However, as has been emphasized, many books appear to have circulated through private collections, notably the vast majority of the texts in the extant corpus, including the vernacular grammatical

⁴⁴³ Oleson 1959, 120-23. Oleson points out that by the end of the fourteenth century Vellir, Múli, and Grenjaðarstaðr had more books than any of the other churches in the diocese of Hólar, outside of the monasteries and the bishopric itself (Oleson 1959, 116-17).

⁴⁴⁴ It remains important, however, to note that the 1532 letter from Hamburg in Appendix 1 and its focus on Latin shows that it cannot be assumed that all journeys abroad involved advanced or esoteric subjects of education lacking in Iceland. The benefits and motivations for education outside of Iceland were clearly much more complex.

treatises. The sort of education which made use of such private collections, possibly taking place outside bishoprics or monasteries, may have included *grammatica* and advanced forms of learning, and the vernacular side of such learning will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.2.5 The Problem of Literacy: Quantitative Analyses and Qualitative Judgments

Having established the general role of Latin in medieval Icelandic society, and pointed out some of the evidence for different forms of education, it is tempting to pose the question of quantitative literacy. How many Icelanders were literate, and how did this compare proportionally with the rest of Europe? While many scholars have asked this question, it is a fundamentally flawed one, and speculation about literacy levels has tended to engender misleading assumptions about Icelandic education and intellectual culture. The main goal of this section is therefore to point out the problems with trying to discuss literacy in quantitative terms and with arguing that literacy in any language was unusually high in medieval Iceland. With that established, some general points can be made about the different forms and functions of literacy.

The main method of attempting to quantify literacy has been to work from medieval estimates of the number of priests and churches in Iceland, from the count of priests and churches in the Skálholt diocese made in *Páls saga* at the beginning of the thirteenth century, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, and can be supplemented by some later counts of priests from documentary sources. Jón Sigurðsson in 1842 used this to suggest that there were some 420 priests, and presumably just as many deacons, and while he does not mention literacy specifically, he uses this to suggest that education was generally of a high quality.⁴⁴⁵ Benjamín Kristjánsson in 1947 noted similar counts of priests in the fifteenth century, and argues that the number of required priests suggests around fifty students were studying for ordination across Iceland in any given year.⁴⁴⁶ Ernst Walter in 1971 also estimated around 400 literate priests for Bishop Páll's time, and suggests that with literate clergy of lower

⁴⁴⁵ Jón Sigurðsson 1842, 87-8.

⁴⁴⁶ Benjamin Kristjánsson 1947, 153-4.

orders, monks and nuns, and layfolk, there might have been around 800 literate Icelanders around 1200, in a population of around 80,000. From this he suggests half this number before the foundation of Hólar, and the first monasteries, so around 400 in 1100; thus roughly 0.5% of the population, rising to 1% over the course of the twelfth century. Unlike earlier scholars, Walter is explicit here that he is arguing for people with knowledge of Latin. Walter also suggests this is an unusually high percentage for the time period, and specifically that Iceland would have had a higher proportion of laymen educated in Latin than in Norway, despite their closely linked intellectual and ecclesiastical culture, because Norway did not have the close relationship between clergy and secular aristocracy that Iceland had.⁴⁴⁷ In his 1988 monograph, Sverrir Tómasson made note of these earlier studies, and followed Walter in arguing that Iceland must have had a generally high level of Latin literacy.⁴⁴⁸ Stephanie Würth in 1998 affirmed these earlier counts, and further speculated that the existence of people obtaining partial educations, or choosing not to be ordained, would have meant that by the thirteenth century a considerable proportion of the Icelandic population must have known Latin.⁴⁴⁹

A separate scholarly tradition has approached the issue of vernacular literacy, rather than Latin literacy, from the perspective of textual production, and the relationship between the literary and intellectual culture of the clergy and that of Icelandic farmers. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson and Sigurður Nordal in the 1940s and 1950s argued that Icelandic farmers had a system of literary and textual production, independent of the clergy, with which they could cheaply produce manuscripts of saga literature and vernacular poetry on parchment from their own livestock, writing and reading extensively during the long winter nights when there was nothing to do. This, of course, was based around the idea that a very large proportion of Icelanders could read and write, at least in the vernacular.⁴⁵⁰ Lars Lönnroth critiqued these ideas on a variety of grounds, but on the whole argued that textual production was largely

⁴⁴⁷ Walter 1971, 201-2.

⁴⁴⁸ Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 35-6

⁴⁴⁹ Würth 1998, 199-200. It is interesting that despite these comments, Áslaug Ommundsen has recently noted that it seems likely that the general Latin ability of both Iceland and Norway have tended to be underestimated by scholars (Ommundsen 2016, 243). The apparent contradiction may be indicative of the lack of active, open scholarly discourse around the issues of education in medieval Iceland and Norway.

⁴⁵⁰ For a summary of their arguments, see Lönnroth 1990, 4-5.

limited to the clergy, and that even among aristocrats semi-literacy would often have been more likely than full literacy. In turn, Peter Hallberg and Stefán Karlsson responded, arguing that literacy was much better in Iceland than elsewhere in medieval Europe, based on rather questionable statements made by visiting Danish and Norwegian clergymen during and after the Reformation.⁴⁵¹ Lönnroth's 1990 survey of this scholarly discourse, while continuing to argue against the separation of clerical and lay textual production, accepts the idea that literacy was more common among Icelanders than in the rest of Europe, partly based on the evidence of the Bergen rune-sticks that runic literacy lasted at least into the fourteenth century in Norway, and not only among the elite.⁴⁵²

There are several inherent problems with these approaches to literacy. Throughout this scholarship there is a fundamental lack of substantive discussion of the conditions of literacy outside Iceland and Norway, and thus all claims of comparison are more or less baseless. There is also no discussion of the relationship between Latin and vernacular literacy, and in Lönnroth's case runic literacy and the relationship between Icelandic and Norwegian literacy are brought up without any qualification of how the various literacies relate to one another. Whatever type of literacy is being discussed, however, all of these scholars appear to be starting with the basic premise that literacy in Iceland was superior or at least equal to the rest of Europe. As with the general scholarly discourse around Icelandic education, the discussion of Icelandic literacy too often revolves around judgments of quality, and defending the idea of good literacy levels. And as with that question, this is an indefensible idea that can obscure and mislead other questions about Icelandic literacy. Naturally, it would be useful to know how and by whom the literary texts that are extant were read, and what reading culture in general was like in Iceland, but raw numbers – particularly when they are only the roughest of estimations – can tell us very little about that.

Generally speaking, there are no reliable numbers for the literacy rates of the rest of Europe against which to judge the levels of Iceland, even if Walter's estimates of 0.5-1% of the population were to be taken seriously. There are also several reasons to assume that

⁴⁵¹ Lönnroth 1990, 5-7.

⁴⁵² Lönnroth 1990, 7-9.

literacy in Iceland was not, in fact, that exceptional. First, even if the counts of priests in *Páls saga* and the documentary sources are accurate, when compared to the numbers of priests per parish church in late medieval England, the Icelandic numbers appear significantly lower.⁴⁵³ Second, the limitations of Icelandic education discussed in the previous chapter, particularly the lack of public schools and urban spaces, also would have limited literacy. This is particularly limiting at the end of the Middle Ages, when administrative literacy and vernacular literacy was rapidly expanding in Scandinavia. In late medieval Denmark and Sweden town schools, *stadskole*, were financed through the towns, with teachers often paid by a special tax, for the purpose of giving secular students an education in vernacular literacy and other useful topics; Arnved Nedkvitne has argued that without these schools, which did not exist in Norway or Iceland, the expansion of literacy after 1400 would not have happened.⁴⁵⁴ As discussed in the previous chapter, there is no evidence for free or public education having existed in Iceland outside the home itself, and this economic factor almost certainly would have limited literacy relative to regions which did develop such institutions. There is no apparent way to determine, or even productively speculate about, the literacy rates in Iceland relative to the rest of medieval Europe. Rather, literacy can be explored as an aspect of culture and society, and for the purposes of this study, a result and a goal of educational practices.

The topics discussed so far in this study have brought up several variable types and functions of literacy. Elementary education, and particularly the isolated note about teaching the alphabet in *Búalög*, could have produced many levels of semi-literacy and purely vernacular literacy. The educational document of 1392, where a mother sets aside an expensive cloak for her son's education, seems likely to relate to a very basic education, with no mention of ordination and arguably a very small amount of money set aside for education.⁴⁵⁵ The document from 1507, which states only that a certain Óláfr Eriksón promised to teach a boy something from a book, also suggests a fairly elementary education.

⁴⁵³ Sigurdson 2016, 65-6. A thorough comparison between the number of priests and churches in Iceland and elsewhere, as a component of estimating proportional levels of Latin literacy, would also need to take into account the total number of people per church.

⁴⁵⁴ Nedkvitne 2004, 184-6.

⁴⁵⁵ *DI* III 484-5. See Appendix 1.

To this can be added the conditions written in many of the educational documents, allowing that students might quit part-way through their education, which could allow for many partly educated Icelanders.

There is evidence that, for Latin literacy at least, partial literacy could in fact have often been quite common. Reciting and singing Latin were taught well before the language could be understood, and Grotans has speculated that at the end of the first three years of a normal medieval education, students would likely have actually understood very little Latin.⁴⁵⁶ Magnús Már Lárusson has argued that Mass-deacons and sub-deacons could have been educated in as little as two years, which certainly indicates a very limited knowledge of Latin.⁴⁵⁷ But this seems to fit well with the description, as AM 238 XXIII fol. does not prescribe the same duties for sub-deacons and deacons, and the several lower levels of unordained clerics, as for priests: each are required to read and sing at certain points in the Mass, where it is certainly not necessary to understand the words; a full deacon, however, is required to *kenna kenningar* at the request of priests or bishops, which presumably refers generally to preaching, and may suggest some slightly higher expected level of literacy than of the sub-deacons.⁴⁵⁸

Grotans has argued for distinguishing three forms of literacy based on the function of the written word: professional literacy, that of scholars and those whose professions revolved around writing; recreational literacy, wherein reading is primarily cultural or literary cultivation; and pragmatic literacy, that required of merchants and other for conducting business. She also notes that it was quite common for people in the medieval west to be able to read, but not be able to write, which has been sometimes termed functional literacy.⁴⁵⁹ *Lárentius saga* is likely referencing this in its repeated mention of both compositional and scribal ability, when valorizing Lárentius' Latin skills. Applying Grotans' categories to Iceland would involve not only different levels of reading and/or writing ability, but also differing levels of use of Latin and the vernacular. The description of the priest using

⁴⁵⁶ Grotans 2006, 76.

⁴⁵⁷ Magnús Már Lárusson 1967, 127.

⁴⁵⁸ It is also noted that the third rank of priest, *lectores*, were expected to read in Matins and at masses for the dead (Kolsrud, ed., 1952, 108-9).

⁴⁵⁹ Grotans 2006, 17-18.

translated texts in AM 238 XXIII fol. noted earlier also suggests that even a full, idealized Latin education in such a prescriptive context could still allow for limitations in literacy. Terje Spurkland, in a discussion of Viking Age runic literacy, has also noted the three levels of literacy which Grotans discusses, and further mentions that cultivated or recreational literacy tends to coincide with an increased number of surviving vernacular literary texts.⁴⁶⁰ Thus we might speculate that much of the distinctive vernacular literary corpus of Iceland was related to a very particular type of literacy, which may have involved a different sort of education.

There is no space for a full exploration of the value, use, and perspectives on literacy in Iceland here, and further speculation about literacy must await more thorough studies. Rather, having established that there is little point in seeking to make value judgments about literacy levels, the wider discussion of education and Latin use in Iceland can suggest the range of contexts in which literacy can be discussed. In clerical contexts Latin was certainly valuable, but bilingual literacy was also important, as both languages functioned together in teaching, learning, and liturgy. Vernacular literacy, as it related to vernacular *grammatica* and education, will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.3 Latin and the Vernacular and the ON Grammatical Treatises

The extant vernacular grammatical treatises themselves deal with ON, not with Latin, and as such are limited in how much they can show about Latin and bilingual education. The *1GT* and *2GT*, as noted earlier, suggest how use of the vernacular at the level of alphabetical learning could affect elementary learning in general, establishing a precedent for students to learn to read without learning Latin. Both treatises were doubtless influenced by trends in actual educational practice, even if the actual pedagogical use of the texts themselves is more uncertain.

At the level of traditional grammatical education, the learning of the Latin language itself, the *3GT* and *4GT* can offer some evidence as to how ON served as a tool in teaching

⁴⁶⁰ Spurkland 2005, pg 138.

Latin. As translated treatises, the vocabulary and metalanguage used in these two texts reflects a dynamic of linguistic interaction, not only of translation itself, but of the bilingual education which has been discussed above. The formation of these treatises, and of the *3GT* in particular, involved making use of a body of vernacular terminology which had developed in the context of bilingual education, of glossing and commentary as well as oral teaching. This can offer a close, lexical look at how Latin learning developed in medieval Iceland. Moreover, so far texts primarily from the fourteenth century and later have been discussed, so as a mid-thirteenth century text the *3GT* can offer a glimpse at the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century educational practices which produced it.

While this line of investigation is speculative, it is greatly supported by comparing the situation in Iceland with that in other Germanic-speaking regions of medieval Europe, where more work has been done on bilingual education and the use of the vernacular to teach Latin. It is very likely, despite the lack of contemporary evidence from Iceland for the eleventh century, that English and German missionaries had a profound impact on the early development of Christian and Latin culture in Iceland. It seems therefore certain that the models of *grammatica* which developed in these regions would have affected how Icelanders adapted Latin learning to their own context.

2.3.1 The English and German Models

When Iceland began to establish schools and literacy in the eleventh century, many other regional traditions had incorporated their vernaculars into their own grammatical discourses. In the Latin west, the close relationship between the Romance languages and Latin meant that they had a distinctive dynamic in dealing with Latin learning and classroom teaching;⁴⁶¹ for Germanic- and Celtic-speaking regions, the process was much more difficult, as Latin reading and writing had to be taught to students who spoke a mother tongue from an entirely different language family. Germanic and Celtic grammarians and teachers were thus

⁴⁶¹ The complex and ideologically charged issue of distinguishing between Latin and the vernacular for Romance languages is one of the most important aspects of analyzing the emergence of vernaculars as textual and literary languages in those regions, which was not present in Germanic and Celtic regions.

related in their experience of dealing with Latin, and any of these traditions could have been known in Iceland. Germanic traditions will be dealt with here, as the relationship between the languages means they were naturally much more likely to have a direct influence.

At the end of the tenth century, right before the conversion of Iceland, the use of the vernacular in the classrooms, commentaries, and the *septem artes liberales* were growing across the Germanic-speaking regions: in England, Ælfric produced his English and Latin grammar and Byrhtferth of Ramsey translated *computus* into Old English, while on the continent at St. Gall Notker Labeo developed texts for a bilingual classroom, using Old High German and Latin.⁴⁶² Notker produced OHG translations and commentaries on Boethius and Martianus Capella, among others, and wrote treatises on dialectic, rhetoric, mathematics, and music.⁴⁶³ These developments of vernacular learning were preceded by extensive gloss-writing and the creation of a grammatical and classroom lexicon in the vernacular, reflective of bilingual teaching and learning.⁴⁶⁴

Notker's grammatical innovations were in expanding the vernacular in its use as a classroom language. As Grotans has described, Notker had to shape the vernacular so that it, like Latin, could "follow the basic rules of written culture, which were set down by *grammatica*. German had to be recorded consistently so that it could be read correctly and be pleasing to both the eyes and to the ears."⁴⁶⁵ Notker used the model of Alcuin's orthographic reforms to create a detailed, fixed orthographic system for OHG, basing this orthography on spoken language, again based on Alcuin's prescriptions of phonetically read Latin.⁴⁶⁶ Notker was in part responding to an anti-vernacular tradition, as Otfrid von Weissenburg had some

⁴⁶² Grotans calls Notker "an exemplary representative of the late tenth-century schoolmaster" in his use of the vernacular and composition of teaching texts (Grotans 2006, 80).

⁴⁶³ Grotans 2006, 3-4.

⁴⁶⁴ Ælfric's grammatical terminology has been linked to the glossing tradition and an "etymological method of analyzing Latin terms" at Winchester, and a bilingual system of learning that Ælfric inherited from his teacher Æthelwold (Chapman 2010, 431-4). Chapman specifically suggests that "a bilingual education in Æthelwold's school included learning a somewhat standardized set of correspondences between Latin and English, especially for technical vocabulary" (Chapman 2010, 434). Grotans argues that while Notker has sometimes been seen as arising out of an Ottonian vernacular decline, that he was rather building upon a tradition of vernacular use, not to create literary monuments, but to teach and learn and make Latin literature more accessible (Grotans 2006, 118-19).

⁴⁶⁵ Grotans 2006, 6.

⁴⁶⁶ Grotans 2006, 13.

hundred years earlier argued that all deviations between Franconian and Latin were barbarism and solecism, that the vernacular itself in failing to follow the rules of Latin could not be controlled.⁴⁶⁷ At the same time as he critiqued it, however, Otfrid himself composed a Gospel harmony in the vernacular, as a replacement for the poetry of the vernacular tradition. Otfrid's teacher, Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda from 822-840, dealt extensively with applying *grammatica* to vernacular languages; he was particularly interested in orthography, the invention of alphabets, and the relationship between sounds and letters.⁴⁶⁸ Notker represented a development of OHG use in the classroom and of the relationship between *grammatica* and the vernacular, but he was part of a tradition that was often ambivalent and complex in its linguistic ideologies.

In England, Ælfric of Eynsham wrote an elementary grammar right at the end of the tenth century, based on an abbreviation of Priscian's massive grammar, called the *Excerptiones de arte grammatica anglie*, written in both English and Latin. Ælfric also wrote a glossary to accompany the *Excerptiones*, as well as a colloquy, a type of written pedagogical dialogue.⁴⁶⁹ The fourteen surviving manuscripts of the *Excerptiones* mark it as one of the most popular extant Anglo-Saxon texts, and certainly the most widely transmitted grammatical text of the eleventh century.⁴⁷⁰ Ælfric's *Excerptiones* has been studied extensively for its grammatical terminology, the simultaneous use of Latin and English and the large corpus of specialized English vocabulary, particularly metalinguistic terms.⁴⁷¹ The text contains over two hundred different English grammatical terms, including loan words, semantic loans, and loan formulations.⁴⁷²

Traditionally scholars have emphasized that the *Excerptiones* was a Latin grammar, only using English as a medium of communication for the teaching of Latin, but recent

⁴⁶⁷ Grotans 2006, 45-6.

⁴⁶⁸ Grotans 2006, 120-21.

⁴⁶⁹ In every manuscript wherein Ælfric's glossary survives, it is following immediately after the grammar. The colloquy, on the other hand, was a less popular text with a more independent transmission, though Ælfric Bata, Ælfric of Eynsham's student, wrote the three texts as a triad (Hill 2007, 288, 292-95).

⁴⁷⁰ Law 1987, 62-3; Menzer 2004, 106.

⁴⁷¹ See Williams 1958 and Chapman 2010.

⁴⁷² Chapman 2010, 422, 427. Semantic loans are words already current in the borrowing language which shift the meaning of the original word, while loan formulations are newly created words using material from the borrowing language, such as compound-word calques.

scholarship has shown how this text also creates a grammatical paradigm for thinking about the vernacular within a bilingual educational system.⁴⁷³ In teaching English grammar, alongside Latin grammar, as part of classroom instruction, students could learn to use the rules of *grammatica* to learn correct interpretation of English-language texts, including the many homilies which Ælfric himself translated into English.⁴⁷⁴ Likewise, the bilingual education evidenced by Ælfric's grammatical writing, as well as his comments about his own education, involved a system of correspondence between Latin and English, a lexical and methodological means of both using English as a glossing language, and of teaching *grammatica* in both languages.⁴⁷⁵ The use of the vernacular to understand Latin involves a development of the vernacular itself, and a better understanding of its grammatical characteristics.

These are the main traditions that would have been present as models or direct influences on the first Icelandic vernacular adaptations of grammatical terms and ideas. However, the extant Icelandic treatises were written from the twelfth through the fourteenth century, when the core Latin grammatical tradition had changed, and the vernacular traditions along with it. It is important to keep in mind that new developments occurred in Icelandic *grammatica* over the course of the Middle Ages. While some of these may have happened in relative isolation of broader changes in intellectual culture, others may have felt the impact of the changes affecting vernacular thought elsewhere.

English was used less in elementary grammatical instruction after the Norman Conquest, and while there were some adaptations made to Ælfric's grammar during the twelfth century, no Middle English grammars survive from before the end of the fourteenth century. John of Cornwall, who wrote his *Speculum gramaticale* in 1346, was known for his bilingual grammatical teaching, and John of Trevisa in 1385 attributed the switch from French to English in elementary learning to his influence. John Leyland, teaching in Oxford from sometime before 1401 to his death in 1428, produced a series of short grammatical texts

⁴⁷³ Chapman 2010, 421; Menzer 2004, 112-13, 123-4; Menzer 1999, 638. Orme 2008, 108 argues for this dynamic apart from Ælfric's work.

⁴⁷⁴ Menzer 2004, 123-4.

⁴⁷⁵ Chapman 2010, 433-34.

in Middle English, which became part of widely influential group of texts, including a translation of Donatus' *Ars minor*. The period of greatest Middle English grammatical manuscript production in 1460-1480 only came to a close with the advent of printed textbooks.⁴⁷⁶ The metalanguage developed by these treatises was not related to Ælfric's, but derived from French and Latin.⁴⁷⁷ While the function of these texts was primarily to teach elementary Latin, like Ælfric's grammar this often involved analysis of English grammatical characteristics. The sometimes strange parsing of English, and awkwardly literal translation of Latin phrases show the hierarchical relationship between the languages.⁴⁷⁸

This is a brief survey of an extremely complex development of vernacular writing on *grammatica*, and it is important not to oversimplify or to generalize the developments. Most of the English treatises discussed are elementary, perhaps early intermediate texts, while Notker's writings concerned rhetoric, dialectic, and other intermediate and advanced topics.⁴⁷⁹ There are general trends, however, in the vernacular traditions discussed here. In periods between and before major vernacular treatises, or the activities of teachers like Notker, Ælfric, and Leylond who expanded bilingual education within their own classrooms, core classroom use of the vernacular in glossing and elementary teaching continued. The glossing and oral translation involved in classroom practice is often invisible in the textual tradition, but remains an influence on extant texts and the history of teaching and learning. There is a significant amount of schoolroom Icelandic metalanguage and glossing practice which must have existed for education to function, yet is only hinted at in the extant sources.

2.3.2 Old English, German, and the Origins of Icelandic *Grammatica*

There is significant evidence that OE in particular, and possibly other vernaculars, had a profound impact on the development of Icelandic intellectual culture and vernacularity. The significant number of Old English loanwords, the translations of Ælfric's *De falsis deis*

⁴⁷⁶ Thomson, ed., 1984, xi-xii. For the development of English metalanguage and grammatical writing at the end of fourteenth century, see also Orme 2006, 106-9.

⁴⁷⁷ Thomson, ed., 1984, xiv-xvi.

⁴⁷⁸ Thomson, ed., 1984, xvii-xxiii.

⁴⁷⁹ Grotans 2006, 91-2.

and *De auguriis* extant in the manuscript Hauksbók, as well as looser evidence from other translations, all point to the use of Old English in the development of the church and vernacular sermon-writing.⁴⁸⁰ In terms of *grammatica* and education, the date of the Icelandic conversion was important: before c.1000 the apparatus for learning Latin as a completely foreign language had already been developed by other Germanic-speaking regions.⁴⁸¹ The wave of new grammatical writings in the eighth through eleventh centuries, as the tradition was adapted by Anglo-Saxon and Irish scholars, created pedagogies and learning for new contexts wherein the vernacular was not a romance language.⁴⁸²

The missionary period in early eleventh century Iceland was a key period for Ælfric's *Excerptiones* and the model of OE bilingual *grammatica* to make an impact on Iceland. Ælfric's text was at its peak of popularity as an elementary English grammar in the early eleventh century. It retained a good position into the twelfth century, with at least two surviving manuscripts containing glosses in Norman French, and there is one copy from the first half of the thirteenth century with language updated into Middle English. After this point English appears to have ceased to be used as a scholarly language until the fifteenth century, when, as noted above, the new metalanguage was Latinate and not based on Ælfric.⁴⁸³ This suggests that Ælfric's *Excerptiones* would have been in use and potentially available to Icelanders through the twelfth century, but is more likely to have arrived at its peak of popularity.

The two English missionary bishops mentioned in the Icelandic narrative sources, Bjarnharðr and Hróðólfr, appear to have been in Iceland for quite some time, during which their role as missionaries certainly must have included teaching.⁴⁸⁴ If an educational text

⁴⁸⁰ McDougall 1986-89, 189-91. Regarding Middle English, McDougall notes specifically that part of *Karlamagnús saga* is said in the manuscript to have been translated from English into Norse, rather than from French, and that several late-fifteenth-century English texts are extant in Icelandic translations from the sixteenth century. On the translation of Ælfric's homilies *De falsis Diis* and *De Auguriis* from Old English into Old Norse, see Taylor 1969.

⁴⁸¹ Raschellà 2001, 587.

⁴⁸² Irvine 1994, 90.

⁴⁸³ Law 1987, 63-4. The thirteenth-century example, by the scribe with the Tremulous Hand, however, has been suggested to be more of an antiquarian study of Old English than a practical use of the grammar (Hill 2007, 286).

⁴⁸⁴ See section 1.1.1 above.

making use of a foreign, albeit closely related, vernacular were to be used in Iceland, it would be of the greatest value during these first generations of grammatical teaching, when the discipline of *grammatica* was being adapted to a new linguistic and cultural context.⁴⁸⁵ Such an influence would have had a profound impact on how Icelanders viewed their own language and its relationship to Latin, and could have potentially instigated a much more rapid development of a bilingual intellectual culture than had Latin alone been used in the conversion process.

Beyond the evidence for OE loanwords and liturgical translations already noted, there is some textual evidence for the direct use of Ælfric's *Excerptiones*. In an article titled "Ælfric in Iceland" published in 2007, Kari Ellen Gade expanded upon some earlier scholarly suggestions about Ælfric's grammatical influence, pointing to parallels between Ælfric's *Excerptiones* and both the *3GT* and the Latin-ON verbal paradigms in AM 921 III 4to. Gade's argument for the influence of Ælfric rests primarily upon terminology, namely the idea that these Icelandic texts use the same methods Ælfric used for the creation of a metalanguage. She speculated that in several cases the Icelandic texts are actually using Ælfric's OE terms as a basis for their ON terms, as a sort of intermediate language between Latin and ON.⁴⁸⁶ Even though the *3GT* is a thirteenth-century text, and AM 921 III 4to even later, it is still most likely that they are reflecting a continuous thread of OE influence on ON intellectual culture going back to the eleventh century.

The *IGT* offers compelling evidence for this influence going back at least to the mid-twelfth century. The introduction to the treatise suggests that at least some Icelandic grammarians viewed English as an authoritative language, a vernacular already normalized by *grammatica*. The *IGT* presents itself as being based on an English model, with a very nuanced perspective on alphabet construction, after introducing the idea of the distinct

⁴⁸⁵ This, of course, does not account for grammatical learning which may have been adapted for the Nordic tongues in Denmark and Norway, and then exported from there to Iceland. However, there was just as much English missionary influence in these regions, and even English monks active in Denmark, and Ælfric could have come to Iceland via an indirect route.

⁴⁸⁶ Gade additionally points out passages where the *3GT* appears to be closer to Ælfric than to Priscian, at the same time as noting that the *3GT*'s main Latin source appears to be Priscian's *Institutiones*, rather than the abbreviated version of the text that Ælfric used (Gade 2007, 325-331).

alphabets for every language, on the precedent of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.⁴⁸⁷ By characterizing the English as having agency in producing their own alphabet, *IGT* reveals here that it is aware of the deliberate process which went into making English grammatically authorized, and is explicit that this influences the author in creating their own treatise. The historical, linguistic relationship proposed between English and Icelandic allows that authority to be applied to both languages – and the *IGT* is not the only place this idea appears.⁴⁸⁸ This passage, the use of English as a foundational justification for the creation of the *IGT*, strongly suggests that the First Grammarian was aware of English vernacular *grammatica*. Considering the connections made by Gade to the *3GT* and AM 921 III 4to, and the general popularity of the *Excerptiones*, Ælfric is by far the most likely source of that knowledge.⁴⁸⁹ But the simple presence of written OE in Iceland would be influential as well: it is important to note that over the course of the twelfth century the expanded English

⁴⁸⁷ Hveriga tungu er maðr skal rita annarar tungu stöfum, þá verðr sumra stafa vant, af því [...] at eigi finnsk þat hljóð í tungunni, sem stafirnir hafa, þeir er af ganga. En þó rita enskir men enskuna látinustöfum, öllum þeim er rétttræðir verða í enskunni, en þar er þeir vinnask eigi til, þá hafa þeir við aðra stafi, svá marga ok þesskonar sem þarf, en hina taka þeir ór, er eigi eru rétttræðir í máli þeira. Nú eptir þeira dæmum, alls vér erum einnar tungu, þó at gork hafí mjök önnur tveggja eða nokkut báðar, til þess at hægra verði at rita ok lesa, sem nú tíðisk ok á þessu landi, bæði lög ok áttvísi eða þýðingar helgar, eða svá þau in spakligu fræði, er Ari Þórgilsson hefir á bœkr sett af skynsamligu viti. (*Whatever language one has to write with the letters of another, some letters will be lacking, because [there are sounds in the language for which the other language has no letters, and some letters may be taken out, because] that sound is not found in the language which the letters have that are taken out. And yet Englishmen write English with Latin letters, as many as can be rightly pronounced in English, but where these no longer suffice, they add other letters, as many and of such a nature as are needed, taking out those that cannot be rightly pronounced in their language. Now according to their example, since we are of the same tongue, although there has been much change in one of them or some in both, I have written an alphabet for us Icelanders also, in order that it might become easier to write and read, as I now customary in this country as well, laws, genealogies, or sacred writings, and also that historical lore which Ari Thorgilsson has recorded in his books with such understanding wit*) (Haugen, ed., 1972).

⁴⁸⁸ In *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* it is stated that at the time of the narrative the language in England was the same as that of Norway and Denmark, but that it changed to French after the conquest of William the bastard (Foote and Quirk, ed. and trans., 1957, 14). In the Prologue of the *Snorra Edda* it is described how the travels of the Æsir across northern Europe left a shared language over all the northern regions, include Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, and England. It also notes that in England there are place names which show a different language from that of the Æsir, possibly referring to celtic place names, although it is unclear (Faulkes, ed., 2005, 6).

⁴⁸⁹ Hreinn Benediktsson has argued that the *FGT* shows greater clarity of method and principles of analysis than comparable orthographic texts in Germany and England (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 37), and is generally disinclined to allow for any foreign influence on the text, except for the basic education in *grammatica* the author must have had. Clearly, the author's reference to English orthographic endeavours belies this, and there are clear connections between the *IGT* and the tradition of *orthographia*, as will be dealt with in the next chapter.

alphabet being referenced here, which included the thorn and eth, ceased to appear in school alphabets,⁴⁹⁰ suggesting the *IGT*'s perspective on the English alphabet was based on earlier, eleventh-century scribal practice.

While English seems to be the most important vernacular language in the development of Icelandic *grammatica*, the possibility of knowledge of vernacular grammatical writing from German-speaking areas cannot be fully discounted. Ísleifr Gizurarson and his son Gizurr are said in *Hungrvaka*, the former also in *Kristni saga*, to have been educated in Saxony, Ísleifr in Herford specifically, in the latter half of the eleventh century. Hamburg-Bremen was likewise the archbishopric of all of the Nordic regions until 1104, when the archbishopric of Lund took over. However, while both Hamburg-Bremen and Saxony were in the north and would have spoken varieties of Low German, the activity of Notker and the school of St. Gall, and Hrabanus Maurus and his linguistic interests at Fulda were in Old High German areas. Thus, while we cannot discount influence from St. Gall and Fulda on Icelandic *grammatica*, the dialectal divisions within Germany suggest that it would not have been from Hamburg-Bremen, or through the education of Ísleifr and Gizurr.

While the development of vernacular education and *grammatica* in Iceland should be seen in the context of developments across Europe, the only vernacular tradition which seems likely to have made a direct impact is the Anglo-Saxon one. This impact alone, however, could have had a profound effect. Ælfric's grammar would have provided a precedent and method for a vernacular, ON understanding of *grammatica* to establish itself almost immediately in Iceland. Ælfric gives warnings about the dangers of translating religious texts without the normalizing safeguards of *grammatica*, as it allows a wider audience to read and potentially misinterpret it, and is explicit that his grammar is intended to solve that problem.⁴⁹¹ If his grammar was available as a precedent from the beginning of Icelandic textual culture, it could have provided an immediate solution to many potential anxieties about the use of the ON as a textual language. Knowledge of the *Excerptiones*, thus, not only could have affected the writing of grammatical treatises and classroom practice, but general

⁴⁹⁰ Orme 2006, 55-6.

⁴⁹¹ For discussion and translation of the passage, see Menzer 2004, 123-4.

attitudes towards the relationship between religion and vernacular composition.

Having this grammatical precedent to help negotiate the interaction between languages in the early Icelandic church, the use of the vernacular would be established in contexts where Latin was still necessary, thus providing a foundation for a bilingual clerical culture. This fits well with scholarly speculation on the cause of vernacular authority in Iceland, which has often revolved around the idea of its early use as a language of the Church, such use setting a broad cultural precedent.⁴⁹² In some cases, this has been viewed as a largely pragmatic issue of communication: scholars have emphasized the importance of ON homily writing in the vernacular for this reason, i.e. communicating to an audience unfamiliar with Latin.⁴⁹³ However, there is nothing about this dynamic unique to Iceland, and the communication of Christian ideologies to the masses of people who could not understand Latin was a serious concern in medieval Europe. In 813 regional church councils were held at Arles, Chalon, Mainz, Rheims, and Tours, and the need to make preaching more intelligible to a wider audience was among the topics raised. The forty-fifth Canon of the Council of Mainz called for everyone to learn the *Credo*, in their own language if learning it in Latin was not possible.⁴⁹⁴

There is reference to such concerns for communication in *Guðmundar saga góða* and *Lárentius saga*, which show that these pragmatic concerns encourage a bilingual, rather than a purely vernacular, clerical culture, and thus can reflect back on the development of bilingual *grammatica*. As noted earlier, in *Lárentius saga* Lárentius is needed at Níðaróss for his ability to speak and write in Norse, in order to mediate in the conflict between the archbishop and his cathedral chapter, but at the same time he needed very advanced Latin skills in canon law. Two speeches are mentioned in King Hákon's court as being read in both Latin and Old Norse.⁴⁹⁵ Later in the saga, in a particularly telling passage, Lárentius mocks Bishop Jón of Skálholt during their conflict over Möðruvellir for inappropriately using Latin

⁴⁹² “The vernacular gained a new prestige through conveying the message of the Church as well as information about its organizational structure to the people. The use of the mother tongue in rituals, spiritual guidance, preaching and prayer gave it a new status and new power and changed people's notions of their own language.” (Astås, 2002, 1045)

⁴⁹³ Turville-Petre 1953, 112-13.

⁴⁹⁴ Grotans 2006, 115-16.

⁴⁹⁵ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 254-5.

rather than Norse:

Byrjaði Jón byskup sitt mál í fyrstu með latínu ok sagði hvat fram hafði áðr farit í Möðruvallaháttum, bjóðandi Laurentio byskupi til andsvara.

Laurentius byskup svaraði á norrænu ok mælti: “Vita menn þat, herra Jón, at þér talið svá mjúkt latínu sem yðra móðurtungu, en þó skilr þat ekki almúgi ok því tölum svá ljóst at allir megi skilja. . .”⁴⁹⁶

Bishop Jón began his speech first, in Latin, and said what had already happened in the Möðruvellir-affair, inviting Bishop Lárentius to reply.

Bishop Lárentius answered in Norse and spoke: “People know, lord Jón, that you speak Latin as easily as your own mother tongue, but the common people do not understand it, and we will speak plainly so that all will be able to understand . . .”

So despite Lárentius’ own stated tendency to speak Latin often,⁴⁹⁷ despite the saga’s argument that Lárentius, like Jón, was one of the finest Latinists in Icelandic history,⁴⁹⁸ he is characterized as knowing when the vernacular was better. When the archbishop of Níðaróss sends a writ validating Lárentius’ side of this conflict, Lárentius had the writ translated into Norse, in order to be better and more widely understood.⁴⁹⁹ This can be viewed alongside the linguistic discussion in the introduction to *Blenda*, a simultaneous acknowledgement of the authority of Latin as the prime written, scholarly language, and the importance of using the vernacular to disseminate important knowledge.

When Guðmundr excommunicates Kolbeinn Tumason in *Guðmundar saga*, the saga is explicit that he recites the words from a document, in Norse.⁵⁰⁰ It is implicit that the formal excommunication would normally be in Latin, but that the situation calls for everyone to

⁴⁹⁶ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 403-4.

⁴⁹⁷ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 334.

⁴⁹⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 383.

⁴⁹⁹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., 1998, 424.

⁵⁰⁰ *Biskupa sögur* 1878, Vol. II, 62.

understand exactly what is happening. In another episode, which only appears in the fourteenth-century D version of *Guðmundar saga*, Bishop Guðmundr sends a messenger with a Latin letter to the pope, receives a reply in Latin, and while the saga attests the veracity of this account by saying that Bishop Lárentius saw the Latin letter during his stay at Niðaróss, it also notes that archbishop had it translated into Norse before reading it aloud to the cathedral *kór*.⁵⁰¹

These dynamics of translation and vernacular rhetoric show how the vernacular could serve functionally without actually replacing Latin; the fact that *Lárentius saga* in particular is so late only emphasizes that there was a stability in this bilingual clerical culture. This stability would have simultaneously fed into and been supported by bilingual education, and in particular by bilingual *grammatica*, through the cultural role of *grammatica* in authorizing and normalizing language and interpretation.

2.3.3 Grammatical Terminology in ON and OE

A vital aspect to the bilingual interactions within Icelandic *grammatica*, which parallels OE dynamics, is the development of technical terminology and metalanguage. Terminology is a key place of negotiation and interaction between Latin and Old Norse. It can reveal aspects of ideology and interpretation not explicitly discussed in texts, and it can connect intellectual traditions and social and cultural contexts.⁵⁰² Analyzing the development of grammatical language, moreover, provides glimpses of aspects of education and *grammatica* no longer extant in the corpus, and thus is fundamentally important for revealing early contexts of bilingual teaching and learning.

Learning a language in a classroom context demands terminology to describe language itself, a metalanguage, and the nature and formation of this metalanguage can

⁵⁰¹ *Biskupa sögur* 1878, Vol. II, 121-6.

⁵⁰² Gade, 2007, 332 is one of the rare acknowledgements of the importance of grammatical terminology. For discussions of terminology in the *3GT*, in addition to Gade 2007, see Micillo 1994; Clunies Ross 2005 197-200; see also glossaries in Wills, ed., 2001, 100-105, Ólsen, ed., 1884, 301-28; for terminology in the *1GT* see Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972 41-67; for the *2GT* Raschellà, ed., 1982, 114-22; for the *4GT* Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 152-7. An incomplete attempt to combine these terminological surveys can be seen in Appendix 2.

provide some information about different contexts of learning: oral, Latin, and bilingual. On a more ideological and traditional level, the technique of basing the beginning of grammatical education around memorizing Donatus' *ars minor* emphasized learning metalinguistic terms at a fairly early stage of education. Different types of terminology can suggest different levels of learning and different ways in which vernacular and Latin culture interacted. Thus, the terminology used in purely vernacular treatises can, in some cases, evidence bilingual education.⁵⁰³

The analysis of this section is based on the methodologies and precedent of Don Chapman's 2010 article, "*Uterque Lingua/Ægðer Gereord: Ælfric's Grammatical Vocabulary and the Winchester Tradition*". Chapman collects and analyzes the full body of grammatical terminology within Ælfric's *Excerptiones* in order to characterize the tradition of bilingual education, *uterque lingua* or *ægðer gereord*, at Winchester, and to understand the patterns and motivation in Ælfric's alternation between Latin and English grammatical terms.⁵⁰⁴ With the Icelandic treatises there is little use of actual Latin terms, and variance in terminology must be compared across different treatises, but those treatises are still transmitted together in the fourteenth-century manuscripts, and so their terminology still most have been read and understood together in certain contexts.

Chapman notes that while not all of the OE metalanguage could have been coined by Ælfric himself, there is very little English grammatical vocabulary elsewhere in the corpus; it is much the same situation with the ON metalanguage, with most terms only appearing in one or two treatises, sometimes only in a single instance. The ON and OE treatises also share the same unsurprising characteristic that the most commonly used terms are not specialized grammatical ones, but common words used with a specific technical sense in a grammatical context.⁵⁰⁵ Chapman uses a conventional taxonomy for distinguishing categories of loan vocabulary, with his own additions:

Loan Words: Words borrowed directly and naturalized from a foreign language.

⁵⁰³ See the corpus of loan formations in Appendix 2.

⁵⁰⁴ Chapman 2010, 422.

⁵⁰⁵ Chapman 2010, 425.

Semantic Loans: Words that are current in the borrowing language, but acquire a new sense in a specific context, as OE *tid* or ON *tíð* for Latin *tempus*, not in the normal sense of ‘time’ but in the specific grammatical sense of ‘verbal tense’.

Loan Formations: Often called calques or simply neologisms, these are new compound words created within the borrowing language, based on foreign words.

Multi-Word Loan Formations: A sub-category proposed by Chapman, where multiple words are used to calque or translate a single foreign word.

Chapman’s analysis provides a quantitative distinction between the use of these terms in the *Excerptiones*. More than 70 percent of loan formations are only used once in the treatise, and 88 percent only once or twice, while 64 percent of semantic loans are used three or more times. Chapman argues that this distribution occurs because semantic loans were widely understood, and so could be used independently of Latin terms, while loan formations were so specialized that they depended on the explicit comparison between languages.⁵⁰⁶ This analysis of the distribution and categorization of Latin and vernacular terminology highlights one of the most interesting aspects of grammatical terminology in ON. Despite the fact that the grammatical loan formations are just as rare in ON as in OE, in the Icelandic treatises they are not supported by their Latin equivalents, and have to function on their own.

This suggests that despite the influence of Ælfric on Icelandic *grammatica*, and the close similarity between OE and ON methods of creating metalanguage and other grammatical vocabulary, the terminology of the Icelandic treatises was used in different contexts. As Chapman argues:

. . . most grammatical terms do not belong to a general domain; instead they are specialized within the domain of grammar, so there could not have existed a well-established English counterpart outside the specialized domain. Ælfric was able to come up with corresponding words, of course, but these correspondences would not have been readily known. They would have to be

⁵⁰⁶ Chapman 2010, 427-8.

learned, just as the original Latin terms would have to be learned. In this regard, Ælfric's coinages would have been much less viable as stand-alone grammatical terms than those that already have a well-established connection. If a student has to learn a new technical term anyway, the student might as well learn the term that would be more valuable for later studies, namely the Latin term.⁵⁰⁷

In the context of bilingual clerical education in Iceland, we can speculate that this may have been the case: if the students were planning to learn Latin anyway, as part of their clerical duties, the ON terms would perhaps have functioned more as glosses of Latin terms than an independent metalanguage. However, within the context of the ON vernacular *grammatica* which eventually developed, represented by the extant treatises, Latin terminology seems not to have had this preferred utility, as these treatises did not depend on it.

The construction of loan formations in grammatical discourse, Chapman explains, has a practical function, related to classroom pedagogy as well as the medieval interest in etymology. Most grammatical compounds are based on common words; Chapman uses the example of the *imperativus*, the adjective describing the 'imperative' voice, based on the verb *impero* and an adjectival suffix. By constructing the equivalent OE *bebeodendlic*, based on the verb *bebeodian*, Ælfric could set up a correspondence between the interpretations of each compound term through their more commonly known components, a useful pedagogical tool for bilingual education:

Using terms that would likely have been known as counterparts to Latin terms in other contexts would have opened up the sense of the Latin term. If an English term could render a corresponding Latin term transparent long enough for students to see what the Latin stem meant, the entire Latin grammatical term would be easier to remember.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷ Chapman 2010, 428.

⁵⁰⁸ Chapman 2010, 429.

This etymological parsing, understanding why words meant what they did, was a key pedagogical tool. In some early medieval grammars, etymology was presented as a category of definition. Chapman characterizes Ælfric as extending the etymological means of definition to the sphere of bilingual education.⁵⁰⁹ He relates this to a wider context of etymological explanation and close English glossing of Latin at the Winchester school, where, he argues, “most of the correspondences between Ælfric’s English and Latin terms were already established in the glossing tradition.”⁵¹⁰

Chapman thus presents a model for constructing vocabulary, not only through glossing and translation, but also in a pedagogical context. Modern language classrooms are not entirely dissimilar: one of the ways to understand a new word, particularly one with an unfamiliar range of meanings, is to break it down into its component parts and translate each of them. In a modern context this is usually a purely oral practice, but in a medieval context, where dictionaries and comparable reference texts are rare and expensive, and memorization by rote is a primary tool, it is not surprising that such words would sometimes be written out and more widely used. Regular classroom use, if widespread, could establish such pedagogical loan formations among a wide portion of the literate population, particularly in a small region like Iceland with a limited number of schools and teachers. The terminology of the Icelandic grammatical treatises, particularly the metalanguage which would have been necessary to elementary and intermediate language learning, would therefore be most widespread and important in its oral classroom context, where it was directly involved with training the entire priestly class, and only secondarily in the narrower context of the extant treatises. This again suggests that it must have begun to develop within the earliest education out of pure necessity, and under the influence of Ælfric and the OE precedent.

It can be argued thus that translated treatises, the *3GT* and the *4GT*, in their use of loanwords and particularly loan formations, represent a development from bilingual education, both oral practice and the glossing of texts, rather than simply an idiosyncrasy of

⁵⁰⁹ Chapman 2010, 429-31. For a full discussion of Ælfric’s use of etymologies and their pedagogical value, see Hill 1988.

⁵¹⁰ Chapman 2010, 431.

translation. In light of the work which has been done on Ælfric, and the influence of OE on Icelandic *grammatica*, the highly Latin-influenced terminology of the *3GT* cannot be seen as the result of a single mid-thirteenth-century development.⁵¹¹ Rather it is far more likely that the application of a tradition of bilingual Latin learning – which produced a body of loanwords and loan formations – was applied in the mid-thirteenth century to the textualization of vernacular poetics began by the *Snorra Edda*. As such, the terminology of the *3GT* is evidence for the use of the vernacular in the teaching and learning of Latin in the early thirteenth century, and probably stretching back to the eleventh century.

Learning Latin, and therefore developing a language for teaching Latin, was among the first tasks that learned Christian Icelanders had to deal with to incorporate the new religion into their society. This was not strictly an issue of *grammatica*, and technical terminology ON like *stafa* and *figúra* are also important to *computus*: *stafa* and *figúra* are frequently used to refer to numerals, and *figúra* to refer to mathematical figures and concepts, in addition to their grammatical usages.⁵¹² Several scholars have acknowledged the importance of glossing practices and general linguistic adaptation for the reception of Christianity in Iceland.⁵¹³ However, the idea that the terminology of the translated grammatical treatises could reflect this linguistic adaptation has not been considered.

Certain metalinguistic terms would have been essential from the earliest bilingual teaching of Latin. Appendix 2 provides a body of terminology from the grammatical treatises, dividing loan formations and loanwords from semantic loans and native terms, but here a few key examples can be discussed which are particularly relevant to the use of the vernacular in the teaching of Latin. The names for the cases are particularly important, in that they are both central to the teaching of basic *grammatica* and extremely rare in the extant treatises, and they are all loan formations. Following Chapman's reasoning, these terms must have developed in direct juxtaposition to Latin terms, in oral and/or textual contexts. Yet such juxtapositions do not appear in the *3GT* and the *4GT*, suggesting that there must be some

⁵¹¹ See also the examples of *fornafn*, *höfuðskepna*, and *yfirstigning* in Appendix 2.

⁵¹² See the entries for *stafa* and *figúra* in Appendix 2.

⁵¹³ For the importance of glossing, see Sverrir Tómasson 2002, 796. For the general importance of linguistic adaptation for the reception of Christianity in Iceland, see Schottnann 2002, 404-411.

bilingual discourse behind the production of the texts. The term for ‘nominative’, *nefnligr*, does not actually appear until the *4GT*, yet it cannot be an innovation of the *4GT* or its era because terms for the other cases, *gæfiligr* ‘dative’ and *roegiligr* ‘accusative’ only appear in the *3GT*. It is far more likely that vernacular cases were developed together in the bilingual teaching of Latin, rather than individual terms being coined in the process of translating texts to be used for vernacular poetics. There are also a significant number of terms relating to the inflection of verbs extant only in AM 921 III 4to, which dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century, but as already discussed, almost certainly derives from a much earlier translation of Ælfric’s *Excerptiones*.

There is more definitive evidence that a more bilingual pedagogical environment lay behind the *3GT* in the terms for ‘diphthong’. The *MG* uses three terms: the Latin loan *diphthongus* is most frequent, glossed only once with the loan formation *tvíhljóðr*, and then the native term *límingarstafr*, which also appears as the shorter *límingr* in the *2GT*. The *2GT* is also unique in using the term *lausklofi*.⁵¹⁴ The *diphthongus*/*tvíhljóðr* interaction in the *MG* is clearly the same type of glossing described by Chapman in Ælfric, where the loan formation only functions to explain the full etymological meaning of the Latin term; it is a brief textual reference to the type of explanation that would have occurred orally in a classroom. Neither *diphthongus* nor *tvíhljóðr* is actually necessary in the context of the treatise, as *límingrstafr* is used elsewhere in the *MG* and once in the *4GT*. The use of the two terms, and particularly the appearance of *tvíhljóðr* only once while the Latin *diphthongus* is used elsewhere on its own, is clearly a remnant of the same sort of glossing function of the vernacular as in Ælfric. The use of the loan formation *tvíhljóðr* rather than a native term could be reflective of pedagogical practice.

Another example in the *MG* suggests that this text in particular is influenced by the bilingual teaching of Latin. The loanword *figúra* is widely used in many different vernacular texts, but the *3GT* may be the earliest, and one passage in the *MG* treat *figúra* as a Latin word in need of glossing:

⁵¹⁴ Raschellà does argue that the *2GT* appears to take its two diphthong terms, *límingr* and *lausaklofi*, as graphemic categories referring respectively to vowel ligatures and vowel digraphs (Raschellà, ed., 1982, 118-19).

Annat tilfelli stafs er figúra, þat er mynd eða vöxtr stafanna gerr, sem nú er ritat.

*The second characteristic of the letter is shape (figura), that is the form or shaping of letters, made as is now written.*⁵¹⁵

This passage seems to reflect what almost certainly must have been a classroom translation dynamic. *Figúra* is a complex word, with variable possible definitions both as a Latin term or as a Norse loanword, so in the very specific grammatical context of discussing the shape of a letter, it is useful to present it as representative of a particular Latin grammatical idea, and then give it a clarifying gloss. In the context of a vernacular treatise this is an unnecessary use of the term, particularly juxtaposed to the *MS* where the Latin term *figura* is used primarily in a totally different sense. But if the *MG* is here preserving remnants of an earlier glossed or partly translated Latin text, this passage would be an important explanation of complex, technical terminology.

It is also possible to speculate a little for Iceland about Chapman's idea that rare metalinguistic loan formations could have been supported by a more general knowledge of closely related terms, or even of different uses of the same term. *Samjafnanligr* 'comparative' only appears once in the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (ONP), in its metalinguistic usage in the *MS*, but the related verb *samjafna* has eight appearances. *Rægiligr* 'accusative' only appears in the *3GT* and *4GT*, but the verb upon which it is based, *rægja* 'to accuse', has some 76 references in the ONP.⁵¹⁶ Perhaps the most compelling example, as both terms are clearly specialized loan formations, but one is much more common and potentially versatile, is the adjective *nefnligr* 'nominative' and the adverb *nefnliga* 'by name/namely': the former only appears once in the *4GT*, while the latter has twelve references in the ONP and is clearly a much more versatile term. These are only a few examples, significantly more could be found

⁵¹⁵ Wills, ed., 2001, 88-9.

⁵¹⁶ It is important to keep in mind that the ONP is not completely comprehensive, see Appendix 2.

among the terms listed in Appendix 2, and a far more thorough study is needed to fully compare the ON lexicon of loan formations to the OE. It is clear, however, that a very similar dynamic to Chapman's likely occurred in ON, wherein specialized metalinguistic terms would have been more readily comprehensible through their similarity to other, more commonly used words.

There are two core lines of connection between the translated grammatical treatises and bilingual Latin education: first, they can be thought of as compositions making use of a lexicon established both orally and textually in bilingual teaching practices, an author making at least in some part a stylistic decision to apply the language of bilingual discourse to a discussion of vernacular poetics; second, they can be thought of as direct textual adaptations of earlier glossed versions of their Latin source texts, new versions being steadily readapted until they reached the version which are now extant, the fundamental shift being the replacement of Latin poetic examples with ON ones. These two scenarios are not mutually exclusive. The existence of AM 921 III 4to gives proof of the existence of bilingual educational texts, where ON is primarily a glossing language, closer to the model of Ælfric's *Excerptiones*; it is very unlikely that the fragment was unique. At the same time, the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did see the development of the so-called 'florid' style – see below section 3.1.3 – which involved literary texts making significantly greater use of loan formations and loanwords for potentially both pragmatic and stylistic reasons. It is not impossible that the *3GT* represents a predecessor of this style.

Whatever their style, both the *3GT* and *4GT* are fundamentally vernacular texts, dealing with the interpretation of vernacular poetry. The lack of equivalent Latin metalanguage, apart from a few loanwords, in either the *3GT* or *4GT* suggests the loan formations appearing in the treatises had more widespread viability than in OE, and that some audience existed which discussed language entirely in the vernacular, rather than in a Latin or bilingual context. However, in order for these loan formations to become established as independently functional, the *3GT* and *4GT* must have derived from earlier glossing and translation of their Latin sources: bilingual education directed towards students who were learning Latin thus must have fed into the development of vernacular intellectual culture.

Conclusion

There is more evidence for the presence of Latin and the importance of Latin education and *grammatica* in Iceland than has been appreciated. The performance of the Latin liturgy was fundamental to medieval Christian culture and society, and there is extensive evidence in documentary and narrative sources that Iceland was not an exception in this. The booklists contained in the *máldagar*, in particular, show how much written Latin existed and was read in medieval Iceland, while *Lárentius saga* and other *biskupasögur* show the value of the language to both elite clerical identity and the simple job of being a priest. *Jóns saga* places a profound rhetorical emphasis on grammatical learning in the context of an idealized conception of cathedral education and its place in the wider community, including the idea that *grammatica* was vital to salvation. *Lárentius saga* shows the career of an Icelandic schoolteacher in the fourteenth century, but also the path to higher levels of learning from a focus on *grammatica* to an education in canon law in Norway.

In both liturgy and education, Latin interacted with the vernacular, and so both elementary and more advanced forms of education functioned as part of generally bilingual culture of clerical education. Glossaries and glosses, fragments like AM 921 III 4to, and the pedagogical books listed in the *máldagar* all show how Latin education and grammatical learning goes beyond what is seen in the main grammatical treatises. These, among other sources, also show the multi-disciplinary nature of elementary education. It included the basic introductions to reading and song, often based upon the Psalms, which in the Middle Ages were often classified with *grammatica*, but also *computus*. The introduction to *Blenda* shows that the combination of an elementary, introductory context with the vital importance of learning these topics for aspiring priests lent itself to translation and bilingual learning.

The most important aspect of *grammatica* after this introduction was learning Latin, a difficult and long process, which must have produced many forms of partial literacy.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Based on the discussions of this chapter, we must reject Sverrir Tomasson's view of the passage in *Lárentius saga*, where he argues that Lárentius could not be teaching monks ignorant of Latin (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 27-8). Learning Latin was a long and difficult enough process that many Icelandic monks and clerics may have

Grammatica could intersect with almost any other discipline through its centrality to the learning of Latin, but also its teaching of language criticism. At the same time, the existence of levels of education before Latin learning points to a whole class of people who must have been introduced to clerical education, but never gained the skills to functionally use Latin or enter into Latin intellectual discourse.⁵¹⁸ The booklists and the discussion of the higher Latinity of canon law education in *Lárentius saga* can add to this picture of a multi-leveled understanding of Latinity, based on skill level and function, each level of which could interact with the vernacular in a different way.

These intersections between language can be better understood by contextualizing the Icelandic use of the vernacular in Latin learning in the history of vernacular developments elsewhere in Europe. All the vernaculars of Europe were potential models and influences for Iceland, but Ælfric and the Anglo-Saxon tradition almost certainly had the most direct impact, through missionary priests and an established model of OE authority. This model surely affected how medieval Icelanders viewed and used *grammatica*, and supported the use of the vernacular in teaching Latin, even as narrative sources can show the fundamental pragmatism of a bilingual composition and rhetoric in clerical contexts. Aspects of this type of bilingual learning can be seen in the type of terminology used in the translated grammatical treatises, which can be discussed on the model OE metalinguistic development. The Icelandic translated grammatical treatises preserve aspects of language use from both classroom practice and the glossing of grammatical and pedagogical texts for use in bilingual education.

In light of the previous chapter, this discussion of Latinity and its role in education further emphasizes that what might be characterized as standard, medieval European forms of clerical education were in fact very complex and variable, both in context and content. Latin could mean very different things to a poor priest or deacon, intent primarily to perform

struggled with it long into their careers.

⁵¹⁸ As Orme describes of an English student at an elementary level of learning: “Such a boy was being taught to read, pronounce, and sing a text correctly at sight. He would not know what it was about until he began to study Latin. Some children who learnt to read may never have progressed to that stage. Once they knew how to recognize words and pronounce them, it would not be difficult for them to read a text in their own language, English or French, because they would more easily understand the structure of the sentences and the meaning of the words. It is very likely . . . a large proportion of pupils took this path . . .” (Orme 2006, 60).

well and earn a living, with potentially little concern for understanding a language, from what a deeply academic schoolmaster and monk like Lárentius would have thought about the language. Even more complex are the lay and aristocratic attitudes towards Latinity and its role in learning, where the potential prestige of the language is disconnected from its function. The discussion of vernacular *grammatica* in the next chapter must be seen both in this space of separated interaction, as well as in the chronological growth of clerical conceptions of vernacularity.

Chapter 3: The Development of Vernacular *Grammatica*

The previous chapter explored education and *grammatica* in the classic sense: the study and standardization of the Latin language and the interpretation of Latin literature. Despite the significance of Latin to medieval Iceland, in terms of liturgy and clerical identity, Icelandic literary culture as can be seen through the extant manuscript corpus was still dominantly vernacular. A vernacular *grammatica* developed in this context throughout the medieval period, under the influence of native pre-Christian intellectual traditions, Latin *grammatica*, and the bilingual educational techniques of the OE model. While there is a significant amount of scholarship on the Icelandic grammatical treatises themselves, no study has attempted to characterize vernacular *grammatica* as a discipline in the broad historical sense, incorporating both the influences on it and the impacts it could have had on Icelandic culture and literature.⁵¹⁹

First, the conditions of Icelandic intellectual culture when Christianity and *grammatica* were introduced must be taken into account. Oral culture provided the means for the production, interpretation, and education in law, poetry, genealogical history, and some amount of runic writing. The foundation of vernacular *grammatica* lies in the textualization and Christianization of these forms of learning, combined with the adaptation of Latin *grammatica* to the bilingual clerical culture of Iceland and the fundamental importance of religious translation within that culture. The precedent of runic writing was fundamental to a sense of vernacular linguistic identity, while the importance of law and poetry to Icelandic society provided a body of important textual subjects for developing vernacular grammatical ideas.

Second, as vernacular *grammatica* had no need to teach native speakers their own language, the discipline can be understood as primarily concerned with different aspects of interpretation, and to a lesser extent composition. Creating a normative ON, a vernacularity

⁵¹⁹ Mikael Males has recently suggested the idea of a vernacular *grammatica* distinct from Latin *grammatica* (Males 2016, 296, 299). However, Males' vernacular *grammatica* is largely restricted to the intellectual culture behind the grammatical treatises and the skaldic tradition, while I will be describing a broader intellectual tradition which intersects more with certain types of prose, hagiography, and eddic poetry as well.

parallel to *latinitas*, was a foundation for serious textual interpretation. This concern for the capacity of language to communicate truth intersected with the historiographical interest in truthful source material.⁵²⁰ Issues around correct language led to an extensive discourse around the different virtues of complex and simple language. In this last sense, in particular, the concerns of poetic interpretation in the grammatical treatises intersect with prose genres. Here, then, vernacular *grammatica* can be seen as a much wider and more influential discipline than has hitherto been suggested.

Finally, these issues of interpretation and composition are the primary way where vernacular *grammatica* can be understood as an educational genre, beyond the elementary learning of basic vernacular reading skills. Latin *grammatica* taught modes and methods of interpretation, while *rhetorica* and the combination of the disciplines in the *artes poetriae* taught effective composition. While there is no basis for assuming that vernacular *grammatica* had the same level of power or influence over education and literary culture as the parallel Latin discipline did, by being modelled in part on them, it very likely found a place in some educational contexts. There is very little that can be said for certain, however, about these contexts or how exactly they made use of vernacular *grammatica*.

3.1 The Origins and Influences of Icelandic Vernacular *Grammatica*

While literacy in the broad sense and *grammatica* as a particular discipline fundamentally changed how Icelanders viewed and wrote about language, they certainly did not wait until the year 1000 to think about and conceptualize their own language. Runic writing and skaldic poetry without a doubt involved at least some metalanguage, and the oral methods of poetic education must have continued past the year 1000, or else the discipline

⁵²⁰ Here I will be using ‘truth’ in a fairly broad, general sense, as fully delineating the relationship between *grammatica* and more specific types of truth – truths related to particular genres and functions of texts – would require a significantly more thorough study. As Copeland and Sluiter note, grammatical thought was orientated around defining what was truth and fiction, but also used theological categories of truth and reality in their understanding of figures and tropes (Copeland and Sluiter 2009, 35-6). Thus the interest of Augustine and others in drawing out the hidden truth behind figures and words in the Scripture (Irvine 1994, 260) can be related to a wider grammatical concern for truth in a broader sense.

would have died out. While the continuity of runic education in Iceland is debatable, it certainly continued in Norway, and from there could have continued to influence Iceland. Legal education, while perhaps not explicitly metalinguistic, could have also had some influence on grammatical developments through the importance of legal interpretation.

Once literacy and Christianity were introduced, the Christianization and eventual textualization of certain genres must have had a profound influence on the formation of vernacular hermeneutics and metalanguage, above all the writing of law and poetry, but likely also the writing of history and vernacular religious works. The importance of truthfulness, precision, and accuracy to these genres would have encouraged a critical attitude towards their production. This, in turn, could have combined with the precedent set by bilingual *grammatica* to begin to develop fully vernacular grammatical writings, ideologies, and pedagogies.

There is no evidence that vernacular *grammatica* as it is being discussed here was ever treated holistically as a discipline.⁵²¹ The great compilations of the fourteenth century, the *Codex Wormianus* and *Codex Upsaliensis*, comprise a significant portion of vernacular *grammatica*, but the origins and influences which are being proposed here go beyond poetics and orthography. The vernacular *grammatica* discussed here, which can be understood as continually developing from the eleventh through the fifteenth century, is the whole component of vernacular intellectual culture which parallels Latin *grammatica*. It is the metalinguistics, commentary, hermeneutics, and general philosophy of language which developed around ON literary and textual culture. By tracing its influences and origins through its development into the grammatical treatises and other later texts, a fundamental component of Icelandic intellectual culture can be characterized. This intellectual culture stands between the poorly evidenced field of education and the vernacular textual culture of the extant manuscript corpus.

3.1.1 The Precedent of Runacy, Poetics, History and Law

⁵²¹ Males suggests similar caution when he notes that the study of vernacular *grammatica* was likely not as institutionalized as Latin *grammatica* (Males 2016, 299).

This distinctly Icelandic vernacular *grammatica* is founded in the existing traditions and cultural features which affected the reception of Latin *grammatica* and the development of linguistic education, interpretation, and ideology. There are four traditions which can be shown to have had a clear effect on these developments: runic writing; poetics and the interpretative and historical attitudes inherent to skaldic poetry; concerns over historical learning and truth; legal interpretation and education. While little can be said for certain about the conditions of such intellectual traditions before the adoption of the Latin alphabet and the extant manuscripts, that they must have had some effect is indisputable. Moreover, the four traditions are linked in their direct need for pre-Christian educational practices, and their concern for linguistic interpretation. This sets an initial context for what the conceptions of ON were before Latin *grammatica* began to make its influence.

Runic writing was certainly known in Iceland, though there are few surviving inscriptions and it seems likely that it was likely less widely used there than in the rest of the Nordic world.⁵²² Scholars have speculated about the extent of the connection between Viking Age runes from Scandinavia and medieval and early modern manuscript runes from Iceland,⁵²³ but it is enough here to point out that at least some knowledge of runes must have existed continuously in Icelandic intellectual culture, enough to affect how conceptions of language, vernacularity, and potentially even educational practices developed. Moreover, the continuing relationship between intellectual culture in Iceland and Scandinavia would have meant a continuing influence of runic pedagogies and discourses throughout the Middle Ages, particularly from Norway.

The corpus of eddic poetry, the mythological and heroic poems in the simpler Old Norse metres, contain accounts of runic learning. While highly literary and even mythic, these accounts do provide some glimpse into how medieval Icelanders might have conceptualized pre-Christian runic learning. In the wisdom poem *Hávamál*, Óðinn learns the

⁵²² For an edition of the extant inscriptions, see Bæksted, ed., 1942.

⁵²³ Þórgunnur Snædal has argued for a continuous Icelandic runic tradition based on the similarities between the cryptic runes appearing on the Rök stone and in Jón Ólafsson's 1752 treatise *Rúnareiddsla* (Þórgunnur Snædal 2005).

runes while hanging himself; in *Rígsþula*, where the figure Rígr is the progenitor to the different classes of humankind, Rígr is described as teaching runes to the most upper-class of his offspring; finally, in *Sigrdrífumál*, the hero Sigurðr is taught several types of useful runes by the valkyrie Sigrdrífa.⁵²⁴ All three accounts emphasize the mysterious, cryptic side of runacy, but also show the connection with the elite cultural practices, and the prestige value of runic knowledge.

While runic literacy is thought to have expanded over the course of the Viking Age and into the Middle Ages,⁵²⁵ the connection with wisdom poetry and elite prestige can also be seen in later poems. In a well-known stanza from *Orkneyinga saga* attributed to the twelfth-century earl of Orkney Rögnvaldr Kali Kolsson, the earl brags of his own skills, including that he *týnik rúnum trauðla* ‘forgets runes slowly’,⁵²⁶ emphasizing a rather pedagogical concern for memorization. The wisdom poem *Hugsvinnsmál*, a probably thirteenth-century translation of the Latin *Disticha Catonis*,⁵²⁷ gives the advice *kenn þú blíðliga bækr ok rúnir* ‘teach with kindness books and runes’.⁵²⁸ This advice hints at a shared pedagogical context for the learning of the runic fuþark – the term for the runic alphabet, referencing its first six characters – and the Latin alphabet, which may suggest a coming together of runic and grammatical learning based on their similarities. It also emphasizes the idea that, rather than replacing the runic fuþark, the Latin alphabet coexisted with the earlier form of writing in Scandinavia, each one fulfilling its own distinct functions, with the runic writing often representing a more ephemeral, pragmatic form of literacy.⁵²⁹

Scholars have shown the extent to which runic pedagogy was influenced by grammatical ideas and Latin learning in Scandinavia, particularly in Norway. Such practices must have influenced Iceland. The writing of the fuþark is quite common among the extant inscriptions, and among several other uses it was a method of practising learning the characters, parallel to the writing out of the Latin alphabet.⁵³⁰ The writing of runes fits with

⁵²⁴ These references are collected in Knirk 1994, 169-70.

⁵²⁵ Knirk 1994, 171; Schulte 2012, 157-8.

⁵²⁶ Gade, ed., 2009, 576-7.

⁵²⁷ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 358.

⁵²⁸ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 367.

⁵²⁹ Schulte 2012, 163-4; Knirk 1994, 206-7.

⁵³⁰ Knirk 1994, 173-4.

several aspects of clerical culture and learning in the Norwegian sources, including representing the phases of the lunar cycle, or even days of the week.⁵³¹ Surviving runic inscriptions of the *Pater Noster* and the *Credo* may also relate to the standard use of such prayers in elementary education.⁵³²

There is also evidence for the use of different types of syllabaries in learning to read and write runes in Norway, including at least one example of a list of four-letter syllables that could function as the internal-rhymes in a skaldic *dróttkvætt* stanza, which potentially links the learning of skaldic verse with these runic syllabaries.⁵³³ Knirk also discusses a *dróttkvætt* love poem carved alongside a Virgil quote about love, which is accompanied by a very badly attempted copy of both the Latin and ON words. This suggests the simultaneous learning of runes, skaldic poetry, and Latin poetry.⁵³⁴ Shared poetic and runic learning is also confirmed by another rune-stick from Tønsberg which contain several carvings by different hands which appear to be communicating with each other. It includes both a verse and an explicit mention of a student learning from a teacher, and which Knirk has argued is an exchange between a teacher of runes and his students.⁵³⁵ One very late, possibly fourteenth- or fifteenth-century, carving on a table top in Nord-Trøndelag is particularly explicit on the pedagogical role of syllabaries, stating *nam ek þetta því fe fu fa fō* ‘I learn that etc.’⁵³⁶ Scholars have emphasized, however, that these syllabaries are a borrowing from Latin pedagogy, and so represent a medieval development in runic learning.⁵³⁷

This developing tradition of syllabary use in Norwegian runic pedagogy can be tentatively connected to the Icelandic orthographic treatises, through terminology and the use of syllabaries. The *IGT* uses the term *rún* three times to refer to ‘letters’ or an ‘alphabet’. Einar Haugen has argued that this use of *rún* is not distinguished from other terms like *stafr*, *látinustafr*, *málstafr*, and *bókstafr*, and that terms derived from runic discourse like *rýnni*, ‘skill in letters’, *ráða* in the sense of ‘to read’, and *stafr* ‘letter’ are not associated with runes

⁵³¹ Knirk 1994, 176.

⁵³² Knirk 1994, 191-2.

⁵³³ Knirk 1994, 192-7.

⁵³⁴ Knirk 1995, 198-9.

⁵³⁵ Knirk 1994, 204-6.

⁵³⁶ Knirk 1994, 203-4.

⁵³⁷ Knirk 1994, 192; Seim 1998, 510-11.

in the *IGT*.⁵³⁸ However, he does not point out that this very lack of differentiation shows a blending and application of native runic metalanguage to grammatical discourse in the decades before the composition of the *IGT*, potentially even as early as the eleventh century. Moreover, the term *ráða* has been discussed by scholars of Norwegian runes as being the preferred verb in runic discourse, rather than *lesa*, potentially referring to silent reading rather than reading aloud, and possibly also suggesting a correct interpretation in the reading of cryptic runes.⁵³⁹ Males has also recently argued against the prevailing scholarly trend, suggesting that in the *IGT* the term *rún* can refer to runes, Greek, Hebrew, and epigraphic writing, but not to Latin characters written on manuscript pages.⁵⁴⁰ It should be noted, however, that the term *rún* is not used in this generic sense in any other grammatical treatises, and so it may be particular to the twelfth-century grammatical discourse of the *IGT*. Whatever the case, whether developed in Iceland or borrowed from Norwegian discourse, the *IGT* is certainly evidence of an existing runic metalanguage being incorporated into vernacular *grammatica*.

The *IGT* may also be linked to the tradition of syllabaries, and thus potentially to runic syllabaries, if they were available to set up a vernacular precedent before the composition of the *IGT*. In presenting its distinctively precise orthography, the *IGT* uses a technique resembling modern minimal pairs to show the significance of each vowel it proposes be included in its alphabet. For the most part, this seems to be a continuation of the Latin grammatical practice of *differentiae* used in many orthographic treatises, to either correct common spelling errors or distinguish homonyms. In orthographic treatises, and in some types of pedagogical poetry, pairs or groups of words would be juxtaposed and particular semantic distinctions or minor orthographic distinctions pointed out.⁵⁴¹ However,

⁵³⁸ Haugen, ed., 1972, 49-50. There is some argument that *rýnni*, at least, is part of a specialized runic/grammatical discourse, as according to the *ONP* it appears only in this one instance in the *IGT*. For an argument that *málstafir* and *bókstafir* can be distinguished in the context of the treatise, and that *ráða* maintains a specific significance in the context of an author and audience familiar with runes, see Hagland 1993.

⁵³⁹ Knirk 1994, 173; Spurkland 2005, 139.

⁵⁴⁰ Males 2016, 266, note 13.

⁵⁴¹ The apparent similarity between the *IGT* and Serlo of Wilton's *De differentiis* has been very briefly pointed out in Law 2003, 180, 201, in Holtsmark 1936, 89-90, and most recently in Males 2016, 265. I discuss in more detail the connection between the technique of the *IGT* and the larger tradition of Latin orthographic writing in Patzuk-Russell 2016.

the *IGT*'s pairs of vernacular *differentiae* involve particularly precise distinctions between long, short, nasal, and unlauded vowels which either would not have been marked or would not have been relevant to Latin orthography. If the runic syllabaries were a source, however, they could have offered a precedent for such vowel distinctions.

The *2GT* seems even more likely to be indebted to the developing medieval runic pedagogical tradition, both because of its syllabary and its distinctive metalanguage. Fabrizio Raschellà, the editor of the *2GT*, argues that *hljóðstafr* 'vowel' and *málstafr* 'consonant' in particular represent aspects of a pre-Christian runic metalanguage, rather than an adaptation to Latin *grammatica* through loan formations.⁵⁴² If this is the case, then the treatise as a whole may have a particular connection to runic pedagogy, possibly Norwegian. As noted in chapter 2, though it does not appear to have been suggested by previous scholars, the rectangular figure drawn in the *2GT* is clearly an elaborated version of a syllabary, using rows of vowels and consonants as a pedagogical tool to show how the different characters can be combined to produce different syllables. If the argument that it depends particularly on runic metalanguage is correct, this use of a syllabary may represent a direct borrowing of the runic pedagogy seen in the Norwegian sources, perhaps even through the author's own teaching experience, or through being taught in Norway.

The most extensive discussion of runes is in the *MG*, where there is a full discussion of the characteristics of the fuþark, and a letter-by-letter comparison between the runes and the Latin alphabet, including references to Greek and Hebrew as well.⁵⁴³ While the Norwegian inscriptions show evidence of Latin pedagogical techniques influencing runic education, the *MG* is the only instance of a full grammatical analysis of the fuþark, using various Latin interpretative techniques, loanwords, and loan formations. The treatise, however, is clearly still making use of the pre-existing mixing of pedagogical traditions. It splits its discussion into the basic sixteen-character fuþark and the extended medieval runes. The former fits with the normal runic pedagogy of beginning everything with the fuþark.⁵⁴⁴ It also appears to make use of distinctions between runic metalanguage and later terms: while

⁵⁴² Raschellà, ed., 1982, 114-22. See also Appendix 2.

⁵⁴³ Wills, ed., 2001, 84-90.

⁵⁴⁴ Seim 1998, 510-11.

límingarstafr ‘diphthong’ is used in the *MS* and *4GT* to refer generally to diphthongs, in the *MG* it refers specifically to runic diphthongs, while elsewhere it used the terms *diphthongus* and *tvihljóðr*. Thus, if *límingarstafr* comes from a pre-Christian runic metalanguage,⁵⁴⁵ even while it could be used generally in other treatises, its distinctive origin appears to have still been understood, likely reflecting the continuing influence of actual runic pedagogy. The *MG* thus show both the developing tradition of runic pedagogy and the influence of earlier runic learning and pre-Christian metalinguistics.⁵⁴⁶

The Icelandic grammatical treatises also draw a connection between the Norwegian runic pedagogy discussed above, which deals with inscriptions, and manuscript runes: those runes which are written with ink and parchment, often in codices. Michael Schulte has linked the development of manuscript runes in both Anglo-Saxon England and later in medieval Scandinavia with an influence of *latinitas* on conceptions and practices of runic writing, suggesting that *latinitas* – and thus implicitly *grammatica* – had an impact on the creation of such literary texts as the *Norwegian Rune Poem*, the Danish *Codex Runicus* – an entire legal codex written in runes – and possibly even the invention of dotted runes.⁵⁴⁷ While it only survives in manuscripts from c. 1500, the *Icelandic Rune Poem* is evidence of the Icelandic incarnation of this tradition; it is not impossible that the OE influence on Icelandic *grammatica* also brought with it some of this mixing of runacy and *latinitas* from the Anglo-Saxon world.

While many scholars emphasize the distinction between the antiquarian interests of the writings of manuscript runes and the more pragmatic and ephemeral functions of inscriptions,⁵⁴⁸ particularly inscriptions in wood, this cannot be treated as a hard distinction. The influence of runic pedagogy in vernacular *grammatica*, and the influence of Latin learning on runic inscriptions, suggest that there was continuous interaction between the two worlds. It is telling that *Guðmundar saga góða* narrates how the priest Ingimundr,

⁵⁴⁵ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 118-19.

⁵⁴⁶ Males has recently discussed the efforts apparent in the *MG* to rationalize aspects of the fuþark, particularly the arrangement of characters and the names of vowels, under the influence of grammatical ideology and in light of the Latin phonographic system (Males 2016, 268-70).

⁵⁴⁷ Schulte 2012, 179-81; Knirk 1994, 206-7.

⁵⁴⁸ Page 1999, 26.

Guðmundr's uncle, leaving his last message after a shipwreck, carved into runes on a wax tablet, when physical evidence exists for the use of such tablets in runic carving.⁵⁴⁹ It would make sense that as a priest and educator of his nephew Ingimundr would have known and probably taught a certain amount of *grammatica*. He could thus represent an example of the numerous ways pedagogies of manuscript runes and runic inscription could have interacted.

Poetry also ties pre-Christian pedagogies and metalanguage to developments of vernacular *grammatica*, and also shows ties to runic learning in both pre-Christian and later textual contexts. The connection between poetry and runes can be seen from multiple perspectives: the actual carving of poetry into runes, as noted earlier; the occasional medieval literary association, such as Egill Skallagrímsson in *Egils saga* being both poet and rune-carver; the historical or chronological link in their concern for memorization, permanence, and incorruptibility;⁵⁵⁰ their shared issues with interpretation, as both are involved in the cryptic obfuscation of their messages through specialized linguistic composition and exegesis, as well as a concern for the clear communication of important messages. Both runes and poetics represent contexts for pre-Christian metalanguage to develop, which could then impact later grammatical discourse, and both are disciplines which would have required extensive pedagogy in both pre-Christian and later secular contexts. As the runic and poetic concerns of the *3GT* show, these pedagogies continued to influence ecclesiastical learning and the development of vernacular *grammatica*.

Vernacular poetry was fundamentally important to Icelandic society and culture from Iceland's initial settlement through the Middle Ages. Traditions of panegyric skaldic poetry came to Iceland from Norway with the first settlement of the country, and numerous Icelanders are recorded as working as professional poets in Norway at the end of the tenth and the first half of the eleventh century, with somewhat lesser numbers in the twelfth and thirteenth, suggesting a drop-off in the Norwegian court being the primary context for poetry.⁵⁵¹ There is excellent evidence for the genre of *níð*, insulting verses, being widely used

⁵⁴⁹ Schulte 2012, 172; Knirk 1994, 207-8. For a discussion of the evidence Ingimundr provides for Icelandic runic literacy, see Hagland 1996.

⁵⁵⁰ Jesch 2005, 188-92, where Jesch also speculates that the term *skáld* could potentially have referred to any person preserving memory and history, not just poets. See also Gade 2000, 70-71.

⁵⁵¹ Gade 2000, 76-82.

and having an important social impact, and scholars have argued that spoken verse fulfilled an important and widespread social role in Iceland in both pre-Christian and post-conversion periods. Slanderous verses, are, for example, serious legal offenses in several law codes.⁵⁵² The genre of *mansöngskvæði* or love poetry also attests to a potentially widespread practice, as it is also banned in *Grágás* and could have sorcerous connotations.⁵⁵³ *Jóns saga helga* specifically mentions that Bishop Jón, among his other efforts at improving the state of Christianity in his diocese, cracked down on the practice of *mansöngskvæði*.⁵⁵⁴

Christian poetry of various types began to develop and be incorporated into Icelandic society in an oral context as well. Poetic scholars have long noted the adaptation of European verse forms into skaldic metres, presumably under the influence of hymns and other ecclesiastical verse, from the early eleventh century.⁵⁵⁵ *Hrynhent* metre almost certainly developed from the standard skaldic *dróttkvætt* metre being influenced by Latin church metres – perhaps suggesting poets were impacted by listening to Latin liturgies – and appears in poetry as early as 1045.⁵⁵⁶ *Kristni saga* describes the missionary Þorvaldr reciting a religious verse.⁵⁵⁷ While it is entirely possible that this verse is not original, it still points to the fact that skaldic poetics and *grammatica* may have begun interacting during the period of the missionary bishops. Taken together, mythological and heroic poetry, wisdom poems of both a Christian and more secular nature, Christian panegyric poetry, and numerous other types of poetry developed and were transmitted over the course of the Middle Ages in Iceland, potentially intersecting with almost every aspect of intellectual culture.

Yet for as large the corpus of extant poetry is, almost nothing is said about how exactly poetry was learned. This is despite the fact that great majority of the oral poetry composed was probably never written down, and despite how often skálds appear as

⁵⁵² Gade 2000, 68-9; Quinn 2000, 42-3; Clunies Ross 2005, 40-1.

⁵⁵³ Clunies Ross 2005, 41-4.

⁵⁵⁴ Sigurgeir Steingrímsson et al., eds., 2003, 211.

⁵⁵⁵ Quinn 1994, 70; Foote 1984, 252-53.

⁵⁵⁶ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, liv. Males speculates that some of the influence from Latin hymns upon skaldic verse could have even begun with Icelandic poets travelling in the British Isles (Males 2016, 280), though there is no reason why such a geography would be more likely than the poets being influenced by Latin verse closer to home, in Iceland or Norway.

⁵⁵⁷ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 9-10.

characters and protagonists in narrative sources. There are references within the poetic treatises to them being used for the training of young poets, but there is no indication as to how the texts would be used, or whether or not this reference to young poets might be rhetorical. These texts, moreover, would appear to refer to a literate, textualized poetic learning, not the purely oral learning which preceded and probably functioned in parallel to it. Elena Gurevich has observed that there is only one extant narrative description of a poet's education, and it is entirely supernatural: in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* a certain shepherd named Hallbjörn *hali* learns how to compose poetry from a dead man reciting a poem to him, while the dead man tugs on Hallbjörn's tongue. The dead mound-dweller tells Hallbjörn to compose a full poem in praise of the man, taking care to make the metre, style, and kennings correct. The closest comparable example she notes is in *Hreiðars þáttr heimiska*, which involves Hreiðar simply discovering his skill as a poet by attempting to compose a poem and succeeding.⁵⁵⁸

This dearth of sources, Gurevich argues convincingly, is not a coincidence. Recalling the mythological origins of poetry described in the *Snorra Edda*, and the general association between the poetic craft and the god Óðinn, she argues that skálds were “mythologizing their craft . . . to emphasize the exceptional quality and value of their own poetry and the individual nature of their art.”⁵⁵⁹ Poets, in other words, may have deliberately obscured or avoided discussing their methods of education and training, emphasizing the innate, even mystical qualities of their craft. Kevin Wanner has more recently suggested that this mystification through claims of supernatural origin and divine inspiration was a direct attempt to gain certain forms of capital from the poetic art, while admitting that it is not certain whether even in the Viking Age claims of supernatural origin were taken very seriously.⁵⁶⁰ But it is worth speculating that runic pedagogy, because of a similar connection with Óðinn, may have benefitted from a similar type of capital by maintaining a certain mystic obscurity.

⁵⁵⁸ Gurevich 1996, 213-16. The lack of descriptions of skaldic education is also commented upon in Wanner 2014, 184. There is a line of verse in *Egils saga* which seems to refer to the person who taught Egil poetry, but it is unclear (Jaeger and Mundal 2015, 32-3).

⁵⁵⁹ Gurevich 1996, 219-21.

⁵⁶⁰ Wanner 2014, 182-5.

The idea of obscure or divine origins links some of the rhetorical techniques that can be seen in medieval Christian skaldic poetry to this deliberately obscured pedagogy. Some Christian skálds communicated this through self-effacement, characterizing their poetry as coming from God or a particular saint.⁵⁶¹ Sometimes it appears as a call to improve skill or eloquence, or simply for aid.⁵⁶² In a particularly early example, the 1153 poem *Geisli* opens with the comment *Prenning eins guðs má kenna mér óð ok bænir*, “The Trinity of one God can teach me poetry and prayers”.⁵⁶³ In *Geisli*, then, there is a literal link between the similar rhetoric of Christian and pagan poets about divine inspiration, and the obscurity of the educational origins of poems, and the training of poets. This may be tentatively connected to the reference to Þóroddr learning *grammatica* simply by listening to the priests teach. There, the form education took is explicit, but it seems to be assisted by the divine, though as with poetic inspiration, this divine assistance is not presented as miraculous.

As noted with *Hreiðars þáttr heimiska*, however, even where there is no divine or supernatural element, becoming a poet is presented more as a matter of achievement and composition than education. When *Íslendinga saga* describes Snorri Sturluson’s rise to power, it is stated that he became a great poet upon the composition of a poem for Jarl Hákon and receiving a sword, shield, and byrnie in reward.⁵⁶⁴ Nothing is mentioned in the saga about his education, or any previous training. As with Hreiðarr, who is shown to be a poet simply through his spontaneous ability to compose, Snorri becomes a great skáld through his ability to compose a poem successful enough to warrant a reward. Despite the continuous appearance of skálds like Snorri in the narrative, and despite the role insult poetry often plays in the conflicts described in *Íslendinga saga*, there still appears to be the implicit idea that poetry is innate, often spontaneous, and wholly divorced from education.

The final aspects of pre-Christian education which interacted with *grammatica* are law and history. As already noted, there are aspects of history in runic writing and skaldic poetry, in the sense of commemoration and preservation of certain types of knowledge. What

⁵⁶¹ Wanner 2014, 195-6.

⁵⁶² See example stanzas in Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 73, 141, 516, 530.

⁵⁶³ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 7, following the prose word order.

⁵⁶⁴ Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, Vol. I, 269.

little evidence for other types of oral storytelling, history, and genealogical lore suggests the such learning could be both celebrated and marginalized. In the monk Oddr Snorrason's version of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, he contrasts the superior pleasure and truth of his account from the tales of stepmothers, told by shepherd boys. These stories, Oddr claims, are more dubious because the king is not the centre of the narrative.⁵⁶⁵ In terms of the relationship between historical knowledge and women, this can be compared to the multiple references to Þuríðr in *spaka* Snorradóttir, particularly her citation as one of Ari's sources in *Íslendingabók*.⁵⁶⁶ Like Bishop Þorlákr's mother teaching him history in *Þorláks saga*, Þuríðr suggests that Oddr's marginalization of these stories and the perhaps more informal methods of learning them was not universal, even in clerical circles. Oddr's emphasis on the superiority of his own writing emphasizes the greater authority of history about kings, but it may also be suggesting an attempt at authorizing textualized history over continuing traditions of oral learning. The concerns for truth in historical learning that Oddr points to also fits with the ideological concerns of *grammatica*, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Oral legal education had strong links to poetic learning in Iceland, and through that is connected to a broader pre-Christian pedagogical discourse involving runic and historical learning as well.⁵⁶⁷ At least six lawspeakers during the Commonwealth period, before the Norwegian takeover of Iceland, are mentioned as being poets as well; the disciplines of law and poetics are linked by their linguistic, performative, and mnemonic requirements.⁵⁶⁸ Two eleventh-century lawspeakers, Skapti Þóroddsson and Markús Skeggjason, the latter of whom instituted the tithe law in 1096, are said to have composed Christian verse. This suggests the legal power of the lawspeaker could have been assisted by the rhetorical and cultural force of poetic composition and recitation in the process of conversion.⁵⁶⁹ Markús Skeggjason is also cited as a source in *Íslendingabók*, which suggests the potential for

⁵⁶⁵ Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1932, 2.

⁵⁶⁶ Quinn 2000, 40.

⁵⁶⁷ Gísli Sigurðsson has also speculated generally regarding the links in the learning of different oral disciplines (Gísli Sigurðsson 2004, 117).

⁵⁶⁸ Burrows 2009, 216.

⁵⁶⁹ Burrows 2009, 217-22.

historical learning as a part of this complex of oral pedagogy.

There is also an important link between law and poetic interpretation, which strengthens the possibility that the pedagogies of these disciplines were learned together, and may have influenced each other. On a wider social level, there are references in *Sturlunga saga* and elsewhere to insulting verses having important legal ramifications, starting disputes and even leading to killings.⁵⁷⁰ This suggests that being able to interpret such verses was a necessity for negotiating legal disputes, and thus for anyone educated in the law. There is textual indication of such links: both *Grágás* and later law codes stipulate that verse must be interpreted in only its literal, not its figurative sense, when it is being determined whether a case can be made against it as libel or *níð*.⁵⁷¹ As already discussed, poetic learning seems to only be mentioned when a poet has composed a serious and successful poem, so it is possible that a more basic, elementary level of poetic learning was more widespread among those involved with legal matters. As already discussed in regard to Latin learning, there could have been many levels of poetic education.

As the first chapter noted, among the only evidence of oral learning which may go back to pre-Christian educational practices are the handful of references to foster-fathers teaching law to their sons. The relationship between poetry and law strongly suggests the poetry – whether skaldic or eddic, courtly or love – was learned in the same type of contexts. References to women, and mothers in particular, being involved with history and storytelling suggest multiple people involved in a potentially complex dynamic of household education which functioned in both pagan and Christian Iceland. A particularly good example of this, previously discussed by Judy Quinn, is in *Færeyinga saga*. *Grágás* says that every Icelander ought to know their basic prayers, the *Pater noster* and the *credo*, and in an episode of *Færeyinga saga* a certain former pagan named Þrándr, who was noted in section 1.2.1 as teaching his foster-son law, also tries to teach him a *Credo*. However, the boy's mother chastises Þrándr for teaching a *Credo* with incorrect *mynd* 'form'.⁵⁷² Here, then, is a

⁵⁷⁰ For an example of a killing over an insulting verse in *Íslendinga saga*, see Jón Jóhannesson et al., eds., 1946, Vol. I, 262-3.

⁵⁷¹ Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol. II, 181.

⁵⁷² Quinn 2000, 40-1.

reference to the most elementary of pedagogical environments, learning to recite basic prayers, with both mother and foster-father involved in teaching, intersecting with legal learning, and involving a critique reflecting grammatical ideals of correct language.

3.1.2 The Development of Textualization and Vernacular *Grammatica*

The development of literacy and the accompanying adaptation of *grammatica* to vernacular contexts must be understood in light of these pre-existing forms and contexts of learning. It was a process which affected different types of texts and language in different ways, at different times, in different contexts. There is no space here to thoroughly discuss the full range in which the textualization of Icelandic culture intersected with *grammatica*. Rather, the goal here is to chronologically contextualize the grammatical treatises – as well as some other texts which reflect grammatical learning – in the development of textual culture, in order to suggest how the discipline of vernacular *grammatica* might have taken shape. From the development of the existing oral pedagogies discussed in the previous section, along with the Latin and bilingual *grammatica* discussed in the previous chapter, vernacular *grammatica* accompanied the ON textual corpus which grew from the twelfth century onwards. As an intellectual discipline accompanying this corpus, and the development of new attitudes about the ON language, it did not replace Latin *grammatica*. Instead, it functioned alongside it, interacting with Latin culture but continuing to fulfill different functions and roles in Icelandic culture.

The *IGT* is explicit at both the beginning and end of the treatise that its orthographic rules are aimed at specific texts. These must be presumed to be the texts written in ON – or at least those considered the most important by the author – at the point sometime in the middle of the twelfth century when the treatise was written. These genres are *lög*, ‘laws’, *áttvísi* ‘genealogies’, *þýðingar helgar* ‘sacred writings/interpretations/translations’⁵⁷³, and the

⁵⁷³ Haugen translates *þýðingar* as ‘writings’, Hreinn Benediktsson as ‘interpretations’, the latter arguing that *þýðing* had not yet come to have the sense of ‘translation’ in Icelandic in the twelfth century (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 182-4). However, the distinction between interpretation and translation in the context of writing in the Middle Ages was never solid, and it is likely that *þýðingar* had the potential to carry all three senses to readers of the treatise.

historical lore of Ari Þórgilsson.⁵⁷⁴ This list is partially repeated at the end of the treatise, along with “whatever useful knowledge a man would learn or teach from books.”⁵⁷⁵ These genres are thus the first corpus upon which a fully vernacular *grammatica* is applied to in Iceland, here in the sense of a language and texts normalized and authorized through prescriptive *orthographia*.⁵⁷⁶ It is important to keep in mind that these are all prose genres, and even though the bulk of the extant Icelandic grammatical treatises are concerned with poetry, the earliest is fundamentally concerned with prose. It is likely that little ON poetry had been written down at that point, and what had been used primarily in minimal quotations.⁵⁷⁷ Thus by the mid-twelfth century there was already developed a grammatical basis for reading ON texts.

Despite the prose object corpus of the *IGT*, there is evidence well-acknowledged by scholars that it was influenced by skaldic poetry, and possibly skaldic pedagogy. The treatise quotes skaldic verse twice, in both instances as examples of particular distinctions of sound, and before the second quote it states:

Skáld eru höfundar allrar rýnni eða málsgreinar, sem smiðir [smíðar] eða
lögmennt laga.

*The skalds are authorities on all writing or speaking, just as craftsmen on
their craft and lawyers on the law.*⁵⁷⁸

Poets here are presented as authoritative figures in their understanding of vernacular language, though the author does not identify himself as one, and both verses in the treatise are quoted anonymously. The idea of authority, essential to the significance and use of

⁵⁷⁴ “þau in spakligu fræði, er Ari Þórgilsson hefir á bœkr sett af skynsamligu viti” (Haugen, ed., 1972, 12-13).

⁵⁷⁵ “. . . svá hverigi er maðr vill skynsamliga nytsemi á bók nema eða kenna . . .” (Haugen, ed., 1972, 32-33).

⁵⁷⁶ Males has also emphasized the fundamental nature of the ideology of the *IGT* to vernacular learning (Males 2016, 266).

⁵⁷⁷ Guðrún Nordal 2009, 28-9.

⁵⁷⁸ Haugen, ed., 1972, 20-21. The emendation here, *smiðir smíðar*, though widely accepted, is not strictly necessary, as the original text can be read *smiðir málsgreina*, i.e. that skalds are craftsmen of distinctions of speech (Guðrún Nordal 2009, 31).

grammatica, is thus tied to poets in this treatise which does not even deal with poetics. Skaldic authority here is not literary, based on the form or content of their work, but is presented as a general linguistic authority. The use of the term *rýnni* here, suggesting skill in writing but linked to runic discourse, has several possible implications. It may suggest that skaldic poetry was already being written down, and skalds themselves were fundamentally linked with written discourse and education, but this seems very unlikely at this early date. Rather, it suggests that skalds here are being connected to runic discourse, and that their authority in the *IGT*'s construction of vernacular *orthographia* derives from both runic and poetic discourse, potentially supporting Judith Jesch's argument that the term *skáld* had a wider use than simply referring to a poet.⁵⁷⁹

This application of traditional poetic learning to the emendation and correction of prose writing may go beyond the vague function of these quoted passages and the general authority of skálds. It has been speculated that the distinctions made by the *IGT* are based on a pre-existing oral skaldic pedagogy. The treatise uses what are essentially minimal pairs to showcase many of its distinctions, and why its prescribed orthographic distinction is necessary for a phonetic distinction which affects the meaning of a word. This pattern, it has been suggested, may have arisen in oral skaldic pedagogy as a method of distinguishing different types of internal rhyme, fundamentally important for skaldic metres.⁵⁸⁰ As noted in the previous section, it may also be compared to the sort of distinctions presented in the runic syllabaries, though these syllabaries are thought to have arisen from a mixing of Latin and runic pedagogies.

While both of these influences may have contributed to the treatise, the semantic component of the *IGT* minimal pairs makes it seem certain that the Latin practice of *differentiae* 'differentiation/distinction', fundamental to Latin orthographic treatises and learning, was a key component to the composition of the *IGT*.⁵⁸¹ The key point here is that,

⁵⁷⁹ Jesch 2005, 191-2.

⁵⁸⁰ Guðrún Nordal 2009, 27-8.

⁵⁸¹ The broad methodological idea of a *differentia* could be applied variously within *grammatica*, but generally it tended to refer to distinctions or differentiations between individual words of similar form or meaning. Isidore of Seville's *Differentiae* established *differentia*, *etymologia*, and *glossa* as the essential methods of explanation in *grammatica*, with the *differentia* used to distinguished things that could be confused through meaning – as between a king and a tyrant – or through form, as *animus* and *anima* (Irvine 1994, 210, 221).

while Latin *De orthographia* treatises lack the very precise graphic distinction of the *IGT*, they often set up pairs of terms to shown distinctions between homonyms.⁵⁸² There is thus a semantic aspect shared by the *IGT*, but not necessarily in poetic training in detecting or construction rhyme, or in syllabaries. This suggests a deep influence from Latin *grammatica* on the earliest example of vernacular *grammatica*, but not necessarily via the bilingual Latin *grammatica* discussed in the previous chapter. There is no particular abundance of Latin loanwords or loan formations in the *IGT*, so influence here is conceptual and ideological, rather than directly textual or lexical.

This coming together of traditions in the *IGT* likely had some practical motivation, but these should not be overemphasized. Scholarship on the treatise has emphasized the potential context of the treatise as appearing soon after the first Icelandic laws were written down: the first secular laws in 1117-18, the first ecclesiastical laws in 1122-33, and the first tithe law enacted in 1097.⁵⁸³ One passage argues that law texts are the most likely text to be misinterpreted and manipulated, if the language is not precise enough, and this is the reason for the carefully constructed new alphabet.⁵⁸⁴ Certainly the importance of vernacular law codes to a broad section of society, and the need for precision in writing law, could have contributed to the development of textual and linguistic analysis. However, it is important to note that Icelandic law did not become entirely textually based at the beginning of the twelfth century, and oral practice continued to function alongside written codices at least into the thirteenth century.⁵⁸⁵ The inherently pragmatic function of the treatise has tended to be the focus of scholars: the *IGT*'s reformed orthography as absolutely essential to the development

⁵⁸² For a compilation of many of the major Latin orthographic treatises, see Keil, ed., 1855-80, Vol. VII. Bede's *De orthographia* seems to have passages bearing the closest resemblance to those of the *IGT*, and considering the apparent connection between Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic *grammatica*, this may be the most likely source. However, differentiation between homonyms communicated through verse developed in later medieval *grammatica*, as in the twelfth-century *Versus de differentiis* of Serlo of Wilton, could also possibly have had influence on the *IGT*, and Vivian Law has argued that Serlo represents the closest parallel to the passages of the *IGT* (Law 2003, 201).

⁵⁸³ See Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 178-81, citing in particular Olsen 1937. Hreinn disagrees with the specificity of Olsen's claims about the purpose of the writing of the *IGT* and its relationship to *Íslendingabók*, but does not contradict that the *IGT* can be generally contextualized in the intellectual milieu of the writing down of the first law codes.

⁵⁸⁴ Haugen, ed., 1972, 14-15.

⁵⁸⁵ For a full discussion of legal writing and literate culture, see Burrows 2007.

of the vernacular.⁵⁸⁶ This attitude ignores the ideological aspects of the text adapted from Latin *grammatica*, which will be discussed later in this chapter, and furthermore ignores the fact that the orthographic reforms of the *IGT* were never enacted, yet the treatise continued to be transmitted. Icelanders functioned well enough without the precise orthography discussed in the treatise, and there is no reason to suggest it was a necessity.

The *IGT* is not the only evidence for the development of vernacular *grammatica* in the twelfth and early thirteenth century. Numerous prose religious translations and compositions were made in this period: a great body of hagiography, a translation of the *Physiologus* which survives in manuscripts from c.1200, many homilies as well as the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, the *Elucidarius*, Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis*, as well as the compilation of material known as the *Old Icelandic Homily Book*.⁵⁸⁷ In one respect, the allegorical and symbolic content of many of these texts is an inherent link to a vernacularized *grammatica*, in the interpretative role that *grammatica* played in Christian culture. The interpretation of allegory, typology, and other types of figurative language are part of the interpretative apparatus of the *Barbarismus*, the basis for the *3GT*, and a key part of *grammatica*. When highly allegorical texts like the *Physiologus* were written in ON, the aspect of *grammatica* which dealt with interpretation would have become applied to the vernacular by clerics and students reading or using the text. In contexts like these it is important to keep in mind Martin Irvine's observation that *grammatica* was not simply a pedagogical practice, but was "an intellectual discourse directed towards the understanding of texts of any kind."⁵⁸⁸ It is also important to keep in mind the influence of Ælfric discussed in chapter 2, which almost certainly provided Iceland with a grammatical model for interpreting vernacular religious texts like these.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁶ See Ólsen, ed., 1884, XXI-XXII; Finnur Jónsson 1920-24, Vol. II, 913; Hreinn Benediktsson ed., 1972, 179; Guðrún Nordal 2001, 26; Clunies Ross 2005, 153.

⁵⁸⁷ For a summary of these prose religious texts, see Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2005.

⁵⁸⁸ Irvine 1986, 17.

⁵⁸⁹ From the perspective of Ælfric, vernacular religious writing was inherently unstable and uncertain, and required *grammatica* to authorize it. Ælfric was explicitly concerned in his writings that Christian works were dangerous to be translated: there was a risk of their mysteries being unappreciated or misunderstood, that an audience not educated in Latin would not know how to interpret the texts properly, beyond their literal meaning, particularly in his translation from the Old Testament, where he worried more about people interpreting it like the New Testament than the possibility of he himself mistranslating it. Ælfric states that he wrote his grammar

Long Christian skaldic poems were composed from at least the mid-twelfth century, and a manuscript of *Plácitusdrápa* shows that some of them were written down by at least c.1200, and potentially earlier.⁵⁹⁰ The writing down of a complete text in a fully clerical, religious context strongly suggests that interpretative ideas from Latin *grammatica* were being applied to vernacular poetry by this point; clerics educated in *grammatica* would have had a difficult time reading a religious poem without using the lens of their own education. Thus, the fact that *Plácitusdrápa* and other early poems use a significant number of kennings suggests a mixing of these grammatical ideas with whatever oral pedagogy surrounded kennings and poetic diction at this point. Twelfth-century Christian poets thus must have experienced in their own education and interpretative activities a juxtaposition of ideas like *metaphora* and kenning, even though this interaction was not textualized until the *3GT* in the middle of the thirteenth century. The writing of commentary, a key aspect of *grammatica*, can also be seen finding poetic expression from an early date. The eddic poem *Merlínusspá*, the translation of the *Prophetia Merlini*, is attributed to Gunnlaugr Leifsson, monk at the monastery of Þingeyrar, who lived from 1140 to 1218/19.⁵⁹¹ The poem includes explicit discussion of the interpretation of symbolic and typological language which will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter. In a religious context, then, the interpretation of deeper meaning in vernacular prose texts was certainly interacting with poetics by the end of the twelfth century.

One particular twelfth-century poem outside the religious sphere also stands out in its relationship to grammatical learning. *Háttalykill* is a *clavis metrica*, a poem made up of verses of different metres, thought to have been written by Earl Rögnvaldr of Orkney and the Icelander Hallr Þórarinnsson in the 1140s, though it is not known when it was first written down. Males' recent work on vernacular *grammatica* has focused on the evidence of the poetry itself, particularly metrical developments, though also developments in diction.⁵⁹²

as a key to unlock the knowledge from the eighty sermons he had already translated. By learning parts of speech, semantic categories, how to break apart and analyze words, his students would learn how to read English texts without misreadings and misinterpretations (Menzer 1999, 639-40).

⁵⁹⁰ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 179.

⁵⁹¹ Haki Antonsson 2012, 95.

⁵⁹² Males argues that Einarr Skúlson's twelfth-century *Óxarflokkur* involves the use of highly contrived circumlocutions which would not have been used earlier, and were influenced by grammatical learning (Males

Háttalykill represents a key point in this development, taking deviations in form from the poetic license of earlier poets and using them as the basis for its list of metres. As Males describes, the poem is a fundamentally grammatical exercise through its systematic study of earlier texts and its use of that study to create and develop metrical rules.⁵⁹³ While no treatises besides the *IGT* survive from before the early thirteenth century, it is clear that vernacular *grammatica* was significantly developing along multiple lines by that point.

In this context, the composition of the *Snorra Edda* in the early thirteenth century should not be surprising. While not a particularly religious text in any explicit sense, its tentative links to *grammatica* suggests that part of the impetus for its composition may have come from more clerical vernacular grammatical discourses. The *Snorra Edda* was potentially written, in part, for a Norwegian audience, particularly the young King Hákon Hákonarson, to encourage his understanding and thus patronage of the skaldic art.⁵⁹⁴ A passage in *Skáldskaparmál* presents the treatises as intended for young poets, to learn to use, or to understand and interpret, the wide variety of traditional poetic diction.⁵⁹⁵ Scholars have also pointed out that scribes of the fourteenth century may have had a hard time understanding poetry,⁵⁹⁶ and it is possible that the *Edda* was composed in a context where the textualization of poetry began to create anxiety about such scribal misinterpretations. From a mythological perspective, the *Edda* also validated mythological narrative and poetry “through asserting their relevance and significance (if not their centrality) to the education of young poets”.⁵⁹⁷

In terms of sources and composition, the poetics of the *Snorra Edda* is especially distant from the Latin tradition when compared to the vernacular *grammatica* which seems to have predated it. It is less an expansion of the tradition of the *IGT* and ON religious writing – though it is certain that Snorri and his intellectual and educational milieu were influenced by these texts – than an influx of oral material which would become incorporated more with the

2016, 284).

⁵⁹³ Males 2016, 281-3.

⁵⁹⁴ Frog 2011, 2; Wanner 2008.

⁵⁹⁵ Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), 5

⁵⁹⁶ For example, see Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, lxxx-lxxxi and Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, liv.

⁵⁹⁷ Frog 2011, 27.

discourses of these other texts later, with the composition of the *3GT* and *4GT*. Unlike the *1GT*, the *Snorra Edda* never makes reference to Latin, never defines its conception of ON or vernacular poetics in terms of the Latin tradition. There is very little metalanguage in the *Snorra Edda* that shows Latin influence,⁵⁹⁸ and yet it transmits a massive body of metalanguage dealing with metre and poetic structure, a significant amount of which appears nowhere else. Most of this must have come from whatever pedagogical discourse, likely still primarily oral, which produced Snorri's own education. Most of the clear Latin influence in the *Edda* lies in its structure and frame: a few of the poetic features selected for analysis, the framing of poetry in prose commentary in *Háttatal*, and the question-and-answer introduction of *Háttatal* all suggest derivation from grammatical discourse, through indirect influence.⁵⁹⁹ This may have included translated vernacular models which have been lost, or a familiarity with Latin pedagogical texts which was only partial or half-remembered. Latin influences which had already affected oral poetic discourse were of course incorporated into the treatise.⁶⁰⁰ There is no evidence, however, that the *Snorra Edda* was participating in the grammatical discourses discussed in Chapter 2.⁶⁰¹ Rather, peripheral Latin influences seem more likely to have come from the juxtaposition of clerical and lay education discussed in Chapter 1.

It is also possible that some components of the *Snorra Edda* were written down before Snorri himself compiled his treatise, though this must remain pure speculation. While

⁵⁹⁸ See Appendix 2. The term *fornafn/fornöfn* is used in both *Háttatal* and *Skáldskaparmál*, both as an idea related to kennings, as well as in the sense of 'pronoun'. While in the 'pronoun' sense it is clearly a loan formation based on *pronomēn*, the other sense is possibly a parallel loan formation based on *pronomīnatio* (Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, cxii-cxiii).

⁵⁹⁹ For a full discussion of the sources of the *Snorra Edda* and a rejection of scholarship arguing for Snorri participating in an ecclesiastical intellectual discourse, see Faulkes 1993. Faulkes has pointed to some specific structural similarity between the opening question-and-answer of *Háttatal* and the opening of Fortunatianus' *Ars rhetorica*, but as Faulke's himself notes, the style is common enough and the content dissimilar enough that there is no reason to speculate about direct connections (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c) xii-xiii). Clunies Ross thoroughly refuted Halldór Halldórsson's arguments that Snorri's system of poetics was influenced by *rhetorica*, specifically Quintilian, and rejects the idea that there was any attempt to align his ideas about figurative language with Latin ones (Clunies Ross 1987, 61-3, 77-9).

⁶⁰⁰ The metrical forms *Háttatal* lists and comments upon are built on both structural and semantic ideas, and are based largely on native principles, but are certainly influenced and even sometimes modeled on Latin and even Irish poetry (Clunies Ross 2005, 168-70; Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), xiii-xiv).

⁶⁰¹ He would not have looked at his treatise as part of the corpus of *artes grammatica*, as has sometimes been suggested (Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, c).

Háttatal is a poem of Snorri's own composition, both *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* may have had their origins in texts used in educating Snorri.⁶⁰² *Háttalykill*, as a *clavis metricae* showing a diversity of possible metres in a single poem, was certainly an influence on *Háttatal*.⁶⁰³ There is no evidence, however, that *Háttalykill* was written down before the *Snorra Edda*, and it is equally likely that it was an oral source. Finally, poetic aids, lists of terminology and kennings, the so-called *pulur*, have been suggested by scholars to have preceded the *Edda* in written form.⁶⁰⁴ While this is possible, many of these arguments depend on fairly anachronistic conceptions of what was necessary for composition and education. Oral poets cannot be assumed to use or need the same tools, references, and mnemonic aids as textual poets. Thus, while Snorri likely had some written sources, the lack of clear precedents suggest that *Snorra Edda* represents an adaptation of oral pedagogies to a textual discourse. Once written, the treatise would make a fundamental contribution to vernacular *grammatica* that would have significant influences through the rest of the Middle Ages.

To what extent the *Snorra Edda* was intended to deal with textual interpretation, composition, and education, rather than their oral equivalents, is uncertain, and it seems likely that the treatise to some extent engages with both mediums of poetry. Some scholars have viewed the *Snorra Edda* as a move of ON poetic pedagogy into the classroom,⁶⁰⁵ and there is textual evidence that it stimulated and influenced the later writing down of mythological eddic poetry.⁶⁰⁶ Certainly some students – presumably the secular elite like Snorri, as well as clerics already involved with Latin *grammatica* – could have used the text in a classroom-like format, contextualized with clerical forms of education. However, considering the largely oral nature of medieval education, even in such contexts, the production and dissemination of the poetry produced by students educated with the *Snorra Edda* would still have been primarily oral. The emergence of the style of narrative poetry known as *rímur* in the fourteenth century points to a genre primarily oral in practice, but

⁶⁰² Heimir Pálsson has speculated that *Skáldskaparmál* in particular could have been involved in Snorri's education (Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, xvii-xviii).

⁶⁰³ This relationship is most thoroughly discussed in Tranter 1997.

⁶⁰⁴ Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, xlv.

⁶⁰⁵ For example Quinn 1994, 69.

⁶⁰⁶ Frog 2011, 5-12.

informed by the textual tradition.⁶⁰⁷ There is likewise no reason to assume the *Snorra Edda* replaced the oral pedagogical practices that informed it, and, considering the widespread importance of poetry in thirteenth-century Iceland, it seems quite certain the oral pedagogies endured.⁶⁰⁸

Whether being applied to oral or textual poetry, the *Snorra Edda* represents not only an effort to preserve information, but to normalize a tradition through bringing together many different sources and making its own stamp on them, deciding what aspect of the oral tradition would be textualized.⁶⁰⁹ In *Háttatal*, the poem and commentary together are structured around the idea of *dróttkvætt* as a single authoritative body of rules and forms, and all the other metres as deviations from that. It is emphasized that earlier poetics did not have this structural consistency, this system, and as a text the *Snorra Edda* presents itself as a normalization of existing systems.⁶¹⁰ The mythological material of *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* is a stable, textual encyclopedia of cultural reference, a basis for stable, correct interpretation of the types of figurative language inherited from pre-Christian poets.⁶¹¹ Yet at the same time the obfuscation and mystification of skaldic pedagogy, derived from the oral tradition, seems to be felt in the *Snorra Edda*, even as the very composition of the treatise breaks this tradition. There is no reference to becoming a poet in the treatise, but

⁶⁰⁷ Frog 2011, 7.

⁶⁰⁸ See Grove 2008, 87.

⁶⁰⁹ This is comparable to some small extent with the role of the lawspeaker in writing down the law. Although the lawspeaker himself loses some personal authority to the written book, and in *Grágás* it is the bishop's copy of the written laws which has the most authority (Finsen, ed., 1852, Vol. I, 213), whichever lawspeaker is consulted or involved with the initial writing down of the law establishes his version of the law as the authoritative written version.

⁶¹⁰ Evidence of the awareness of older poetics appears at several points in the treatise, and the idea of a development of poetics in two particular passages: “Nú skal rita þá háttu er fornskáld hafa kveðit ok eru nú settir saman, þótt þeir hafi ort sumt með háttaföllum, ok eru þessir hættir dróttkvæðir kallaðir í fornum kvæðum” (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 24) (*Now those metres shall be written which ancient skalds have spoken, and are now set together, although they have sometimes composed with metrical inconsistencies, and these metres were called dróttkvætt in ancient poems*); “Viða er þat í fornskálda verka er í einni vísu eru ymsir hættir eða háttaföll, ok má eigi yrkja eptir því þó at þat þykki eigi spilla í fornkvæðum” (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 26) (*It occurs widely in the works of ancient skalds that in there are various metres or metrical inconsistencies in a single verse, and it should not be imitated, although it does not seem to spoil ancient poems*). For the poem itself, Faulkes has noted that *Háttatal*'s consistent line length is a departure from earlier poetry Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), xvi.

⁶¹¹ Cf. to Augustine's understanding of the transferred signification of signs, *signa translata*, the interpretation of which requires “a knowledge both of languages and of a larger cultural encyclopedia that provides references for things signified” (Irvine 1994, 183).

as noted above the only audience mentioned are existing young poets. Moreover, there is a notable tendency in Snorri's rhetoric to view the development of poetic traditions as natural processes, and the rules of his normalization to be commonsensical and rational. He does not correct poetic mistakes, as would be the case later in the *3GT*. This attitude is particularly apparent in a passage discussing *nýgervingar* in *Skáldskaparmál*.⁶¹² The idea of *nýgervingar* seems to be presented as an innovation here, but one which Snorri does not object to, and he presents it as an organic development of younger skalds basing their poems on those of older skalds. Again, it is notable that the younger skalds are not presented as students, but composers independently constructing their poetry on the model of existing works.

The development of vernacular *grammatica* into the thirteenth century cannot be viewed as a single tradition, or a single intellectual discourse. The *1GT* presents a normalized orthography, seemingly influenced by skaldic learning but intended to be applied to a wide variety of prose texts. The translation of religious texts from Latin to ON, as well as the writing down of religious poetry in a clerical context, implies grammatical discourse about linguistic authority and interpretation of figurative language, even where no treatises exist. The *Snorra Edda* is a textualization and normalization of a great body of oral poetic learning. None of these texts replaced oral pedagogies, but they were all informed by them, and over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there is clear evidence for greater interaction between the different aspects and contexts of vernacular *grammatica*.

3.1.3 Intersection of Developing Grammatical Traditions

The *3GT* is the earliest extant response to the *Snorra Edda*, written by Snorri's own

⁶¹² En þessi heiti hafa svá farit sem önnu ok kenningar, at hin yngri skáld hafa ort eptir dæmum hinna gömlu skálda, svá sem stóð í þeira kvæðum, en sett síðan út í hálfur þær er þeim þóttu líkar við þat er fyrr var ort, svá sem vatnit er sænum en áin vatninu en lœkr ánni. Því er þat kallat nýgervingar alt er út er sett heiti lengra en fyrr finnsk, ok þykkir þat vel alt er með líkindum ferr ok eðli (Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), 41) (*But these terms and kennings have developed as others, so that the younger skalds have composed according to the model of old skalds, just as it stood in their poems, and set out into those areas which they thought similar to that which had been composed, as the lake is to the sea and the river to the lake and the brook to the river. Thus it is called wholly nýgervingar when a term is set out further than is found earlier, and that seemed entirely good when developed with probability and nature*).

nephew. It is at its core a coming together of Snorri's poetic learning with the bilingual adaptation of Latin *grammatica* discussed in the previous chapter,⁶¹³ though it may also be a response to the *IGT* as well, because of its concern for orthography and runacy. This mixing of textual traditions continues in the *4GT* in the fourteenth century, where more religious hermeneutics are added to the developed model of the *MG* portion of the *3GT*. This religious side of vernacular *grammatica*, implicit in the translations and poetry of the twelfth century, becomes explicit in some compositional styles of late hagiography. This so-called 'florid style' of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries often makes use of commentary incorporated into the text, including specific notes on interpretation, which links it to the larger tradition of vernacular grammatical discourse.

The two parts of the *3GT*, the *MG* and the *MS*, cover a wide range of grammatical topics, and taken together represent a response to the *IGT*, the runic tradition, the bilingual teaching of Latin, the *Snorra Edda* and particularly the commentary structure of *Háttatal*, and a continuing adaptation of oral poetic tradition.⁶¹⁴ The very end of the *MG* even contains two verses which include typological interpretation, prefiguring the intersection of religious hermeneutics and vernacular poetics in the *4GT*. In this sense the *3GT* is the foundational text for the idea of vernacular *grammatica* as a singular discipline, a mixing of hermeneutic practices and linguistic ideologies united by the concern for normalizing, interpreting, and understanding ON in the context of Latin and what it understanding as universal characteristics of language: sound, letters, syllables, parts of speech, errors and faults of diverse types, and the tropes and figures of speech taken from its sources.

Rather than the *3GT* simply being a failed attempt to merge two divergent poetic systems, as scholars have often characterized the treatise,⁶¹⁵ it is a contextualization of

⁶¹³ Noting the coming together of vernacular and bilingual tradition here is important, in contrast to the argument that "the Third and Fourth Grammatical Treatises are fully within the Latin educational tradition" (Clunies Ross 1987, 25).

⁶¹⁴ See Micillo 1993, 78. Tarin Wills has in particular dealt with Óláfr's combination of thought from both grammatical and logical traditions (Wills, 2001, 144).

⁶¹⁵ Clunies Ross has focused on Óláfr Þórðarson's attempts to stretch the definitions of terms and make inexact comparisons to fit the systems together, his being hampered by classical definitions of figures and tropes (Clunies Ross 2005, 197-201). Tranter suggests that Óláfr had to deal with the problem that Latin aesthetics could not fully apply to the vernacular, that Latin and Norse metrics are so profoundly different (Tranter 2000, 144-47). It is important to keep in mind that the classical definitions of figures and tropes were not invariable,

aspects of the *Snorra Edda* and its textualized poetics in a bilingual grammatical discourse which certainly existed before the treatise. It would be naïve to argue, particularly in light of such a piece of learning as the *IGT* in the twelfth century, that the first time parts of Donatus and Priscian were translated was the mid-thirteenth century, and were then immediately applied to vernacular poetics. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *3GT* must have been preceded by a tradition of glossing and translation in the service of Latin learning.⁶¹⁶ Its hermeneutics, too, are a textualization of what must have happened any time a cleric was educated in both Latin *grammatica* and skaldic poetics: an application of an authoritative system of interpretation to a highly figurative and symbolic type of literature.⁶¹⁷

The *3GT* reacts to and expands upon these existing traditions in different ways. The *MG*, in dealing with letters of both the Latin and runic alphabets, is an expansion upon both the *IGT* and Priscian. It does not present a prescriptive, pragmatic purpose like the *IGT*, but is similar to it in defining aspects of ON in light of Latin and other languages, using a wider scope: in a particularly pointed example, the *MG* compares the maximum length of syllables in Latin and ON, before relating the discussion of syllable to rhyme in both ON and Latin poetry.⁶¹⁸ The connection between the orthographic and phonological concerns of the *IGT* and the metrical issues of the *Snorra Edda* are made explicit for the first time in the *MG*.

and consistent adaptation occurred in the Middle Ages. Bede, for example, not only represents a culminating point in adapting figures and tropes to Christian discourse and scriptural texts, but also invents his own distinction in different forms of allegory, and worked to adapt the classic *allegoria* to scriptural needs (Copeland and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 257-60). Though largely skeptical of the viability of the *3GT* and its terminology for analyzing ON, Kristján Árnason has speculated that the translation of the standard grammatical distinction between acute, grave, and circumflex accents in the *3GT* may in fact be evidence for the tonality of ON (Kristján Árnason 1993).

⁶¹⁶ Unaltered elements of an earlier translation would explain much of the particularly odd features of the text: sentences and phrases which are translated with unusual and often awkwardly literal translation, ideas and terms which are not particularly applicable to ON poetry or language, and the use of so many loan formations and loanwords.

⁶¹⁷ It is sometimes suggested that the *3GT* is using skaldic poetry in order to explain Latin poetic figures, see for example Gísli Sigurðsson, 2000, 98-99. However, the treatise makes more sense when understood as using the Latin figures to explain the verse, in essence applying a particular hermeneutic system to vernacular poetic literature. It must be kept in mind where the figures of the *Barbarismus* are intended to be used: if the goal is to use them in their normal context, interpreting and normalizing Latin text and literature, then Latin examples would be used – the only readers for whom this treatise would be useful are students or scholars of Latin. With vernacular examples, it must be assumed that the intended goal of the treatise is the interpretation of vernacular texts.

⁶¹⁸ Wills, ed., 2001, 92-3.

Like the *Snorra Edda*, the *3GT* involves the writing down of a large amount of poetry which was almost certainly never written down before the composition of the treatise.⁶¹⁹ Unlike the *Snorra Edda*, this oral poetry is placed in the framework of the metalanguage of Latin grammatical discourse, both basic grammatical terminology like case inflection as well as the hermeneutic framework of the Latin tradition of faults, figures, and tropes.

Rather than being a reaction against the hermeneutics of the *Snorra Edda*, the *3GT* is an expansion of them using the tools of *grammatica*, adapting them to a clerical context. It uses the metalinguistic tools developed in bilingual Latin learning to expand upon the metalinguistic tools of the *Snorra Edda*, and by extension, those functioning in oral skaldic pedagogy. Both treatises attempt to determine what is correct and incorrect in a skaldic stanza,⁶²⁰ but the Latin concepts translated into the *3GT* greatly expand the scope and tools available to analyze skaldic poetry, in a way that probably was already happening to some extent, as mentioned above, around the composition of poems like *Plácitus drápa*. The relationship between hermeneutic systems in the treatise is variable: when Latin and Old Norse terms and ideas are compared, sometimes they are equated,⁶²¹ sometimes the Norse term is said to belong the same category or type as the Latin figure, and very often the Norse terms are metres which are said to incorporate the Latin figures.⁶²²

⁶¹⁹ See Gísli Sigurðsson 2000.

⁶²⁰ Guðrún Nordal 2009, 36.

⁶²¹ In places the characterizing feature of a Norse metre fits perfectly with the definition of a Latin term, as with *anadiplosis* and *drögur*, *gátu* and *enigma*, and *bragarmál* and *syncope*. In the *3GT*, *anadiplosis* is said to refer to a word appearing at the beginning and end of a *vers eða vísa*, presumably here as elsewhere referring to verses in both Latin and Norse poetics (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 94). This is notably the same definition as Donatus, where “Anadiplosis est congeminationis dictionis ex ultimo loco praecedentis versus et principio sequens” (Keil, ed., 1855-80, vol. IV, 398). It is not clear from the *3GT* that *drögur* refers to the name of a metre rather than a poetic device, but *Háttatal* lists it as the ninth type of *dróttkvætt*, where “Þat málsorð er fyrst er í þessi vísu er síðarst í hinni fyrri, ok er hin síðari svá dregin af hinni fyrri. Því heita þat drögur” (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 11) (*That word which is first in this stanza is last in the former, and thus the latter is drawn from the former. Thus it is called ‘drawings’*). The exact nature of the relationship between *anadiplosis* and *drögur* cannot be certain, but the background of the terms in Donatus and *Háttatal* suggest that *anadiplosis* refers to the abstract idea, the poetic device itself, while *drögur* refers to the metre defined by that device. Similarly, *gátu* ‘riddle’ is said to be the same *figúra* as *enigma*, and though it does not appear in *Háttatal*, it is possible that like so many other terms it was thought of as a category of metre, semantically defined in this case. *Bragarmál* is said to be the name for *syncope* in poetics, and the definition of the two terms is exactly the same: the removal of a letter to make one word from two (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 87).

⁶²² The selection of Norse poetic terminology in the *MS* is comparatively short, particularly the list of metres. *Háttatal* presents over sixty different metres with distinct names, usually the feature that defines their variation from normal *dróttkvætt*, and presents variations of many of those metres. The *Málskrúðsfræði* gives less than

The clearest result of these comparisons are an understanding of ON poetics in more general, abstract terms than they are presented with in the *Edda*. The Norse terms in the treatise are more often concrete, often the names of metres, while the Latin terms are part of a generally more abstract system of thought.⁶²³ In doing this, the *3GT* places the poetics of the *Snorra Edda* and oral skaldic pedagogy into definitive juxtaposition with the wider vernacular grammatical discourse. Rather than present the Old Norse system of metrics as comprehensively as possible, as the *Edda* does, the *3GT* presents a broader system of stylistics which can be used to describe and interpret Old Norse poetry, but is not constrained by it. The treatise refers widely to Norse and Latin terms as *figúrur*, ‘figures’, and thereby presents them as fundamentally on the same level within the context of vernacular grammatical discourse. The *3GT* contains the earliest instance of this use of the term *figúra*, but as a loanword it was likely adapted much earlier as part of bilingual Latin *grammatica*.⁶²⁴

Within this contextualization of Norse poetic ideas in more general and abstract hermeneutics, the *MS* is to a certain extent less of a purely poetic treatise than the *Snorra Edda*, presenting a system which affects all language use. The *MS* expands the metrical subject-matter of *Háttatal* by arguing that metres are created and maintained through the Latin *figúrur* and the abstract concepts they represent. Mention of metres is particularly prevalent in the section on barbarism; changes to the lengths of vowels and other slight alterations of words are said to be used in maintaining the rhythm, *kveðandi*, or rhyme,

ten named metres.

⁶²³ A Norse metre and a Latin *figúra* that describes the characteristic that defines that metre appears to be the most common context for a named Norse metre in the *Málskrúðsfræði*. Both *riðhendr* and *nýi háttr* are said to use *homoeoteleuton*, which essentially refers to end rhyme, or to any group of words being held together by the same ending (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 98). *Háttatal* describes *riðhendr* and *nýi háttr* as two fairly distinct types of rhyming verse, though the idea seems to be rhyming words appearing immediately next to each other (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 17, 31). *Stælt* and *álagshátt* are said to be the two metres that always make use of the figure *parenthesis*, where a sentence is set within a divided sentence (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 112-13). This fits neatly with the definitions of the metres in *Háttatal*: *álagshátt* includes an intercalated phrase in the second and fourth lines, while *stælt* is not so precisely defined but seems to have a very similar structure, with two intercalated sentences (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 10, 16).

⁶²⁴ Sverrir Tómasson discusses what it means *at tala í figúru* (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 251-2), but his discussion narrows the term down into a fairly specific sense, and the overall evidence indicates that the term *figúra* is broad and intersects with many aspects of linguistic ideology and reading practice. See the entry for *figúra* in Appendix 2.

hendingar, of a verse,⁶²⁵ and sometimes specific metres are mentioned.⁶²⁶ Barbarism in the 3GT offers a way of describing broadly all the ways Norse poets manipulate words to maintain poetic structure, without tying the term or its use to a particular metre. This sense of abstraction is quite explicit in the section on *paronomasia*, or punning.⁶²⁷ *Paronomasia* is an abstract concept of placing together similar-sounding things, and the example given in the verse example uses *aðalhending*, which is a type of *paronomasia* used in *skáldskapr*.⁶²⁸ The reference to Snorri emphasizes how the 3GT is working intertextually with the *Snorra Edda*, expanding its subject matter into grammatical discourse while allowing that it is not dealing with actual metrics.

In the discussion of metaphorical, figurative, and circumlocutory language a similar

⁶²⁵ Barbarism used to maintain *kveðandi* is mentioned four times (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 64, 65, 68, 69), to maintain *hendingar* three times (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 65, 66), while simply for *fegrð* ‘beauty’ twice (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 63, 66). Notably, solecisms, which involve changes on the level of phrase or sentence, are never said to be used for these purposes.

⁶²⁶ Barbarism adds a syllable to maintain a three syllable line in *kviðuháttir* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 63), changes a letter to maintain the rhyme in *dróttkvætt* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 65), and adds an ‘h’ to maintain the rhyme in *bálkarlag* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 68). The same dynamic appears in the various types of metaplasm: *prosthesis*, or the addition of a syllable at the beginning of a word, is used in one example to maintain the *stuðlar*; or the alliterating letters of an even line, in *dróttkvætt*. (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 86). The distinction between metaplasm and barbarism as vice and virtue is not clearly maintained in the 3GT; while the treatise makes it clear that barbarism used in poetry is called metaplasm, like Donatus it obscures this distinction by using examples from poetry in the section on barbarism. It is unclear, then, how exactly Óláfr or later redactors understood or interpreted this distinction, but it might speculatively be suggested that barbarism/metaplasm was thought of as an all-encompassing idea for the manipulative of a word, while the specific terms given in metaplasm simply represent optional ways of referring more specifically to the different uses of barbarism/metaplasm.

⁶²⁷ *Paronomasia sætr saman likar raddir, þær ær viafnt merkia . . . þetta kǫllvm ver aðalhendingar iskállskap, ok taka af þessi figrv vpphaf þeir hættir, ær með hendingvm ærv saman sættir, ok breytiz þat amarga vega, sœm finnaz man ihatta tali þvi, ær snorri hæfir ort* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 95-6) (*Paronomasia puts together similar sounds, those which signify differently. . . we call that full rhyme in poetics, and those metres which are composed with rhyme take their foundation from this figure, and that varies itself in many ways, as one finds in that Háttatal [Reckoning of Metres], which Snorri has composed*).

⁶²⁸ The equation between *paronomasia* and *aðalhending* is not entirely fitting with the full meaning of its Latin definition, as Donatus states simply that “*Paronomasia est veluti quaedam denominatio*” (Keil, ed., 1855-80, vol. IV, 398) where *denominatio* can refer to any substitution of words, but essential refers to a pun. Thus *aðalhending* is not actually of the same definition, but is not actually contrary to it: a pun involves full rhyme, even if its purpose is different and more semantic than metrical rhyme. The 3GT’s manipulation of terms here should be seen in the context of its general tendency to see the Latin terms as broader and the Norse terms as more specific, applied ideas. It is moreover worth noting the *aðalhending* is defined earlier in the *MG*: “Þessar samstoður gera mesta fegrð í skáldskap, ef einn raddarstafr er í tveim samstoðum ok hinir sǫmu stafir eptirsettir, sem hér: snarpr, garpr, ok kǫllum vér þat aðalhending” (*Syllables create the most beautiful effect in poetry if the same vowel is in two syllables and the same letters follow it, as here: ‘snarpr’ (sharp), ‘garpr’ (warrior); and we call that full rhyme*) (Wills, ed., 2001, 92-3).

relationship appears, while at the same time the treatises do not fully agree.⁶²⁹ Some disagreement, however, is unsurprising, as even within the *Edda* itself it is clear that Snorri and later redactors were working with a metalanguage in flux, an intellectual and grammatical culture which was in a long process of defining itself and adapting ON as a scholarly language.⁶³⁰ The many issues in defining and distinguishing the terms related to kennings and other types of figurative language is addressed in the glossary in Appendix 2. Yet as with metres and related ideas of prosody and phonetics, the relationship between kennings and Latin grammatical terminology is again one of a concrete poetic device and an abstract idea. After almost all the varieties of *metaphora* have been given the *MS* notes:

Með þessi figrv ærv saman settar allar kenningar i norrænum skaldskap, ok hon ær miok sva vpphaf til skaldskaparmals.⁶³¹

With this figure all kennings in Norse poetry are set together, and that is thus a great foundation for poetic diction.

Metaphora is a more general and abstract concept, which lies behind the construction and use of all kennings. Earlier the subcategory of *sannkenningar* is also placed within the conceptual field of *metaphora*.⁶³² This relationship of general Latin term and specific Norse term occurs not only with *metaphora*, but also with the fault of *cacemphaton*⁶³³ and in several other

⁶²⁹ For discussion of disagreement regarding aspects of kennings, see Clunies Ross 1987, 75-6; Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, cx-cxi.

⁶³⁰ Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, cxv.

⁶³¹ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 104.

⁶³² Með þeim hætti erv þær kenningar, ær ver kollvm sannkenningar i skaldskap, at kalla manninn asa heitvm ok kenna sva til vapna eða skipa eða nokkvrn aga annars nafni ok kenna þa við eign sina nokkvra (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 102-3) (*With this mode are those kennings, which we call sannkenningar in poetics, which call the man by the name of gods or name thus weapons or ships or sometimes gods, by the name of another god, and name them according to something of their own possession*).

⁶³³ The term *nýgerving*, a ‘novelty’ whereby a metaphorical idea is maintained throughout a stanza or half-stanza, is only mentioned in the *MS* in the context of the so-called *nykrat* or *finngálknað*, where the extended metaphor or allegory of the *nýgerving* is broken. The *MS* offers the example where an axe is called both the ‘troll woman of the shield’ and the ‘affliction of the helm’ in the same stanza, it says that this is a type of *cacemphaton*. *Cacemphaton* which somewhat ambiguously is said to refer to *ófagr framflutning* ‘unattractive expression’ (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 80). Though *nykrat/finngálknað* is certainly not what Donatus had in mind with *cacemphaton*, it fits the literal definition of the Latin term, which is precisely translated. Thus,

instances in the *MS*.⁶³⁴ In some instances the relationship appears to be inverted, where a Norse poetic device makes use of a Latin idea, but the Latin idea is still a more abstract and widely applicable concept.⁶³⁵

There is little doubt that kennings could be understood in different ways by different poets and grammarians in medieval Iceland, but by placing them in the field of *metaphora*, the *MS* allows them to be discussed and understood in a wider context, not only interlingually, but also in both poetry and prose. The *3GT* as a whole collects and analyzes earlier pedagogical and hermeneutic traditions and combines them, producing not only ON poetics fit for being discussed alongside Latin poetry in a clerical context, but a more comprehensive vernacular *grammatica* than had hitherto been made explicit. The idea of the *figúra* as a broad term for symbolic, figurative language is a fundamental tool in an ON hermeneutics which can go beyond the description of poetic metre and diction.

nykrat/finngálknað is a poetic error that fits within a certain category of *cacemphaton*. This understanding of *cacemphaton* as a broad field of error is further evidenced by the fact that *þresköld*, wherein the last letter of a word is the same as the first letter of the following word, is also said to be similar to, or a type of *cacemphaton* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 79-80). This is the only extant instance of *þresköld* being used in this technical, grammatical sense appears to be here is the *3GT*. The wide difference in meaning between *þresköld* and *nykrat/finngálknað* suggests that Óláfr was taking *cacemphaton* as any kind of discordance, whether phonetic, i.e. odd clusters of letters, or semantic, i.e. odd arrangements of kennings.

⁶³⁴ *Ofkenndr* refers to two kennings used in the same phrase, and is said to be related to *tautologia* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 82), which in Donatus is the repetition of nouns. *Klauf* is said to be where two *sannkenningar* are joined without any conjunction, and *svipa* where more than two are used, and both are said explicitly to be “hin sama figvra” as *dialyton*, which joins multiple nouns without conjunction (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 99-100). *Vindandi* is presented as a specialized term for a poetic archaism, a ‘u’ retained before ‘r’ in certain words, which the *MS* states is still used by Germans and Danes. It is presented as a very specific instance of *prosthesis* and *aphaeresis*, the addition or removal of the initial letter of a word, respectively (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 87). In solecism involving a change of person, *viðmælt* is said to be when the verse switches into the second person, and *hliðmælt* in the third person (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 78).

⁶³⁵ As in the case of *ofljóst*. Based on its use in the *Snorra Edda*, Anthony Faulkes has defined it as a sort of pun or word-play, often using a kenning or *heiti* of a homonym of the intended word (Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), lxxii). Its use is described in *Háttatal* (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 12), and explanations of specific examples of it appear in both *Skáldskaparmál* and *Háttatal*. It is first mentioned in the *MS* in the context of barbarism which reduces time, i.e. shortens vowels (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 66). While this vowel-shortening barbarism does not fit with Faulkes’ definition of *ofljóst*, the phrasing of the *MS* does not suggest that the two ideas are being equated. The *MS* is noting how creating *ofljóst* often requires vowel shortening, i.e. in the manipulation of words to create homonyms. This fits with the second mention of *ofljóst* in the context of *eptasis*, the lengthening of a short syllable: “Þæssi figvra hæfir margar kynkvísir i versvm, ænn i skaldskap ær hon sialldan, næma ofliost sæ ort” (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 89) (*This figure has many branches in verse, but in poetics it is rare, unless ofljóst might be used*). *Eptasis* is a general grammatical and linguistic tool that can serve to create *ofljóst*. Faulkes’ definition of *ofljóst* as manipulation of homonyms is suggested elsewhere in the *3GT*, where *amphibologia* includes a mention that nouns with multiple meanings are used widely in *skáldskapr* to obscure a sentence (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 83-5).

A prose incarnation of this tradition, making use of this idea of vernacular *figúrur*, is apparent by 1280, just a few decades after the composition of the *3GT*, in the *Jóns saga baptista* of Grímr Hólmsteinsson. This text was written at the church of Oddi in the south of Iceland at the request of Runólfr Sigmundarson, abbot of the monastery of Þykkvabær.⁶³⁶ A letter from Grímr to Runólfr regarding the composition of the text and a passage from the end of the saga preserve a significant amount of exegetical analysis. In terms of vernacular *grammatica*, there are two clear links to the discipline: on the one hand, a significant amount of translated hagiography existed in the twelfth century, and the commentary and exegetical passages in *Jóns saga baptista* may reflect discourse which was primarily oral, or expressed in Latin texts which are now lost, from earlier periods.

On the other hand, the term *figúra* is used several times to refer to obscure or symbolic language widely in *Jóns saga baptista*, metalinguistically linking the discourse of this saga with that of the *3GT*.⁶³⁷ While the *3GT* applies the vernacularized hermeneutic idea of *figúrur* only to poetry, *Jóns saga baptista* shows that it was applied more widely to prose texts, at least by the late thirteenth century. In addition, the last line of the *MS* notes that the *figúrur* are often used both in poetry and in the prophetic sayings composed by ancient men.⁶³⁸ This could refer to the poetic prophecies of *Merlínusspá*, as well as the prose symbols and typologies of *Jóns saga baptista*. Moreover, the end of the *3GT* includes two Christian verses with typological interpretation in the prose commentary,⁶³⁹ again suggesting that the interpretation of skaldic poetics and Christian symbolic language through a vernacularized *grammatica* was already well established by the mid-thirteenth century.

What has been referred to as the ‘florid style’ of prose, written in the style of *Jóns saga baptista*, appears in the fourteenth century and including similar incorporated commentary, suggesting an expanding vernacular grammatical discourse in hagiographic prose. This has generally been associated with monastic culture in the north of Iceland among

⁶³⁶ For a recent general study of this saga, see Marner 2013.

⁶³⁷ See item VI and VII in Appendix 3. Other uses of *figúra* appear in the incorporated commentary of the saga in Unger ed., 1874, 876-7, 881, 887, 898, 906, 916.

⁶³⁸ *Þesar figvrur ero miðk settar iskalldskap ok ispakmæli, þav er vitrir men hafa forðvm saman sett* (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 119).

⁶³⁹ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 117-119.

the students and followers of Bishop Lárentius, the so-called Northern Icelandic Benedictine School.⁶⁴⁰ However, in relation to the development of vernacular *grammatica*, it is important to note that the florid style was not confined to this context: in addition to *Jóns saga baptista* being written in the south, versions of *Mariú saga* and parts of *Stjórn*, texts also associated with this style, were written in the late thirteenth century.⁶⁴¹ We should thus be cautious about restricting the use of the style in chronological or geographical terms. Moreover, while *Jóns saga baptista* was commissioned by an abbot, and *Merlínusspá* was translated by a monk, the *3GT* does not appear to have been written in a monastic context, and so even in the fourteenth century this vernacular grammatical discourse might not have been entirely monastic.

The term *figúra* appears in these later hagiographic texts, though not as frequently as in *Jóns saga baptista*. It appears in *Petr's saga Postola*, where the obfuscating aspect of the idea is emphasized, and things are said to be spoken under the veil of figurative language, *undir figúru*.⁶⁴² In *Tveggja postola saga Jóns og Jacobs* the Apocalypse is discussed as being deliberately locked behind heavy figures, *þungar figúrur*.⁶⁴³ *Marthe saga ok Marie Magdalene* notes the death of Lazarus being first described with a figure, before being explained.⁶⁴⁴ *Thomas saga Erkibyskups* has a thoroughly typological use of the term in its epilogue, where an Old Testament story is a *figúra* of Archbishop Thomas himself.⁶⁴⁵ The term thus seems to refer to both the abstract idea of a symbol itself, and the obfuscating symbolic language used to conceal an idea.

The composition of the *4GT* in the fourteenth century can be better understood in light of this trend in vernacular hagiographic commentary. Written as a continuation of the *MS* and taking the same structure,⁶⁴⁶ it uses *figúrur* from the *Doctrinale* and *Græcismus* to

⁶⁴⁰ For a general survey of rhetoric and stylistics in ON prose, see Þórir Óskarsson 2005, for the Northern Icelandic Benedictine School in particular, see also Sverrir Tómasson 2006, 168-71.

⁶⁴¹ Sverrir Tómasson 2006, 161.

⁶⁴² Unger, ed., 1874, 20, 109.

⁶⁴³ Unger, ed., 1874, 612-13. See item VII in Appendix 3.

⁶⁴⁴ Unger, ed., 1877, 522.

⁶⁴⁵ Unger, ed., 1869, 501-2.

⁶⁴⁶ A fragment of a so-called *Fifth Grammatical Treatise* appears in AM 748 I b 4to (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 159), following a similar structure, which suggested the writing of such prose commentaries around collections of verse may have been more diverse and widespread than the extant corpus shows.

expand the range of the hermeneutic system given in the *Snorra Edda* and *3GT*. Like the *3GT*, it sometimes compares Latin and ON texts to clarify a position or idea, defining ON poetic discourse in a broader bilingual context. The *4GT*, however, is distinguished by its focus on Christian poetry, which makes it a meeting point between the poetic discourse of the previous treatises and the prose discourse of the florid style of hagiography. Several passages show typological or allegorical interpretation being applied to verse.⁶⁴⁷ The examples are significant because they are explicitly noted as verse translations of biblical material, and the prose commentary of the *4GT* is thus simultaneously interpreting scripture and ON verse. The *4GT* thus exemplifies the potential complexity of the exegetical side of vernacular *grammatica*, referencing the poetic discourse of the *3GT*, the prophetic discourse of *Merlínussþá*, and the religious discourse of *Jóns saga baptista*.

The fourteenth century also brought poetic responses to and reactions against the *Snorra Edda*, showing that vernacular grammatical discourse in Iceland could have multiple, different perspectives, even within a fairly narrow context. Multiple conflicting ideologies influenced conceptions and ideals of poetic composition. This is shown in brief commentaries incorporated into three poems: most famously, the poem *Lilja* from the mid-fourteenth century,⁶⁴⁸ as well as the *Guðmundardrápa* of Árni Jónsson, the fourteenth-century abbot of Munkaþverá, and the *Guðmundarkvæði* of Arngrímur Brandsson, the fourteenth-century abbot of Þingeyrar.⁶⁴⁹ The relevant verses of all three poems are included in Appendix 3. These comments on poetic style attest, with reference to the *Edda*, to the popularity of the poetic treatise in the fourteenth century, its representative authority over a certain style of poetic diction, as well as the fact that certain poets were reacting against this diction.

Numerous explanations have been given for the perspective of these poems in

⁶⁴⁷ The key examples are included as item V in Appendix 3, see Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 10-11, 21.

⁶⁴⁸ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 555.

⁶⁴⁹ Árni Jónsson was ordained abbot of Munkaþverá in 1370, and Arngrímur Brandsson was ordained at Þingeyrar in 1351 (Skórzewska 2011, 263-4). Guðmundur Arason is the only Icelandic bishop who had poets write about him in his own lifetime, which has been attributed to his family connections to known poets in northern Iceland, but significant amounts of poetry were written about him in the fourteenth century as well (Guðrún Nordal 2001, 101).

critiquing the diction of the *Edda*, painting a particular narrative of Icelandic poetics. These explanations, however, ignore the complexity and potential for multiple discourses within vernacular *grammatica*. It has been suggested that *Lilja* and the other poems were written for a foreign audience, presumably a Norwegian one, or that the ethos which they represent comes from the tastes of the Norwegian clergy, which arguably came to influence Iceland more in the fourteenth century.⁶⁵⁰ However, the fact that all three poems reference the *Edda* suggests that they were intended to function in a context where the treatise was authoritative. The three poems do not actually represent the same perspective: while *Lilja* and *Guðmundardrápa* are openly critical of what they present as the rules of the *Edda*, *Guðmundarkvæði* is using it more as the basis for a modesty topos, in that it is not expressing an ideal of *claritas*, ‘clarity’, as a contrast to the poetics of the *Edda*. Even in the *4GT*, which is written in the same mode and tradition as *Háttatal* and the *3GT* and the complex diction there, the discussion of the term *Antimetabola* contains a critique of the use of obscure language, saying that the use of words with obscure signification is considered very detrimental.⁶⁵¹ This suggests the complexity of discourse, as the *4GT* seems to both partake in the obscure discourse of the *Edda*, while at the same time agreeing with the perspective of *Lilja*.

The ultimately oral traditions of ON poetics did not start interacting with clerical culture and ideals in the fourteenth century,⁶⁵² and the critiques given in *Lilja* and *Guðmundardrápa* are very old, standard aspects of Christian rhetoric, as will be discussed below. ON poetics and its complex diction had been interacting with clerical ideals on a

⁶⁵⁰ “It may be that one motivating factor for these men was their desire to communicate with like-minded clerics outside Iceland, particularly in Norway, where skaldic poetry was no longer appreciated nor, probably, well-understood” (Clunies Ross 2005, 231). “This ethos appears to have stemmed not from the Icelandic milieu of learned antiquarianism but from that of “det norske atlantimperium” to quote Stefán Karlsson’s phrase, from the circle of powerful clerics who held sway in Norway and Iceland in the first half of the fourteenth century and whose Icelandic members may have emulated the tastes of Norway rather than Iceland” (Quinn 1994, 90). See also Foote 1984, 267.

⁶⁵¹ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 33.

⁶⁵² Cf. Quinn 1994, 90: “The traditional art of poetic circumlocution, however, was so deeply rooted in the culture of pre-Christian myth and so dependent on a taste for word-play that its reception in learned circles was more problematic, particularly considering the influence the Christian church had on schooling and textual production during this period.” While Quinn does note that the continued transmission of the *Edda* suggests that some scholars in Iceland still appreciated such word-play, the suggestion of this argument that medieval learned clerical culture did not care for word-play is deeply problematic.

textual level since at least the *3GT* and *Merlinusspá*. Several religious poems from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show a precise and careful transformation of Latin liturgical images and phrases in kennings or kenning-like constructions.⁶⁵³ The ideology of these fourteenth-century poems, therefore, did not function to the exclusion of other vernacular grammatical ideologies, nor should it be confined entirely to mid- and late-fourteenth century discourse.

The development of vernacular *grammatica* described here has taken a very general approach, pointing to possible influences and paths of development. The oral and pre-Christian pedagogies discussed at the beginning of the section can only be examined speculatively, but it is nevertheless important to keep in mind that they must have existed. Literate discourse and education, moreover, cannot ever be said for certain to have entirely replaced oral learning. The textualized poetics of the *Snorra Edda* and the clerical influence suggested by the use of grammatical source material and terminology in the *3GT* both point to distinct, literate contexts of learning, but by no means do they provide evidence that they entirely replaced what went before. ON religious translation and poetry, linked to the tradition of the *Snorra Edda* through the *4GT*, nevertheless must have had some vernacular grammatical ideology supporting it before the fourteenth century, potentially derived from or influenced by Ælfric.

The distinction of vernacular *grammatica* is its taking of ON language and texts as its subject matter, yet it continued to interact with the Latin tradition in different ways throughout its development. Vernacular *grammatica* was not separated from Latin *grammatica*, and could function in the same fairly small monastic contexts, with continuing influence from Latin texts and ideas. Influence could occur in the other direction as well, as examples of Latin verse written in skaldic metres show.⁶⁵⁴ Yet the functional division remains, and vernacular *grammatica* could not fulfill the primary function of teaching necessary Latin skills to clerics. The specifics of its intellectual characteristics and functions will be discussed in the rest of this chapter.

⁶⁵³ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, xlvii-xlviii.

⁶⁵⁴ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 471-5.

3.2 Development of Interpretation in Vernacular *Grammatica*

Having briefly surveyed the chronological developments of vernacular *grammatica*, it remains to go more deeply into what defined it as an offshoot of Latin *grammatica*. As the language-teaching aspect of *grammatica* is not relevant to a native-speaking population, linguistic interpretation appears to be the most relevant aspect of the discipline. As a full discussion of ON hermeneutics could fill several volumes, the goal here is only to point to a few general aspects of interpretation and reading practice for which there is evidence in the grammatical treatises and related texts. Ideological issues, rather than pragmatic ones, will be the focus, as discussing practical matters of interpretation and grammatical discourse would involve much wider research into linguistic, codicological, and paleographic issues.

First, the ideology of normalized language will be addressed, and the ways that different types of normalization affect interpretation. Normalized language is authoritative language, and is understood as being more capable of communicating truthfully, a concern of many different types of writing. Second, different types of symbolic, figurative, and obfuscating language relate to each other across boundaries of religious and genre, and the particular authoritative discourse around typological interpretation affects other genres. Finally, the contrary ideology of simple language, *claritas* ‘clarity’, affects multiple genres and intersects with the particular utility of the vernacular itself in easily understood communication. In all of these hermeneutic issues, Icelandic vernacular *grammatica* is defined by its use of ON as a metalanguage and as the language of the subject texts.

3.2.1 Vernacular Normalization, Truth and Interpretation

Authoritative language in the Middle Ages was not supported by any single consistent ideology. Multiple ideals conflicted, both in terms of different intellectual traditions behind the medieval trivium and huge stylistic differences between types of authoritative texts. The pagan *auctores* and the Bible, the Church Fathers and the poets of Christian epics, even basic

categories of poetry and prose presented contradicting ideas of what constituted authoritative ideals of language use. Philosophically derived ideals of pure language, which could perfectly reflect truth, conflicted with poetic and prophetic ideals of ornamented and obfuscating language. Grammatical tools of interpretation both blended and conflicted with rhetorical tools of composition.⁶⁵⁵

Yet medieval Christian intellectuals sought to understand language as non-arbitrary, without accident, and reflective of God's construction of the world. For the Bible to actually reflect divine will, language must have the capacity to reflect pure truth, but there could still be different means or ideals of how this truth should be communicated, depending on both the nature of the message and the audience.⁶⁵⁶ There were thus both centrifugal and centripetal forces at work in the construction of a coherent medieval understanding of linguistic authority. Within this complex dynamic the ideals and models of *grammatica* did not always reflect the reality of how authority related to normativity. Regarding Alexander of Neckam's well-known summary of a grammatical education, referenced in chapter 2, Suzanne Reynolds has noted:

[T]he relationship of authoritative text and grammatical inquiry is not as straightforward as Nequam, for one, would like us to think. On the one hand, grammar's concern with correctness is inevitably compromised by the *auctores'* usage, and on the other, the boundary between grammar and her sister discipline rhetoric seems very unclear, for both have a claim to the figurative language which characterizes the *auctores'* texts.⁶⁵⁷

Appreciating the complexity of this situation is essential when examining the key grammatical processes of normalization. The key grammatical concept of *emendatio*, and the

⁶⁵⁵ This is particularly apparent in the overlap in the rhetorical and grammatical study of the figures and tropes (Copeland and Sluiter 2009, 28-38) but also in wider poetic discourse (Purcell 1996).

⁶⁵⁶ Law makes the point that the study of language required language to be characterized as non-arbitrary, in specific reference to philosophical values in Varro and Plato, but that this idea was prevalent through the Middle Ages because of an analogous Christian value of the spiritual over the bodily, deriving to a great extent from Augustine's work on language and theology (Law 2003, 44, 107-9).

⁶⁵⁷ Reynolds 1996, 19-20.

related subordinate idea of *orthographia*, were concerned with establishing and maintaining a normative *latinitas*.⁶⁵⁸ They were the principles which kept the texts of the canon correct, uncorrupted, and consistent, a vital concern in a manuscript culture. *Emendatio* and *orthographia* thus created authority through normativity. Normativity and authority constantly interacted: the authoritative texts created the normative standard, while *grammatica* maintained the linguistic justification of their authority. Yet, as Reynolds notes, the inevitable realities of implementing ideals and authorial usage complicates the situation.

There were also serious theological implications for normativity. Major early medieval grammarians like Bede, Alcuin, and Cassiodorus saw both *emendatio* and *latinitas* as essential for continuing the written tradition, and for many the highest use of *orthographia* was correcting the texts of the Scriptures.⁶⁵⁹ Several authors, Alcuin and Boniface, argued that heresy could derive from textual defects and error.⁶⁶⁰ While the shift in language and culture meant grammatical traditions changed within ON vernacular culture, those traditions still had an effect on all literate perspectives on language and linguistic authority. Vernacular *grammatica* was the means for Latin conceptions of authority to be applied to ON, for textualizing and communicating native ideas about language, for using linguistic comparison to negotiate normativity.

Orthographic normalization is the earliest function apparent in vernacular *grammatica*. This normalization had both ideological and practical motivations, though modern scholars have discussed the practicalities far more. Yet the fact that the *IGT* never had its orthographical rules adopted, and was still transmitted in a fourteenth-century manuscript, suggests that its ideological function was more important. Its ideology of normalization and authority is most clearly communicated in one passage, where a rhetorical opponent argues that they could read perfectly well without a overly precise alphabet, and all the new characters, that the *IGT* proposes. But, the author argues:

⁶⁵⁸ *Orthographia* and *emendatio* were sometimes used synonymously to refer to the correction of error in a very broad sense, not only in terms of orthography itself but also stylistics and other aspects of grammar (Irvine 1994, 75-7).

⁶⁵⁹ Irvine 1994, 74, 328-31.

⁶⁶⁰ Irvine 1994, 289, 303, 307.

Eigi er þat rúnanna kostr, þó at þú lesir vel eða ráðir vel at líkindum, þar sem rúnar vísa óskyrtr. Heldr er þat þínn kostr; enda er þá eigi ørvænt, at þeygi lesa ek vel eða mínni maki, ef sá finnsk, eða ráða ek vel at líkindum til hvers ins rétta fœra skal, ef fleiri vega má fœra til rétts en einn veg, þat sem á einn veg er þó ritit, ok eigi skýrt á kveðit, ok skal geta til, sem þú lézk þat vel kunna. En þó at allir mætti nokkut rétt ór gœra, þá er þó vís ván, at þeygi vili allir til eins fœra, ef máli skiptir allra helzt í lögum.

It is not the virtue of the letters that enables you to read and to make out the pronunciation where the letters are unclear.⁶⁶¹ That is rather your virtue, and it is not to be expected that I also, or anyone like me, if such there be, shall be able to read well and to make out which path to take where more than one course is possible because it is written one way, but not clearly determined, and one then has to guess, as you claim you can do so well. But even though everyone could make something out of it, it is practically certain that everyone will not arrive at the same result when the meaning is thereby changed, particularly in the laws.⁶⁶²

Here the *IGT* is offering a philosophy of reading and of composition, both distinctive and influenced by Latin ideas of normality and authority. The issue is not that readers will not be able to understand a text – the issue is not textual corruption to complete incomprehensibility – but rather that ambiguities of meaning could arise from orthographic ambiguities. This is the same type of concern as Bede, Alcuin, and other grammarians had for misinterpretation arising from textual ambiguity. The reference to law codes here implies two things about reading law: they were difficult texts open to multiple interpretations, and their interpretation

⁶⁶¹ Males argues that the term *rún* should never be translated as ‘letter’, and that in this passage the imprecision of the runes is being referenced (Males 2016, 266, note 13). While such an interpretation seems to raise some more complex problems – such as why the rhetorical opponent would be implicitly arguing for the use of manuscript runes in law codes – and change the specific meaning of the passage, it does not alter the general ideological perspective or grammatical inheritance of the treatise.

⁶⁶² Haugen, 1972, 14-15.

was important to Icelandic society and culture.⁶⁶³ Ideologically, the *IGT* appears to found the discipline of vernacular *grammatica* by suggesting an ON vernacularity modelled on *latinitas*. It argues that there is an absolute, perfect version of ON which could communicate truth with precision when governed, regulated, and normalized by *grammatica*.

The later orthographic treatises, the *MG* and the *2GT*, work within the intellectual tradition established by the *IGT* but do not appear to significantly alter its conceptions of authority. Like the *IGT*, the *MG* makes use of comparisons between ON, Greek, and Hebrew to emphasize the distinctive character of the runic alphabet and the ON language, but it is more descriptive and less prescriptive than the *IGT*.⁶⁶⁴ The *2GT* does offer some prescriptions about when to use certain characters, but likewise frames its argument with a less explicit sense of *emendatio*. However, in the *2GT* a singular ON alphabet is presented, which is implicitly normalizing, particularly in light of the syllabary figure presented as part of the treatise. Considering the potential orthographic variety of medieval Icelandic manuscripts, any presentation of strict rules of which characters to use, and where to use them, suggests a sense of normalizing *orthographia*.

Normalization is a core aspect of poetics and poetic interpretation as well, as mentioned earlier in the discussion of the *Snorra Edda*. When dealing with poetic *auctores* the ideals of a normalized language are significantly more complex, as Reynolds emphasized, but are still in part based on the concept of a language with invariable meaning which can perfectly communicate truth. This core grammatical ideal is enforced by the interest of the *Snorra Edda* in creating a cohesive system of metrics and diction, whereby the structure and language of verse itself could be normalized. Poetic normalization in the *Snorra Edda*, *MS*, and *4GT* is layered and hierarchical, to varying degrees attempting to create metric, prosodic,

⁶⁶³ Legal knowledge and manipulation of the law could be a vital tool in the political game of chieftains and other wealthy Icelanders (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999, 90).

⁶⁶⁴ In the *IGT* the distinction is made between Greek, Latin, and Hebrew alphabets to show that all languages need their own alphabet, distinction between long and short vowels are said to be made in both Greek and ON, a Greek letter is identified and its use in Greek is compared to its Norse use, the Greek original of ‘y’ is identified, and ‘z’ is said to be a combination of a Hebrew and a Latin letter (Haugen, ed., 1972, 12-13, 16-17, 26-9). Mentions of Greek and Hebrew appear in the *MG*: Greek and Norse alphabets are noted as having the same number of characters, the letter ‘s’ is identified as Latin and the letter ‘z’ as Greek, both represented by the same rune, the Hebrew letters *aleph* and *ioth* are mentioned because they can represent two vowels, just as like the *íss* rune, another rune is said to originate from Hebrew letters (Wills, ed., 2001, 84-5, 88-9).

phonetic, morphological, semantic, and rhetorical authority.

As mentioned earlier, the *Snorra Edda* has some apparent inconsistencies in its definitions of terms which suggest that it arose out of an active discourse. Later poets, like the *Lilja*-poet, understood a particular system of poetics as being represented by the *Edda*, and whether critiquing or praising that system they understood it as authoritative. *Háttatal* is highly prescriptive as to what constitutes correct metre, while acknowledging that older poets did not follow these prescriptions:

Nú skal rita þá háttu er fornskald hafa kveðit ok eru nú settir saman, þótt þeir hafi ort sumt með háttaföllum, ok eru þessir hættir dróttkvæðir kallaðir í fornum kvæðum . . .⁶⁶⁵

*Now shall be exemplified those variations of form which early poets have used in composition and which are now made into consistent verse-forms, though these poets have in some cases composed with metrical inconsistencies, and these variations in early poems are called dróttkvætt . . .*⁶⁶⁶

[Víða er þat í] fornskálda verka er í einni vísu eru ymsir hættir eða háttaföll, ok má eigi yrkja eptir [því] þó at þat þykki eigi spilla í fornkvæðum.⁶⁶⁷

*It often happens in the work of early poets that there are several variations or metrical inconsistencies in a single stanza, and this ought not to be imitated though it is not considered a fault in early poems.*⁶⁶⁸

Here the *Edda* is explicit that it is normalizing an existing tradition, and engaging with the

⁶⁶⁵ Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 24.

⁶⁶⁶ Faulkes, trans., 1995, 198. *Saman settir* in a general sense means ‘place together’ or ‘compile’, and Faulkes suggesting here that it can be read as ‘made into consistent verse-forms’ is a very specific interpretation, but justifiable, and indicative of the extent to which the *Snorra Edda* is attempting to normalize complex and inconsistent traditions.

⁶⁶⁷ Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 26.

⁶⁶⁸ Faulkes, trans., 1995, 200.

tension between grammatical normalization and existing *auctores* which defined much of medieval grammatical discourse.

Further evidence for Snorri's concern about the relationship between a normalized text and the communication of truth is apparent in his other writings, most notably in the prologue of the so-called *Separate saga of Saint Óláfr*. In discussing the communication between Iceland and Norway in the days of King Haraldr hárfagri, soon after the settlement, the saga notes:

Spurðu men þá á hverju sumri tíðendi landa þessa í milli, ok var þat síðan í minni fært ok haft eptir til frásagna. En þó þykki mér þat merkiligast til sannenda, er berum orðum er sagt í kvæðum eða öðrum kveðskap, þeim er svá var ort um konunga eða aðra höfðingja, at þeir sjálfir herðu, eða í erfikvæðum þeim, er skáldin færðu sonum þeira. Þau orð, er í kveðskap standa, eru í sömu sem í fyrstu váru, ef rétt er kveðit, þótt hvern maðr hafi síðan numit at öðrum, ok má því ekki breyta. En sögur þær, er sagðar eru, þá er þat hætt, at eigi skilisk öllum á einn veg. En sumir hafa eigi minni, þá er frá líðr, hvernig þeim var sagt, ok gengsk þeim mjök í minni optliga, ok verða frásagnir ómerkiligar. Þar var meirr en þvau hundruð vetra tólfræð, er Ísland var byggt, aðr menn tæki hér sögur at rita, ok var þat long ævi ok vant, at sögur hefði eigi gengizk í munni, ef eigi væri kvæði, bæði ný ok forn, þau er men tæki af sannendi fræðinnar.⁶⁶⁹

Men then in each summer traded news between these lands, and that was afterwards carried in memory and later kept in stories. Yet what seems to me most reliable is what with clear words is said in poems or other sorts of verse-making, those that were composed about kings or other chieftains, that they themselves heard, or in those funeral-poems, which the skalds presented to their sons. Those words that are fixed in poetry remain the same as they first

⁶⁶⁹ Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ed., 1945, 421-2.

were, if it correctly composed [and] though later one man after another may learn something from it, he cannot alter it. But for those sagas that are spoken, there is a danger that they will not be understood always in one way. And some have no memory, once some time has passed, of what was said to them, and often much changes in memory, and stories become unreliable. It was more than two hundred and twenty years, since Iceland was settled, before men could take here to writing sagas, and that was a long age and a difficult one for sagas not to have changed in oral tradition, if there were not poems, both new and old, from which men can get evidence of what really happened.⁶⁷⁰

Taken along with the concern for poetic normalization and interpretation in the *Snorra Edda*, this passage offers an ideology intriguingly similar to that in the *IGT*. In both instances, the fundamental grammatical concern for language which does not allow for variable interpretation is explicitly presented. While in the *IGT* this is a matter of strict orthography preventing variable interpretation, in the *Separate saga* it is a matter of textual form: the fixed form of poetry, specifically correctly composed poetry written with clear words, prevents the reinterpretation and rewriting that can occur with prose texts. If the poetic ideology of the *Separate saga* is significantly old, it is possible that it was one of the pre-Christian factors that contributed to the development of vernacular *grammatica*. Even if not, it may have been a factor in the development of the poetic treatises, and the focus of skaldic poetry as the medium upon which Latin tropes and figures were vernacularized. If skaldic poetry was already being used and textualized in part because of its relationship with reliability and truth, then this relationship may have been a large part of what made it a core subject of vernacular *grammatica*.

The *MS* builds upon the foundation of normalization in the *Snorra Edda*, expanding the framework within which correct poetics are understood. Much of the *MS* is devoted to identifying linguistic faults: barbarisms, faults within words, and solecisms, faults within

⁶⁷⁰ Translation by Wanner 2014, 190.

phrases, as well as a number of miscellaneous faults. Metaplasms and *schemata lexeos*, even, are presented in the treatise as faults when used outside of poetic discourse. The tropes, while clearly virtues rather than faults of speech, are individually identified as non-normative language – in that they are *figúrur*, and must be treated differently – and so like the *IGT* suggest that there is a perfect, true version of Old Norse. Identifying barbarisms and solecisms simultaneously serves the same normalizing and interpretative function as *Háttatal* shows in the passages above: it identifies the faults in the *auctores* that young poets should not imitate, and it develops hermeneutic strategies which characterize good and bad language, as well as normative and non-normative.

The *4GT* does not deal with faults directly, but it shows the same perspective on language as *Háttatal* and *MS*, as in the explanation of *antitosis*, the change of number, tense, or case for a particular purpose:

Um tímaskifti stand nóg dæmi í Soluecismo, en ekki er nýjum skáldum fallið að líkja eftir slíkum hlutum, er til þess eru að eins sett að skilja fornskálda verka.

*Concerning the change of tenses, sufficient examples are found in Soloecismus, but it is not appropriate for new poets to imitate such things, which have only been explained so that one can understand the works of the ancient poets.*⁶⁷¹

Here again there is a distinction between the conditions of interpreting established *auctores* and composing new poetry. This is apparent in the *Snorra Edda* as well as the *4GT*, but is also a core tension within Latin *grammatica*. This entire discourse seems to have been borrowed from Latin into vernacular writing, or if something similar already existed, it became heavily influenced by Latin ideology.

Normativity here is understood as that aspect of language which makes it

⁶⁷¹ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 24-5.

unambiguous, truthful, having of a vernacularity parallel to the idea of *latinitas*. In the orthographic treatises, above all in the *IGT*, that normativity is created through the maintenance of orthographic rules which show all possible semantic distinctions. In the poetic treatises that normativity is created through emphasizing metrical and grammatical rules, which are openly acknowledged as not being followed by ancient authors. The ideal of unambiguous truth is communicated in the *Separate Saga*, which emphasizes that this discourse must have gone beyond these treatises and their pedagogical contexts, and into other branches of intellectual culture concerned with truthful communication. All of these forms of normalization are concerned with how language is interpreted, and they thus intersect with other factors of interpretation, and other ways of using language which can impede or aid interpretation and the communication of meaning.

3.2.2 Complex Language and Interpretation

By ‘complex’ this section is denoting a range of linguistic factors which at least partly contrast with ideals of clear, simple language which can communicate easily to any audience. Language which is non-normative, obfuscating, typological, or figurative is highly problematic in the context of medieval grammatical discourse because of its lack of clarity, its apparent role as a barrier to the truths which a text is supposed to communicate. Justifications for the use of such language, however, are numerous, and are a central issue of vernacular *grammatica*. The inherent complexity of skaldic poetry, and the centrality of such poetry to vernacular grammatical discourse, means that these justifications have a particularly wide significance. The issues and tensions involved in interpreting complex forms of language is also a meeting point between religious interest in allegory, prophecy, and symbolism and secular interests in skaldic metre and diction.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the conditions of skaldic pedagogy mirror the obfuscating nature of the poetry itself. Icelanders did not write about learning poetry, and it seems likely that this reflects a certain secrecy, or at least privacy, about the pedagogical process itself. It has been speculated that the highly riddle-like nature of skaldic poetry was

closely related to the exclusivity of its courtly contexts, which disappeared after the year 1000 and was accompanied by a general simplification of poetic forms.⁶⁷² The importance of interpreting poetic obfuscation, however, was not confined to this context and continued to be important into the later Middle Ages, and the fact that the law demanded that poetry only be interpreted in a literal sense suggests an earlier conflict over figurative readings.

Generally, thus, an idealization of complex language may be assumed before the introduction of *grammatica* to Iceland. However, it should be noted the passage quoted above from the *Separate Saga* suggests that, even while metrical complexity preserves a poem's reliability, an aspect of clarity of communication was thought to be important to the role of skaldic poetry as historical record.

Chronologically, *Merlínusspá* is the earliest commentary explicitly defending complex language, and is the clearest instance outside the *3GT* and *4GT* that shows how secular and religious conceptions of complex language could interact. The poem as a whole takes a Latin poem based around the words of a Welsh prophet and fills it with references to Norse mythological figures and skaldic battle poetry, as well as Christian eschatological imagery, putting it in an unusual space between a religious and secular text. Verse 94 of the poem defends the poem against critics of its highly referential, symbolic style of language; the fact that this must be defended at all demonstrates the tension between plain and complex language in an ON vernacular poetic context as early as the late twelfth century. Verse 95 continues the defense, arguing that it should be clear to the reader that this is the way prophetic language is supposed to be, offering a very general sort of precedent. Verses 96, 98 and 99 focus on this defense through the precedent of Old Testament prophecy.⁶⁷³ First they reference the psalms and the prophets in general, and arguing that their language is much like *Merlínusspá*, then cite Daniel and David specifically. The reference to Daniel in verse 98 is

⁶⁷² See Lindow 1975. The connection between the use of poetry in courtly culture and increasing obfuscation may be a wider medieval social phenomenon that applies both to Norse and some Latin poetry (Jaeger and Mundal 2015). As Roberta Frank has noted: "all court poetry has a certain impulse to difficulty, a desire to outdo all competitors in wit and craftsmanship" (Frank 1978, 28). However, Christian poetry written outside a courtly complex had other motivations for obscurity and complexity, and while what religious skaldic poetry is extant shows a general trend towards later poems being simpler, there are important exceptions, including new types of kenning and rhetorical complexity (Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, liii-lxi).

⁶⁷³ See Appendix 3 for the relevant verses.

particularly telling of a syncretic understanding of exegesis, as there the poem explicitly states that Daniel, just like Merlin, used symbols of animals and beasts to signify future kings. Verse 100 is a final defense, a call for the use of wisdom in understanding the symbolism of prophecy, and yet at the same time a warning that not all prophecies come to pass, that the words of prophets are *myrk* ‘obscure’, using the same language *Lilja* and the plain-language proponents use to denigrate complex language, but from the opposite ideological position.

It is important to point out the depth of interpretative complexity in *Merlínusspá*, to show how much exegetical ideology existed in ON poetic discourse when this poem was composed. The anxiety about interpreting symbolic, prophetic language in *Merlínusspá* is a response to a long-standing discourse in Christian *grammatica*, going back at least to Augustine. In *De doctrina Christiana*, at least one copy of which was known to have existed in fourteenth-century Iceland,⁶⁷⁴ Augustine discusses the pleasure of interpretation,⁶⁷⁵ and allows for the obscurity of figurative language in prophecy,⁶⁷⁶ but is cautious about commentators mimicking the complexity of their sources.⁶⁷⁷ Augustine, who elsewhere is a

⁶⁷⁴ At Viðey in 1397 (*DI* IV 110-11).

⁶⁷⁵ Nunc tamen nemo ambit et per similitudines libentius quaeque cognosci et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inveniri. Qui enim prorsus non inveniunt quod quaerunt, fame laborant; qui autem non quaerunt, quia in promptu habent, fastidio saepe marcescunt. (*But no one disputes that it is much more pleasant to learn lessons presented through imagery, and much more rewarding to discover meanings that are won only with difficulty. Those who fail to discover what they are looking for suffer from hunger, whereas those who do not look, because they have it in front of them, often die of boredom. In both situations the danger is lethargy. It is a wonderful and beneficial thing that the Holy Spirit organized the holy scripture so as to satisfy hunger by means of its plainer passages and removed boredom by means of its obscurer ones*) (Green, ed. and trans. 1996, 62-3).

⁶⁷⁶ Dicendum ergo mihi aliquid esse video et de eloquentia prophetarum, ubi per tropologiam multa obteguntur. Quae quanto magis translatis verbis videntur operiri tanto magis cum fuerint aperta dulcescunt. (*So I realize that I must say something also about the eloquence of the prophets, in which much is obscure because of their figurative language. Indeed, the more opaque they seem, because of their use of metaphor, the greater the reader's pleasure when the meaning becomes clear*) (Green, ed. and trans. 1996, 214-17).

⁶⁷⁷ Non ergo expositores eorum ita loqui debent tamquam se ipsi exponendos simili auctoritate proponent, se din omnibus sermonibus suis primitus ac maxime ut intellegantur elaborent, ea quantum possunt perspicuitate dicendi, ut aut multum tardus sit qui non intellegit, aut in rerum quas explicare atque ostendere volumus difficultate ac subtilitate, non in nostra locutione sit causa qua minus tartiusve quod dicimus possit intellegi. (*Their expositors should not speak in such a way that they set themselves up as similar authorities, themselves in need of exposition, but should endeavour first and foremost in all their sermons to make themselves understood and to ensure, by means of the greatest possible clarity, that only the very slow fail to understand, and that the reason why anything that we say is not easily or quickly understood lies in the difficulty and complexity of the matters that we wish to explain and clarify, and not in our mode of expression*) (Green, ed. and trans. 1996, 222-3).

strong proponent of *claritas*, allows some loopholes for composition in complex and figurative language and particularly the use of imagery, as would well describe both *Merlínusspá* and the wider corpus of kennings. Such language can be pleasurable to read, preventing readers from becoming bored and neglecting what they are supposed to learn from the text, and it can make them appreciate the secrets of a concealed text as well. Biblical prophets were major *auctores* of this sort of language, and like the *4GT* and the *Snorra Edda* Augustine cautions young poets against copying certain older texts which do not fit with the normative ideal.⁶⁷⁸

Merlínusspá seems to completely ignore this recommendation. In part this is certainly a result of generally more liberal attitudes toward prophecy in the later Middle Ages: Merlin himself gained position alongside the Sibyls and the Bible as acceptable prophecy, at least in some circles, and the twelfth century brought contemporary prophets like Hildegard of Bingen.⁶⁷⁹ The level of seriousness with which some intellectuals took this can be seen in a comment by Roger Bacon in an introduction to his thirteenth-century *Opus Maius*, calling on the church to examine all prophecies, including Merlin's, in order to prepare for the coming of the Antichrist.⁶⁸⁰ The rising authority of Merlin suggests that, despite the warnings of Augustine and other rhetoricians, the use of Old Testament prophets to authorize highly symbolic and complex language was not particularly problematic. Even the pagan, and sometimes demonic, nature of Merlin and other Welsh prophets was defended and equated with Old Testament prophets quite often,⁶⁸¹ so that there was probably less difficulty adapting

⁶⁷⁸ There is not room in this study to go into significantly more detail on the Latin tradition of reactions towards obscurity. For a useful survey, see Ziolkowski 1996.

⁶⁷⁹ Ziolkowski 1990, 151. There has been a revival of arguments suggesting that the ON poem *Völuspá* was influenced by the Sibylline oracles (Steinsland 2013, Johansson 2013), and it is possible that a larger study on ON prophecy could link the Sibylline oracles to *Merlínusspá* as well.

⁶⁸⁰ "If only the Church would examine the prophecies of the Bible, the sayings of the saints, the sentences of sibyl and Merlin and other pagan prophets, and would add thereto astrological considerations and experimental knowledge, it would without doubt be able to provide usefully against the coming of Antichrist . . . For not all prophecies are irrevocable and many things are said in the prophets about the coming of Antichrist which will come to pass only through the negligence of Christians" (Translated and quoted in Blacker 2005, 16).

⁶⁸¹ See Ziolkowski 1990, 155-62. Particularly notable is a passage of Gerald of Wales, writing some ten years after Geoffrey of Monmouth, which Ziolkowski translates and quotes, defending Merlin: "He may well have been a true believer, but, you will say, there is no mention of his sanctity or devoutness. To this I answer that the spirit of prophecy was given not only to the holy but sometimes to unbelievers and Gentiles, to Baal [Balaam] and the Sibyl, for example, and even to the wicked, such as Caiaphas and Baal again" (Ziolkowski 1990, 159-60).

the pagan elements of the *Prophetia Merlini* into a Norse context than has been suggested.⁶⁸²

In terms of language use itself, *De doctrina Christiana* is particularly concerned with commentaries and interpretations written about the prophets, their proximity causing them to mimic the language of the main text, and this indeed seems to be a major factor with Merlin: the *Prophetia Merlini* themselves can be seen as a deliberately obfuscating commentary on recent history, which made use of the language of prophecy;⁶⁸³ *Merlínusspá* does not defend its own language, but rather the fact that as a translation – and thus inherently an interpretation and a commentary – it is continuing to use the murky, symbolic language of its source. Augustine himself may have contributed to this creative, poetic attitude towards prophecy, as Westra argues:

Ironically, here Augustine’s solution was to make an aesthetic virtue out of an apparent hermeneutic vice by calling obscurity figurative discourse and by elevating it to a principle of beauty. The obscurity of the biblical text becomes the source of its fecundity, its richness of meanings, and its beauty . . . In the hands of Augustine and his predecessors this type of interpretation becomes a creative activity that reconstitutes the biblical text cognitively, leaving the exegete quite rapturous in the process. As Marrou observes, the allegorical interpretation of the Bible is a form of poetry, i.e. an imaginative and creative activity. At the same time, this form of poetic exegesis of an authoritative but obscure text, yielding cognitive pleasure, is similar to the allegorical interpretation of Homer and Vergil: both are expressions of the same mentality. In actual practice, the separation of beautiful form from meaningful

⁶⁸² Philip Lavender has argued that Merlin’s infernal birth – his father was said to have been an incubus – was not mentioned in *Merlínusspá* in order to emphasize his religious authority (Lavender 2006, 123). However, the birth is mentioned in *Breta sögur*, the translation of the rest of the *Histora regum Britanniae*, and if Merlin was established as an authoritative prophet enough to be relevant to Icelandic readers, it seems doubtful that further care would be needed in dealing with his problematic background. On the other hand, Lavender’s suggestion, following Jochens, that the translation of *Merlínusspá* “sought to make use of the biblically influenced prophetic material therein to create a translation which would ‘domesticate [further the] pagan magic’ of the already syncretic *Völuspá*” (Lavender 2006, 121) does provide a good argument for the intellectual discourse going on behind these poems, translations, treatises, and commentaries.

⁶⁸³ Ziolkowski 1990, 158-9.

context was as impossible in poetry as in exegesis.⁶⁸⁴

This idea of poetic exegesis can be seen even more clearly in the verses of the *4GT* translated from biblical sources, also quoted in Appendix 3. In imitating the symbols of their sources, while rendering them into a more complex poetic format, they seem to contradict Augustine's mandates. Yet their contextualization in a grammatical treatise, juxtaposed to other types of Christian verse as well as secular stanzas, suggest that their intellectual and poetic discourse took pleasure from, and saw beauty, in obscurity. Likewise, as they propose a hermeneutic which can be applied to a diversity of texts, they see a shared type of joy in obscure language in both religious and secular material.

Returning to native traditions of deliberately obfuscating language, a passage in the *Snorra Edda* suggests what traditions of secretive, riddling language were known to the audience of *Merlínusspá* and the *4GT* alongside the Latin prophetic exegesis which they explicitly mention. In *Skáldskaparmál*, after the story of Þjassi's death and the settlement with Skaði, Bragi tells of how Þjassi's father Ölvaldi gave each of his three sons their inheritance, by letting them take mouthfuls of gold in turn:

“En þat höfum vér orðtak nú með oss at kalla gullit munntal þess jǫtna, en vér felum í rúnum eða í skáldskap svá at vér kǫllum þat mál eða orðtak, tal þessa jǫtna.”

Þá mælir Ægir: “Þat þykki mér vera vel fölgit í rúnum.”⁶⁸⁵

“And we now have this expression among us, to call gold the mouth-tale of these giants, and we conceal it in secret language or in poetry by calling it speech or words or talk of these giants.”

*Then spoke Ægir: “This seems to me a very good way to conceal it in secret language.”*⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁴ Westra 2007, 21.

⁶⁸⁵ Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), 3.

⁶⁸⁶ Faulkes, trans., 1995, 61. It is important to keep in mind that Faulkes' translation of the *Edda*, while

Here the use of runes and the use of poetry is related in their function to conceal language through obscurity; kennings themselves are explicitly said to be useful as a method of concealing language. This is closely related to its roles in prophecy: as Augustine argues, concealing meaning through obscurity creates a pleasurable reading experience, and inspires the reader to more thorough understanding, while on a more implicit level it allows prophecy to function by giving it a range of potential interpretations, some of which are only accessible to the learned, the ideal audience of the text. *Merlínusspá* suggests this necessity when it states that Daniel’s prophetic dreams are *studda merkjum*, ‘supported by symbols’. The main ideological distinction, as Augustine argues, is that in Biblical and hagiographic prophecy is authorized by divinity, but as the example of Merlin shows, that distinction could be often ignored.

Another thirteenth-century wisdom poem, *Sólarljóð*, contains a reference which shows the secretive language of runes being linked with typological symbolism, and both to poetic interpretation. Near the end of the poem there is a dedication to the poet’s son, which suggests that the poem had been interpreted – using the verb *ráða*, already noted as being related to runic interpretation – from a hart’s horn, a symbolic weapon of Christ. The next stanza offers up runes, said to be carved by the daughters of Njörðr, which seems very likely to refer to runes carved on the horn which is presented in the narrative as the source of the poem.⁶⁸⁷ In *Sólarljóð*, then, there is a close link between cryptic or holy knowledge being contained in runes and the use of poetry – the extant poem itself – to interpret and express that knowledge. The highly Christian nature of the poem suggests the potential that pre-Christian conceptions of runic knowledge and poetics are being mixed with grammatical ideas of allegorical interpretation, and the presentation of verse as a method of interpretation

authoritative and widely used, takes many liberties in interpreting particular words and phrases. Here he twice translates *rúnar* as ‘secret language’, and while this is not inaccurate, the more general translation of ‘runes’ better communicates the wider significance of the passage.

⁶⁸⁷ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 353-4. As the notes to verse 79 indicate, however, some scholars have questioned the association between the runes of verse 79 and the interpretation of the horn in verse 78, on the basis that pagan symbols like runes would not be places on such a Christian symbol. However, in such a strange and syncretic poem, it seems spurious to reject such a juxtaposition out of hand, and to assume that runes would always have pagan connotations.

hints at a potential shared context with the verse prophetic translations in the *4GT*.

Both Christian and native secular traditions appear to have had ideologies around obfuscating language as a pragmatic device and a more ornamental one. Complex poetic language could help maintain a certain social or cultural elite, it could conceal insulting poetry, and the passage from *Skáldskaparmál* quoted above suggests a potentially wider interest in secretive language. At the same time, kennings are clearly highly ornamental in both skaldic and eddic forms of ON verse. In the Christian tradition, Augustine points to the pleasure found in difficult interpretation, but also the pragmatic mnemonic and pedagogical aspects of difficult language. These ideas are also expressed in a commentary from *Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs*,⁶⁸⁸ which addresses a distinct but related aspect of this discourse on complex language. Like the passage of the *Snorra Edda*, it views highly symbolic language as a means of deliberate concealment, though here that concealment was mandated by God. At the same time, obscure figures act as a mnemonic device in *Tveggja Postola saga*, and the work required to understand them aids the reader's understanding. Yet they are also said to conceal important knowledge from evil men, and it seems to be implied that the mystery of them might inspire such men to virtue, by being *lengra brott born fra alþyðligu orðtak* 'brought further away from common speech.'

On an implicit level, the passage from the *Separate saga* can be linked to this discourse, as an idealization of complex language as a historical source, as a transmitter of truth. The sort of poetry it praises as truthful is presumably the same sort of complex, referential, kenning-rich poetry that *Lilja* is setting itself against. This is a different angle on the same idea which Augustine and *Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs* present, that it is often the very complexity of a text which makes it more memorable. In the same historiographic context, Augustine's note that the perfect compositional strategy of Scripture contains both plain and obscure passages is relevant. As an aesthetic and interpretative strategy, this neatly parallels Old Norse prosimetrum, particularly works like *Heimskringla*, which compose explanatory prose around verses that are presented as older primary sources, but which are difficult to read and often can have multiple interpretations.

⁶⁸⁸ See item VIII in Appendix 3.

Tveggja Postola saga also hints at the tension between figurative language and the glossing language used to explain it, which links it to *Jóns saga baptista*. On the one hand, there is the divinely inspired complex language put in the mouth of John himself, also seen as beautiful, in part because it was variable in meaning and brought something new with each reading, even though the very variability which makes it aesthetically appealing makes it problematic.⁶⁸⁹ On the other hand there is the complex, elite language of the commentary and grammatical interpretation incorporated into the text, intended to allow common and unlettered readers to understand the figurative and prophetic parts of the text. In the *3GT* it is made explicit at points that its metalanguage is a high register of language, apart from the common speech,⁶⁹⁰ yet here the complexities of vernacular *grammatica* are no longer a narrow intellectual discourse, but the very means by which elite discourses and language are made accessible to wider audiences.

Each of these texts reflects a fairly particular context for this discourse about complex language and its interpretation. The composition of the *Snorra Edda* by Snorri Sturluson and the *3GT* by his nephew Óláfr Þorðarson certainly may indicate a particular relationship between their family and poetic pedagogies. Likewise, for the monastery of Þingeyrar at the end of the twelfth century, Haki Antonsson has suggested a particular connection between syncretic modes of interpretation and identity:⁶⁹¹ However, the point of discussing all these

⁶⁸⁹ This contrasts to the *IGT*, where variable meaning in law texts is exactly what its orthographic model is intended to avoid; here the variability is valorized, pleasant, yet made accessible and useful through commentary. It is also significant that this is an observation about fundamental meaning, rather than ornamentation. The distinction can also be seen in *Lilja* and in the *3GT*. Language in *Lilja* is being distinguished from normative language in rhetorical terms, a differentiation between poetic ornament and clear communication. In the trope section of the *3GT*, however, the distinction is philosophical and semantic, a differentiation between normative and non-normative meaning, not between ornamented and un-ornamented content.

⁶⁹⁰ As in the *MG*: “Sogn er hinn minsti hlutr samsetts máls ok hon er kǫllut einn hlutr af því máli, er fullkomið sen hefir. En sú sogn eða sá hlutr er af alþýðu kallaðr orð.” (*The word is the smallest part of connected speech, and it is called the only part of that speech which has complete meaning. But that word or that thing is called orð by the common people*) (Wills, ed., 2001, 98-99). While I present Wills’ translation of *hlútr* here in its most generic sense as ‘thing’, it seems much more likely that in this passage *hlútr* is being used in the sense of ‘part’, as in ‘part of speech’.

⁶⁹¹ “Clearly then, for the Þingeyrar monks and their associates the application of Christian learning, especially biblical typology and symbolic thought, was not an intellectual game. Rather, it was an essential tool in the engagement of this small community of men with the native tradition, as well as a means of defining their own identity in Icelandic society around the turn of the twelfth century” (Haki Antonsson 2012, 130).

sources together has been to suggest that each of these particular contexts were part of a shared intellectual culture. Taken together, the comments referenced here on complex and symbolic language show a highly active discourse functioning throughout the Middle Ages in Iceland. Though much of this exegetical discourse developed around prophetic and biblical interpretation, native poetics, and Latin traditions of *grammatica* and *rhetorica*, in wider use it certainly influenced and was influenced by reading practices in other genres, and in wider discourses.⁶⁹² They likewise demonstrate that care should be taken in making assumptions about large, prevailing shifts in linguistic attitudes over the course of the Middle Ages in Iceland.⁶⁹³

Figurative language is a core issue of medieval hermeneutics, and the textual analysis of the *3GT*, *4GT*, the *Snorra Edda*, and other texts is only a formal approach to the much wider practice of composing and interpreting language which is complex, problematic, and multi-layered. Looking at commentaries incorporated into literary compositions like *Merlínusspá* and *Jóns saga Baptista* show how medieval grammarians and intellectuals associated many aspects of reading through complex, symbolic language, whether the complexity pertains to mythological reference, metaphor, typological interpretation, prophecy, or simply mistakes or mild alterations of morphology or syntax. The various meanings and contexts of a term like *figúra* in themselves indicate the wide contextualization and influence of various ideologies of linguistic complexity. The idea of vernacular *grammatica* gives a name to what is clearly a broad and connected discourse about

⁶⁹² Þórir Óskarsson has hinted at this relationship between the florid style and the complexities of ON poetics: “Extended poetic images and similes are also common; some are reminiscent of the complex kennings of *dróttkvætt* verse. These are often intended to illustrate abstract phenomena, for instance virtues and vices, though people are also frequently described in terms of imagery” (Þórir Óskarsson 2005, 369-70). Moreover, while religious allegory, prophecy, and kennings may seem like distant topics, Irvine has discussed how in medieval semiotics allegorical interpretation could provide a method and framework for all other forms of interpretation (Irvine 1994, 249-50).

⁶⁹³ For example, the argument about the shift in poetic and linguistic ideology represented by *Lilja* has often been overemphasized. As Guðrún Nordal, for example, has argued: “The most powerful dissenting voice was that of Eysteinn Ásgrímsson . . . who dissociated his poem *Lilja* from the regulation of *Edda* . . . and thereby brought to an end a 500-year-long tradition of skaldic verse-making” (Guðrún Nordal 2001, 211). This is a misleading exaggeration, both because of the complex discourse *Lilja* was a part of, and because the *Edda* was not written until the thirteenth century and there is no way to know how significance, universal, or cohesive its prescriptions were before that. Males also sees a fundamental shift in attitudes towards vernacular linguistic authority in the fourteenth and fifteenth century (Males 2016, 301) and characterizes the ideal of *claritas* and the reaction of *Lilja* against the *Edda* as an innovation of the fourteenth century (Males 2016, 295, note 109).

interpretation, and suggests a potential link to pedagogy and other linguistic issues.

3.2.3 Simple Language and Interpretation

As the pleasure and difficulty of interpreting different types of complex language provide a link between the different textual practices involved in vernacular *grammatica*, so the ideologies around simple language and its interpretation provide a contrasting body of connections. The unifying idea here is that of *claritas* ‘clarity’, which could represent several different aspects of textual and verbal communication. As discussed above, there was an established philosophical and theological opposition to obfuscating language in the Middle Ages. This often overlapped with rhetorical and sermonistic ideals of simple language which could be widely understood, and thus bring important messages to a wider audience. In this way *claritas* intersected with the general idea of the use of the vernacular, rather than Latin, as a medium of communication. At the same time, simple language could be understood as more normative register, language which could be interpreted literally without the need for an education in more difficult forms of interpretation. This particular idea which, like *figúra*, links many discourses of simple language, is that of common speech or common, unlearned people. In all these contexts the idea of common people or common language could have different significance, but it points to the related ideal of *claritas*.

In the most general use of this ideology, we can point to the role of the vernacular itself in bringing *claritas* to rhetorical and liturgical situations. In chapter 2, a passage was quoted from *Lárentius saga* wherein Lárentius chastises Jón, bishop of Skálholt, for giving a speech in Latin which could not be understood by the common people. Within the saga, this relates to Lárentius’ own career in Norway, where his ability to speak Norse allowed him function in an ecclesiastical conflict involving those who did not understand Latin. There is a related sentiment at the beginning of the *Icelandic Homily Book*, where the clarity of the vernacular is tied into the usual clerical modesty *topos*:

Nu þó at at vér fém mioc vanbúner til hváRAR fém vér fremiom guþf þjónofto

þeira ef nu hefe til tíndar. þa verþr þo at hvóro yþr þat allra auþfýnft. hve miok vér erom vanbúner við þui ef vér fcoqlom guþi þíóna a þa tungo oc aþa malýtfco ef ér cUNOþ iamt skilia oc umb at mála fem vér. þurfom vér fyr þui of þAN hlut éinkom meft yþvarar várcunar. oc þes at ér féoreþ þau orþ a léiþes ef vér vildom mála til þurftar qlom os. þó at ér fineþ áþvi fana málfþaþi. at eige fe aollo máleno orþfimlega faret eþa fcoqrolega.⁶⁹⁴

Now although we are very unprepared for either of the divine services which we practice, which now have been recounted, it is nonetheless necessary for it to become clearest of all things to you, how greatly unprepared we are for that, when we shall pay homage to God in that tongue and in that idiom which you can always understand and speak, like ourselves. Therefore, we need most especially that share of your pity, and this, that those words are conveyed in that way, which we wished to speak to all of us out of necessity, although it is found in that case true, that not all speech is spoken eloquently or notably.

This juxtaposition of the necessity for clear communication with the disparagement of rhetorical ability closely resembles the ideology in the fourteenth century ‘anti-*Edda*’ poetry, particularly *Guðmundarkvæði*, where there is more self-deprecation than criticism of florid language. But it relates to *Lilja* as well, in how the simpler language – here the vernacular – is associated with necessity, with pragmatism, with wide understanding.⁶⁹⁵

These fourteenth-century poems are, however, the clearest and most rhetorically charged evidence for the ideal of *claritas*, and particularly its expression in poetry. They combine a modesty *topos* and a critique of complex language identified with the *Snorra Edda* to authorize their own writings, in particular idealizing the clear communication of their ideas; it is the substance, rather than the form, of the poem which the language should serve. *Lilja* verse 97 argues that finding the correct meaning of all words is of primary importance,

⁶⁹⁴ Van Weenen, ed., 1993, 1v 29-36.

⁶⁹⁵ Cf. to *Blenda*, quoted in the Chapter 2, where in a bilingual computational context, the vernacular is described as the unnecessary language.

while the rule of the *Edda* itself is obscuring. The former point hearkens back to the ideology of the *IGT*, a different perspective on the same idealization of perfectly communicating the truth within a text. The latter point is developed in verse 98, which argues that obscure archaisms, *hulin fornyrðin*, impede understanding the poem, again prioritizing meaning over form. *Guðmundardrápa* calls itself plain, and speculates that those who study the *Edda* and related books will not like it, but the author/commentator prefers plain verse: here the surface reading is wholly aesthetic, and it is more implicit that plain language improves understanding. As with the *IGT*, more can be understood from the commentary of these poems by paying attention to the rhetorical opponents of the authors: in critiquing that type of language, *Guðmundardrápa* acknowledges that many readers and listeners find obscurity itself pleasant. *Guðmundarkvæði*, as already noted, does not critique the *Edda*, but rather simply uses the idea of its *reglar*, ‘rules’, to emphasize its own modesty *topos* even more than *Guðmundardrápa* and *Lilja*.⁶⁹⁶

All three of the poems just discussed use the *Edda* in this same way, speaking of the authority and esteem in which the *Edda* is held, emphasizing the complexity of the discourse about language use. They seem to be speaking to an audience who would find their simpler language authoritative, while emphasizing that in another context, with another audience, the rule of the *Edda* would be the greater authority. The ambiguities of *Guðmundarkvæði* and *Guðmundardrápa* suggest that these audiences often overlapped, and that the relative authority of simple and complex language must often have depended on the subject matter and intended functions of each individual poem.

Lilja itself is a well-studied poem, and Peter Foote’s seminal 1984 article on it made several key arguments and observations which point to the complexity of discourse behind simple language. Foote shows that a number of stanzas of *Lilja* are clearly translations based on passages of Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria nova*, implicitly placing those stanzas within the small corpus of ON poetic translations.⁶⁹⁷ Foote links the ideology of the commentary at the end of *Lilja* to fairly common reactions of Christian scholars against obscure language,

⁶⁹⁶ See Appendix 3, II-IV,

⁶⁹⁷ Foote 1984, 259-64.

citing Augustine, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, and William of Conches, and providing a possible direct link between Geoffrey and *Lilja*'s direct comment on obscure language.⁶⁹⁸ Finally, by comparing late religious poetry with the popular poetic genre of *rímur*, and continuing his discussion into seventeenth-century poetics, Foote hints at the complexity of the dynamic between linguistic ideals.⁶⁹⁹ The relevance of Augustine to both this ideology of *claritas*, and to the issues of typological and prophetic interpretation in *Merlínusspá*, is strong evidence that the ideologies of this poem were, however, relevant to vernacular ON textual culture well before the fourteenth century.

From c.1200 the *Icelandic Homily Book* and *Merlínusspá* – the latter having to defend its symbolic language from potential critics – both provide evidence for this earlier dynamic. In more general terms, it has been argued that a tripartite division of high, middle, and low styles in Latin *rhetorica* may have been felt in Iceland, and some scholars have argued that these were directly translated into the vernacular, both its attitudes towards language and its commentary on language, with *lágr málsháttur* being the translation of *sermo humilis*, the plain style. Old Norse religious authors, in turn, would have been aware of these divisions.⁷⁰⁰

In characterising this *sermo humilis*, Þórir Óskarsson has said: “In general, this style is ordinary and uses little ornament; the message was regarded as so beautiful and sublime that it needed no linguistic ornamentation.”⁷⁰¹ This mirrors the sentiment of *Guðmundardrápa* verse 78 that not only the functional clarity of plain language, but the aesthetic of it was appealing. Clunies Ross has argued along these lines, that the *sermo humilis* must have been a strong influence on the commentary in *Lilja* and the other poems, but at the same time she acknowledges that *Geisli* and other twelfth-century poems also seem to avoid obscure and riddling styles of poetics.⁷⁰² In the context of discussing and defining vernacular *grammatica*, however, the ON discourse must be appreciated as being more complex than the simple translation of the idea of the *sermo humilis*. Every piece of

⁶⁹⁸ Foote 1984, 266-8.

⁶⁹⁹ Foote 1984, 268-70.

⁷⁰⁰ Þórir Óskarsson 2005, 358; Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 174.

⁷⁰¹ Þórir Óskarsson 2005, 358.

⁷⁰² Clunies Ross 2005, 231.

vernacular literature, every vernacular homily and speech would make itself felt in the development of ideologies and pragmatic considerations around simple language. There is an intellectual discourse behind these poems, among poets, clerics, and in pedagogical settings, and as with so many aspects of Icelandic *grammatica* – the metalanguage, the teaching of Latin, etc. – the extant texts did not encompass the entire discourse, and cannot be assumed to have done so.⁷⁰³

The audience and particular context of ideologies of simple language fundamentally affect how appeals to *claritas* or the understanding of simple language should be understood. In the *Icelandic Homily Book* passage, the use of the vernacular as a simpler form of language is offered for wider understanding. In *Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs* common speech appears to be deprecated as the domain of evil men, who must be brought away from it in their learning of virtue. In *Jóns saga Baptista*, in contrast, the lengthy incorporated commentary appears to be both a form of complex language and a necessity for teaching common, unlearned people. *Lilja* and the other poems seem the most deceptively affected and rhetorical in their appeal to *claritas*: *Lilja*, for all its lack of kennings, is still written in *dróttkvætt* and is not a simple poem. The very fact that it contains one of the few instances of exegetical commentary in verse suggests a highly learned, elite audience, the sort of audience that would have known and used complex *figúrur*. Here *claritas* is, at least in part, a rhetorical affectation used to gain authority from an established ideological tradition.

All of the examples discussed so far might appear to be a step away from the core vernacular *grammatica* represented by the grammatical treatises, but there is no doubt that they are part of a shared discourse. As the previous section noted, the *4GT* contains its own warning against the use of obscure language for its own sake. Likewise, *claritas* is significant to the relationship between the texts which have been discussed here with the poetic treatises and their interests in tropes and *figúrur*. The implicit vernacular discourse between them can

⁷⁰³ Foote focuses on the idea that *Lilja*, as a superior poem, was more influential as an exponent of linguistic ideology than *Guðmundarkvæði* and *Guðmundardrápa* (Foote 1984, 265, note 42). While it may have made more impact as a poem, this focus on the literary side ignores the fact that these linguistic ideologies reflect a wider discourse, which includes circumstances of education and oral discourse.

be in part revealed by Latin *grammatica*. John of Salisbury's very qualified introduction to the figures of speech in his 1159 *Metalogicon* is a useful example of the relevance of *claritas* to the *figúrur*:⁷⁰⁴ Here *claritas* is at the centre of a balancing act of producing good, authoritative language, and communicating ideas that can be readily understood is the most important part of writing. Allowance is made for ornamentation, and the use of tropes and metaphors in very elite discourse, but it is clear that the use of *figúrur* is the ideological opposite to *claritas*, and that they function together in *grammatica* only with significant tension. It is unsurprising, then, that this tension would be translated into vernacular discourse. John's comments also show how this tension is closely linked to the interplay between inherited ideology and practical function. As with the *IGT*, no aspect of linguistic authority can be said to be purely functional or purely ideological, and both elements of authority are highly dependent on context. In sermons and homilies both the long tradition of *claritas* and the needs of an uneducated audience could call for simple language; for the same reason, as John hints, texts written for students and those early in their education could necessitate simpler language.⁷⁰⁵

The *Metalogicon* text also points to a more theoretical link between the ideology of *claritas* and the discussion of complex language in the grammatical treatises and elsewhere.

⁷⁰⁴Dispositio et tropus id est modus locutionum, ut cum a propria significatione ex causa probabili sermo ad non propriam trahitur significationem . . . Sed et hi ad modum scematum priuilegiati sunt, et solis eruditissimis patet usus eorum. Vnde et lex eorum artior est, qua non permittuntur longius euagari. Regulariter enim proditum est, quia figuras extendere non licet. Siquis etiam in translationibus et figuris auctorum studiosus imitator est, caueat ne sit dura translatio, ne figura inculta. Virtus enim sermonis optima est perspicuitas et facilitas intelligendi, et scematum causa est, necessitas aut ornatus. Nam sermo institutus est ut explicet intellectum, et figurae admissae ut quod in eis ab arte dissidet, aliqua commoditate compensent (Hall, ed., 44-5) (*Grammar also regulates the use of tropes, special forms of speech whereby, for sufficient cause, speech is used in a transferred sense that differs from its own proper meaning . . . The employment of tropes, just as the use of schemata, is the exclusive privilege of the very learned. The rules governing tropes are also very strict, so that latitude in which they may be used is definitely limited. For the rules teach that we may not extend figures. One who is studiously imitating the authors by using metaphors and figures must take care to avoid crude figures that are hard to interpret. What is primarily desirable in language is lucid clarity and easy comprehensibility. Therefore schemata should be used only out of necessity or for ornamentation. Speech was invented as a means of communicating mental concepts; and figures [of speech] are admitted by their utility for whatever they lack in conformity to the [rules of the grammatical] art* (Copelands and Sluiter, eds., 2009, 499). As Copeland and Sluiter note, the line mentioning 'clarity' is reflective of a line in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, emphasizing many ideas in *grammatica* and *rhetorica* are so ubiquitous that specific sources are often not important.

⁷⁰⁵ See the elementary teaching texts translated in Thomson and Perraud, eds., 1990. It is likely no coincidence that the *Disticha Catonis* are translated into very straightforward language in *Hugvinnsmál*.

Mirroring the first line of the *Metalogicon* passage, the *MS* describes how all of the tropes, including such basic ideas as metaphor and metonym, are in themselves *óeiginligr* ‘improper’, even though often used in skaldic poetry.⁷⁰⁶ The language is not incorrect, or lacking in authority, but it is a deviation from its literal meaning, and thus a deviation from *claritas*. As Augustine’s text shows, the tension between the joy of interpreting complex language and the ideal of *claritas* was not new to vernacular *grammatica* or the fourteenth century, but was inherent in the Latin tradition itself, and only further complicated by its incorporation into ON discourse.

Taken in a broad sense, vernacular *grammatica* consists of the discourses and ideologies around the production of a normative, authoritative ON, and the interpretation of texts in ON. Normative, simple, and complex language are different issues within it, but are not always entirely opposing. Teaching and learning how to interpret complex language is key to enabling understanding, and effective glossing, as in *Jóns saga baptista*, can create *claritas* even within a highly figurative, symbolic text. Thus, even as *Lilja* critiques the *Snorra Edda* for representing rules of poetics which encourage archaic diction and complex kennings, the *Snorra Edda* is itself a normalization, standardization, and regulation of the wider oral discourse, and thus can be said to have brought some *claritas* to ON poetics.

Linguistic authority based on the relative simplicity or complexity of language was also highly dependent on context, and medieval Iceland inherited an active and fluid dynamic of linguistic ideals. Education and *grammatica* were means of authorizing texts, as well as categories of language use, and the nature of the authority they granted were thus also dependent on context. The bilingual intellectual life of Iceland further complicates the situation, where both new and established modes of vernacular authority interacted with Latin modes. Monastic reading might have one set of norms and ideals, while Lárentius reciting a speech to an audience of mixed education might have another. Commentary on a highly symbolic or typological religious translation must engage with complexity in a certain way, similar yet distinct from more secular prophetic verse like *Merlínusspá*, and even more

⁷⁰⁶ The contrast of *eiginligr* and *óeiginligr*, ‘proper’ vs. ‘improper’, form is based on a single line in the introduction to the tropes in the *Barbarismus* (Keil, ed., 1855-85, Vol. IV, 399). For more work on the ‘improper/proper’ distinction in ON, see Clunies Ross 1987, 29-38.

distinct from mixture of praise poetry and salvation history in *Lilja*. All of these contexts, however, in some way must link back to educational practices in medieval Iceland.

3.3 Teaching vernacular *Grammatica*

How does vernacular *grammatica* fit into the educational contexts discussed in the first two chapters, into the extant evidence for Icelandic schools and the teaching and learning of Latin and bilingual topics? This is, by necessity, the most speculative part of this study, as the education of laypeople is almost never explicitly mentioned, and the role of the vernacular in clerical education is likewise almost never directly commented upon. This section will thus, by necessity, be a response to some previous scholarly speculation, along with some suggestions for possible ways vernacular *grammatica* could fit into the education contexts already discussed, and meet certain needs of educated laypeople and clergy.

The role of vernacular *grammatica* in Icelandic pedagogies must have changed over the course of the Middle Ages, as the discipline itself and the culture around it developed. Elementary aspects of it may have been more widely influential, while certain components were likely to have been more useful in clerical rather than lay learning. The wide significance of poetry to medieval Icelandic society might suggest that aspect of the discipline was widely learned, yet at the same time oral pedagogies may have still dominated the wider learning of poetry. Finally, some features of the relationship between vernacular and Latin *grammatica* can be suggested, based on the extant evidence and the necessities of clerical culture.

3.3.1 The Pedagogical Functions of Vernacular *Grammatica* and of Latin *Grammatica*

It has been a basic premise of this study that, while they interacted both directly and through bilingual learning, vernacular *grammatica* was functionally distinct from Latin *grammatica*. The learning of Latin was a highly complex and difficult process, and involved teaching correct poetics, often through classical texts, difficult metalanguage through the

artes grammaticae, and scriptural language and interpretation. The types of texts involved in teaching Latin had variable functions, as Reynolds describes:

Whereas the study of the Scriptures is an end in itself and requires no further justification, the study of the *auctores* is fundamentally ancillary; it has what might be termed instrumental status. It is done with a certain end in view - achieving literacy - and is important in so far as it helps to achieve that end.⁷⁰⁷

This describes both a useful similarity between the vernacular and Latin versions of the discipline, as well as an important difference. In a very particular context, presumably the monastic one in which the *4GT* was composed, skaldic poetry might have been understood as a useful ancillary to the study of vernacular religious texts. The dynamic would not be quite the same, ON poetry would not have the same role as classical poetry in preserving an older, arguably more authoritative version of a language. But it could have had a similar role in providing more entertaining, memorable texts for students to learn difficult interpretative and linguistic concepts. The pedagogical use of *Ars amatoria*, a text which has risqué material but which thus could be depended upon to convince students to learn their Latin, might be comparable. However, the *Snorra Edda* and *3GT* are clearly written primarily for the study of skaldic poetry as the main subject texts, not an ancillary text. One particular passage in *Skáldskaparmál* appears to most clearly present its pedagogical role:

En þetta er nú at segja ungum skáldum þeim er girnask at nema mál skáldskapar ok heyja sér orðfjöldá með fornum heitum eða girnask þeir at kunna skilja þat er hult er kveðit: þá skili hann þessa bók til fróðleiks ok skemtunar. En ekki er at gleyma eða ósanna svá flessar sǫgur at taka ór skáldskapinum fornar kenningar þær er hǫfuðskáld hafa sér líka látit.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁷ Reynolds 1996, 12.

⁷⁰⁸ Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), 5.

*But these things have now to be told to young poets who desire to learn the language of poetry and to furnish themselves with a wide vocabulary using traditional terms; or else they desire to be able to understand what is expressed obscurely. Then let such a one take this book as scholarly inquiry and entertainment. But these stories are not to be consigned to oblivion or demonstrated to be false, so as to deprive poetry of ancient kennings which major poets have been happy to use.*⁷⁰⁹

Here the treatise is entirely orientated to young poets, though which young poets would be interested in learning textually rather than orally is unclear. This can be contrasted with the prologue of the fourteenth-century *Codex Wormianus*, where all four grammatical treatises appear, which presents its learning for new skalds, learned men, but clerics above all. Even there, however, there is no indication of the use of poetry for other types of learning: poetic interpretation and composition are the prime goals.

Showing these distinctions is important, as the main scholarship which has addressed the role of the ON grammatical treatises in education overlooks the important differences between the disciplines. Guðrún Nordal in *Tools of Literacy* in 2001 argued more than any previous scholar for the importance of skaldic verse in Icelandic education. She maintains that the use of classical pagan poets in *grammatica* provided a model for Icelandic authors to adapt skaldic verse into their own vernacular treatises. On this model, by the twelfth century Icelanders were teaching poetry both inside and outside schools.⁷¹⁰ She further speculates that one of the purposes of the *IGT* was to meet a need for “exact rules of orthography and phonology to secure a faithful presentation of the verse in the Latin alphabet.”⁷¹¹ Through the association shown between skaldic poetry and *grammatica* in the Icelandic treatises, she argues, those who received a clerical education were taught skaldic poetry as a part of *grammatica* from the middle of the twelfth century onwards. The layout and other codicological features of the *Snorra Edda*, she suggests, point to its use as a school text, and

⁷⁰⁹ Faulkes, trans., 1995, 64.

⁷¹⁰ Guðrún Nordal 2001, 22-3.

⁷¹¹ Guðrún Nordal 2001, 26.

the changes made to the extant versions of the text point to continued use of the text through the fourteenth century.⁷¹²

While some of these observations are useful, the overall picture it paints is unsustainable. Skaldic poetry could not play the same role in Latin *grammatica* as Latin poetry,⁷¹³ and even within vernacular *grammatica* its role was likely very often different. In Iceland, as elsewhere a clerical education was still orientated around the difficult process of learning Latin, as well as other pragmatic clerical skills like song and computus, none of which skaldic poetry could assist in.⁷¹⁴ That is not to say that clerics would not have learned skaldic poetry, but only that it would not have served the same needs as Latin *grammatica*, and so was unlikely to have been a priority in teaching young students. Adults continued to learn, however, particularly in monastic contexts, and there are no reasons why the grammatical treatises and compilations like the *Codex Wormianus* would not have been involved in private or more informal study.

The other issue with Nordal's paradigm is that it orientates all vernacular grammatical learning around the study of skaldic poetry, based on what seems to be a misunderstanding that Latin *grammatica* was orientated entirely around classical poetry. This chapter has been focused on showing how the discipline is better understood in much broader terms. Nordal has argued that the discussions of phonetics and orthography in the *FGT* and *SGT* make the most sense in the context of poetic composition and exegesis, and that the entirety of Old Norse vernacular *grammatica* arose from and revolved around the study and creation of poetry.⁷¹⁵ If we view these treatises only in terms of their compilation with the *Snorra Edda* and the *3GT*, then they might appear to be primarily concerned with poetry. However, the wider intent of the *IGT* is quite explicit:

⁷¹² Guðrún Nordal 2001, 36-7, 68-9.

⁷¹³ This is not only a problem with Nordal's work; cf. Santini's suggestion that the *3GT* "seems to have played an equivalent role in Icelandic culture to that of Bede's *De schematibus et tropis* in Anglo-Saxon culture" (Santini 1994, 38), ignoring the importance of the linguistic difference, or implicitly suggesting that Old Norse played the same role in Iceland as Latin did in Anglo-Saxon England.

⁷¹⁴ Males has recently noted this distinction between the Latin *grammatica* described in the narrative sources and the vernacular focus of the grammatical treatises, and argues against the use of the vernacular grammatical treatises in the classroom, contextualizing them rather in leisure reading or the mandated private reading of Benedictine monasteries (Males 2016, 296).

⁷¹⁵ Guðrún Nordal 2001, 13, 26, 40 for key remarks. See also Guðrún Nordal 2008.

Nú um þann mann, er ríta vill eða nema at váru máli ritit, annat tveggja helgar þýðingar eða lög eða áttvísi eða svá hverigi er maðr vill skynsamliga nytsemi á bók nema eða kenna, enda sé hann svá lítillátr í fróðleiksástinni, at hann vili nema lítla skynsemi heldr en engva, þá er á meðal verðr innar meiri, þá lesi hann þetta kápítulum vandliga, ok bæti, sem í mǫrgum stǫðum mun þurfa, ok meti viðleitni mína en várkynni ókœnsku, hafi stafróf þetta, er hér er áðr ritit, unz hann fær þat, er honum líkar betr.

*Now any man who wishes to write or to learn that which is written in our language, whether it be sacred writings or laws or genealogies or whatever useful knowledge a man would learn or teach from books if he is humble enough in his love of learning so that he will rather gain a little insight than none until there is a chance for more – then let him read this treatise with care, and improve it, as it no doubt needs in many places, let him value my efforts and excuse my ignorance, and let him use the alphabet which has already been written here, until he gets one that he likes better.*⁷¹⁶

Latin *grammatica*, while it made use of poetry as a tool, was not entirely orientated around poetry as its subject matter, and there is no reason to suggest that vernacular *grammatica* was limited in this way.

For clerics and clerical students who would be learning Latin *grammatica*, what role could vernacular *grammatica* then play? In terms of poetics, it could provide a model for the application of their Latin learning to vernacular texts, which could be important for various reasons. As already mentioned, Ælfric provides a model in his arguments about why his own grammatical work was important for safely interpreting vernacular homilies in England. His concern, however, was for those not fully trained in Latin *grammatica*, who were not capable of properly interpreting the many levels of scripture and theological writing. His pedagogy

⁷¹⁶ Haugen, ed., 1972, 32-3.

allowed that there were Anglo-Saxon clerics insufficiently trained in Latin *grammatica* who would yet be reading, and presumably performing, homiletic texts.

This is a useful model for Iceland. The first two chapters made it clear that there were many levels of partial Latin literacy, and many priests who functioned at various levels of incomplete education. Vernacular *grammatica*, and above all the tools for the interpretation of complex and figurative language, could have filled a pedagogical niche. Both for students needing to complete their education more quickly, for lack of funds or some other reason, or priests needing to fill gaps in their education, vernacular *grammatica* could be very expedient. If some poetic knowledge was widespread, and such a priest or student had already had some amount of oral poetic education, a text like the *3GT* or the *4GT* might have been useful for their purpose. At the same time, the language of the commentary of *Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs* may suggest a pedagogical role for such a text, emphasizing the rewards of putting more work into reading and investigating a text.⁷¹⁷ Such rhetoric seems ideally targeted towards a student or undereducated priest.

The description of a priest's duties in the fifteenth-century AM 328 XXIII fol., discussed in Chapter 2, also provides a clue to the use of vernacular *grammatica* in this type of context. Here, in addition to learning Latin, it is among a priest's duties to learn translations of the gospels, in order to better understand the teaching and homilies of Gregory the Great, presumably alongside other church fathers.⁷¹⁸ Though the reference specifically to gospel translation might suggest this is a late text with Reformation interests, it might also suggest the general role of translated religious texts for priests with limited Latin skills. Here, Latin must be learned sufficiently well to perform the liturgy, to have some reading skills, but for difficult theological texts having some sort of translations would be important assistance for full comprehension. Because complete understanding is the issue here, principles and concepts of interpreting complex and symbolic language would be key to the use of translated texts.

It should also be kept in mind that, just as the poetic treatises suggest that they could

⁷¹⁷ See Appendix 3.

⁷¹⁸ Kolsrud, ed., 1952, 110.

assist in the composition as well as the interpretation of poetry, it is possible that vernacular *grammatica* was a tool in clerical compositions and translations. Certainly religious poetry, but also religious homiletic writing could have also been assisted by more easily comprehensible instructions on figures and faults of speech. In this sense, skaldic poetry would fulfill a similar role within vernacular *grammatica* as classical poetry in Latin *grammatica*, where the very complexity and figurative nature of the language enables its use as a pedagogical text. If such a pedagogical function was a precedent, it might explain in part the dynamic in the *4GT* of commentary on skaldic translations of biblical passages, rather than on the biblical passages themselves directly.⁷¹⁹ Translation was an essential part of clerical education in Iceland,⁷²⁰ as it was elsewhere in northwestern Europe, where Celtic and Germanic languages were spoken, and this almost certainly affected the pedagogical role of vernacular *grammatica*. Grotans has even argued that in these regions *translatio* should be considered one of the core elements of grammatical learning.⁷²¹ *Translatio*, an essential component of the *grammatica* that taught clerics the linguistic skills they needed, seems at the same time to have been a core aspect of vernacular *grammatica*, which taught about the Old Norse language and certain parts of its literary corpus.

3.3.2 Teaching Vernacular *Grammatica* to the Laity

The oral forms of education discussed at the beginning of this chapter were the primary forms of education for lay people. It is impossible to say exactly when or how consistently oral education was replaced by textual forms, and it seems certain that with some forms of learning, like poetry and history, oral pedagogies remained active throughout the Middle Ages. However, the composition of the *Snorra Edda* by a layperson, presumably for a lay audience, suggests that the thirteenth century saw at least some lay literate learning

⁷¹⁹ See Appendix 3.

⁷²⁰ Clunies Ross 2005, 119.

⁷²¹ “In order to understand a text, to read it correctly, interpret it, correct it, and exercise criticism on it, one first had to understand what the words said. One way to achieve this was to resort to the vernacular. Depending upon how it was applied, *translatio* could function as a part of each of the four traditional categories, as an individual branch, or even as the object of *grammatica*.” (Grotans 2006, 26).

in poetics.

The scope and significance of this new pedagogical context has caused widely different reactions from scholars. Some have characterized the thirteenth century as bringing poetic learning entirely into a classroom context.⁷²² Stephanie Würth, in contrast, has argued that teaching and learning about the Icelandic language and other vernacular topics was informal, possibly optional, and has associated it with the farms of Oddi and Haukadálr in particular.⁷²³ The identification of Haukadálr and Oddi with the teaching of native tradition is based on the texts produced by the priests educated there – Ari’s *Íslendingabók* at Haukadálr and Sæmundr’s lost Latin history of Norwegian kings at Oddi – and the fact that Snorri Sturluson was fostered at Oddi, though his education is never explicitly discussed. Snorri’s career as a lawspeaker, his historiographic and poetic writing suggests that during his fosterage he learned from all the forms of oral pedagogy discussed at the beginning of the chapter. The fact that priests like Bishop Þorlákr were also educated at Oddi makes it tempting to suggest that secular and clerical forms of learning interacted there and created more textualized forms of secular learning. However, there is no direct evidence for this,⁷²⁴ and even the argument that there was a particularly high level of native tradition being passed down at these two farms is quite speculative.

The only evidence that existed for Snorri having some textual, rather than a purely oral, education is that the *Snorra Edda* suggests not only the ability to read and write, but some grammatical learning as well.⁷²⁵ It is not clear, however, to what extent this is entirely attributable to Snorri, and what might have come from scribes or clerical assistants in the construction of the text. The institution of chieftain-priests might have some influence on this unusual situation. As discussed in the first chapter, there is almost no evidence for chieftains

⁷²² See above all Quinn 1994.

⁷²³ Würth, 1998, 197-8, following Halldór Hermansson 1932, 30.

⁷²⁴ As Heimir Pálsson has pointed out, Snorri might have learned a fair amount of his education from old women chanting poems and telling histories, as St. Þorlákr himself did (Heimir Pálsson, ed., 2012, xii-xiii).

⁷²⁵ Foote argued that the composition of *Háttatal* required a firm foundation in Priscian, Donatus, and potentially Quintilian (Foote 1984, 257), but there is no basis for this argument. If Snorri had such a firm Latin education, it seems unlikely that there would be no reference to Latin, or use of Latin loans, in the treatise. Likewise, Þórir Óskarsson’s argument that the authors of all the grammatical treatises were “deeply learned by European standards” (Þórir Óskarsson 2005, 356), while not impossible, ignores the fact that the source material of the treatises would require no more than a fairly basic grammatical education to read and understand.

who were ordained as priests performing basic clerical duties, and as such there is no reason for them to have obtained a Latin education. The fact that they obtained some prestige from their ordination, however, suggests the possibility that some education was involved, and if so, it was very likely a vernacular education.⁷²⁶ A seemingly unique passage from the B version of *Þorláks saga* provides an interesting hint at a chieftain-priest education and its context. The passage describes the famous Jón Loptsson, foster-father of Snorri Sturluson:

Hann var inn vísasti maðr á klerkligar listir, þær sem hann hafði numit af sínum forellrum. Hann var djákn at vígslu, raddmaðr mikill í heilagri kirkju. Lagði hann ok mikinn hug á at þær kirkjur færi sem bezt setnar er hann hafði forræði yfir at öllum hlutum. Fullr var hann af flestum íþróttum þeim er mǫnnum váru tíðar í þann tíma.⁷²⁷

He was the wisest man in all clerical skills, those which he had learned from his parents. He was a deacon in ordination, a man of great voice in the holy church. He also took great interest in that churches should be established as well as possible, when he had authority over all things. He was complete in most of those skills which were customary to men at that time.

This passage, though only appearing in a later version of the saga, suggests that becoming a deacon involved Jón Loptsson learning clerical skills, but that he learned them from his parents, within the home. There is no specific mention of Latin, and the compliment on his voice may indicate his duty as a deacon, or may suggest some sort of congregational singing.

The handful of documentary references to lay education in the fifteenth and early

⁷²⁶ Gunnar Harðarson's most recent contribution to the dynamic of education and intellectual culture leans heavily on the idea that chieftain-priests had a complex syncretic education, learning Latin but also secular topics (Gunnar Harðarson 2016, 39). While, as I have noted, the chieftain-priests were certainly an important point of intersection for secular and Latin learning, I believe Gunnar's remarks are indicative of a tendency for many scholars to overstate their role in the development of Iceland intellectual culture, and attribute too much of Iceland's cultural distinctiveness to this one particular social dynamic. For references to scholarly arguments regarding the prestige which knowledge held for chieftain-priests, see Bandlien 2016, 137.

⁷²⁷ Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ed., 2002, 166.

sixteenth centuries suggests lay education occurring – as at Oddi and Haukadalsr – alongside clerical learning. Given that teaching Latin to lay students was probably not a priority, this seems like a likely context for the teaching of vernacular *grammatica* to lay students. So in the 1492 document for Hólar,⁷²⁸ the bishop of Hólar is called to educate one son to be ordained as a priest and to help the other to become a man; this latter may involve some component of vernacular *grammatica*. The series of conflicts from 1507-19 over an education payment was based around an original contract that stated only that the student should be taught something from a book, suggesting basic reading skills and potentially some component of vernacular *grammatica*.

All in all, it must be confronted that there is very little basis on which to speculate about the content of literate lay education in Iceland beyond the most elementary level.⁷²⁹ While the *Snorra Edda* may have originally been intended for a lay audience – and even that assumption is not certain – its transmission with the *3GT* and *4GT* suggests it was quickly adapted for a clerical audience. With that said, however, figures like Snorri, as well as the documentary evidence, show that some laypeople must have been educated, likely in the full range of educational contexts discussed in Chapter 1. With no need for Latin learning, vernacular *grammatica* may have been a central part of such education, whenever it went beyond the most elementary learning of reading. As discussed in Chapter 2, lay education among aristocratic groups in the Middle Ages could be orientated around a sort of literacy orientated around recreational reading. Given both the difficulty of reading skaldic poetry and the prevalence of the prosimetrical form in ON literature, such recreational literacy could have necessitated some component of vernacular *grammatica*, particularly the discussion and listing of archaic diction in *Skáldskaparmál* and the *Bulur*.

Both lay and clerical students could benefit from the linguistic and exegetic learning in their own language. Vernacular *grammatica* could be incorporated into a clerical education

⁷²⁸ Example 14 in Appendix 1.

⁷²⁹ An interesting Anglo-Saxon example for how such an elementary lay education, based in the vernacular, might function is apparent in king Alfred's *Letter to the Bishops*, where he argues for "a primary education in English literacy for free born men. Those who wish to go further in education and advance to ecclesiastical orders will be instructed in Latin, presumably the traditional grammatical curriculum" (Irvine 1994 418-9).

alongside Latin *grammatica*, or it could form the basis of a lay student's curriculum. Collections of treatises, as in the extant grammatical manuscripts, could be useful reference works for established scholars, or could have been involved in adult education and private autodidacticism. In the same way that Latin *grammatica* formed the basis for a Latin education in many complex ways, the evidence for vernacular *grammatica* suggests that a significant number of factors fed into vernacular pedagogy in medieval Iceland, though it must remain uncertain whether vernacular *grammatica*'s pedagogical role was ever truly comparable to its counterpart, in any context.

Conclusion

Vernacular *grammatica* is useful as an idea because it indicates the intellectual links in composing and interpreting different types of texts – law, poetry, history, and religious writing – and points both to the indebtedness of that discourse to Latin tradition, and, at the same time, its distinction as its own field, divided by both language and function. Pre-existing traditions of oral education in law, poetry, runes, and history all influenced how Latin *grammatica* was received in Iceland and how vernacular *grammatica* developed. It is not known when or how consistently these oral pedagogies were textualized but over the course of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries the discipline of vernacular *grammatica* developed and functioned alongside oral learning.

The extant treatises show the teaching and learning of abstract ideologies about sound, language, and interpretation, mixing native traditions with Christian, Latin, and grammatical learning. The *3GT* and *4GT* make use of existing paradigms of bilingual Latin teaching to contextualize ON poetics in a clerical milieu. Looking beyond the treatises, vernacular *grammatica* developed elsewhere in both poetry and prose. Poems like *Merlínusspá* and *Lilja* show poets applying wholly different exegetical methods, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, into commentaries incorporated into their verses. The hagiographic innovations of the so-called florid style likewise show the incorporation of grammatical commentary into prose. The related theological concerns of the *4GT*, expressed

in poetic commentary, and the composition of *Jóns saga baptista* in the late thirteenth century, show the breadth of impact vernacular reinterpretations of *grammatica* had in Iceland, and the continuing influence of both Latin discourse and the thirteenth-century traditions of vernacular *grammatica*.

These manuscripts, poems, and treatises are made up of multiple traditions of language use, pedagogy, and intellectual practice being actively brought together for new purposes: the interpretation, authorization, and normalization of vernacular literature and language. Their heterogeneous qualities, particularly in the translated *3GT* and *4GT*, show the diversity of grammatical and educational practices in medieval Iceland. Particularly in the *Codex Wormianus*, where all four treatises and the *Edda* are compiled and summarized in the *Prologue*, it can be seen that fourteenth-century intellectuals had a range of pedagogical and exegetical traditions to work with to elucidate and analyze their own vernacular linguistic and poetic tradition.

Even within this heterogeneity a few key ideology components and functions of vernacular *grammatica* can be perceived: the production and maintenance of normative language, the interpretation of complex language, and the maintenance of clear communication and *claritas*. All three of these could contradict each other, yet just as in Latin *grammatica*, they function together in the role of authorizing and maintaining textual culture with no definitive chronological trend. At the same time, the actual pedagogical practices behind vernacular *grammatica* are far more uncertain than for Latin learning. In a general sense it can be said that vernacular orthographic learning, the basic learning of alphabets and syllabaries, could have had a place in very widespread elementary education, but beyond that we can only speculate. The extent of the vernacular manuscript corpus in medieval Iceland is a strange and frustrating juxtaposition to the silence on the teaching and learning of vernacular topics through textual means.

Conclusion

This study has aimed to broadly show the complexity of education in medieval Iceland, its importance to society and culture, and the diverse number of ways it could have taken place. There was too much variety within Icelandic education for any single model or paradigm of learning to describe it all. The three chapters have shown three different facets of educational history from which this complexity and broader significance can be shown. Through the juxtaposition of these different approaches, there are important themes and points of connection which show key dynamics and ways in which education functioned in medieval Iceland. While it is beyond the purview of this study to analyze specific contexts in depth, the general topics dealt with in each of the three chapters show how the history of schools, Latin learning, and vernacular learning can all be better understood by being explored together.

First, there is the central and neglected importance of clerical education, and the relationship that suggests between the economic, social, disciplinary, and linguistic experience of training to become a priest. Different forms of learning like Latin or canon law, or even the basic knowledge of how to perform certain parts of the liturgy, could be types of cultural capital that helped justify the cost of education. The function of skills as well as the difficulty of learning them affected their financial value and their social prestige. This relationship could change in unexpected ways, however: *Lárentius saga* has Lárentius turn the Latin skills of Bishop Jón against him, while at the same time Lárentius' peers mock him for both his relationship with the archbishop and the charity – and thus implicitly the social relationship – that enabled his own education. Work has been done by Kevin Wanner on the extensive ways skaldic poetry could be perceived as cultural and other types of capital in medieval Iceland, but such scholarship on clerical and Latin skill could be equally revealing. The study of medieval Icelandic Latinity must take into account these issues, and contextualize itself in Icelandic social history.

The relationship between educational costs and intellectual skills also points to the question of how importance or significance is judged when dealing with language, writings,

and intellectual disciplines. The extant manuscript corpus makes it appear – though it is by no means certain – that Latin may not have been widely important as a literary language in medieval Iceland. This study has argued, however, that this does not apply to its importance to education, to society and Christian culture, and thus to Icelandic culture as a whole. It was also important to many individuals, to priests and deacons who depended on their liturgical performance for their careers, but also to the Icelanders listening to the liturgy and constructing their understanding of Christianity based on it. Equally, looking at the small corpus of Icelandic grammatical treatises may suggest that such texts – and the specialized metalanguage contained within them – were not widely important in Icelandic society, but analyzing these treatises in greater depth can help reveal the intellectual culture behind the treatises. The grammatical treatises show aspects of Latin, bilingual, and education culture in Iceland that are evidenced nowhere else in the corpus, and thus are fundamental to the study of medieval Icelandic culture as a whole.

Second, all three chapters here show that there was a diversity of ways that vernacular and Latin learning and culture could interact, which both influenced and were influenced by educational practices. Latin and ON both were involved in the liturgy, the education of the priest impacted how both languages were used and interpreted, and likewise the audience was both educated by the liturgy and influenced by what education they were already equipped with. Poetic education, likewise, could come from informal exposure, from formal oral pedagogy, vernacular textual learning, Latin poetic texts, or some sort of bilingual pedagogy. A priest experienced in Latin poetry could learn more about vernacular poetry later in life through a text like the *Snorra Edda*, a student like St. Þorlákr could learn about both poetics from different sources during his education, or a poet like Snorri Sturluson could be exposed to and influenced by Latin poetry and *grammatica* through the liturgy, or through speaking with priests. The point of emphasizing all this is to show that the syncretic discourses in the ON grammatical treatises cannot be relegated entirely to particular formal or informal educational contexts. They influenced and were influenced by a variety of educational contexts, functions, and priorities.

This variability and flexibility in education – the capacity for any educated person to

take on a student and teach them from a small number of books in a variety of topics, in both Latin and ON – means that the composition of literary works cannot have been confined to clerical centres like the bishoprics and monasteries, as scholars sometimes suggest. The general idea that more literature might be produced at such locations, where there were more literate people and the potential for a strong sense of textual and intellectual identity, is reasonable. However, it cannot be an exclusive argument, as literate priests were not confined to only the large, wealthy churches. Moreover, when speaking of vernacular literature, it might even be argued that isolation from a major church centre and the greater predominance of Latin in such places would be a motivating factor for writing in the vernacular. Both author and immediate audience would be less likely to know or be interested in serious Latin composition away from such centres. On the whole, taking in consideration the difficulty and complexity of contextualizing education problematizes many assumptions about the contextualization of literature.

Third, looking at *grammatica* broadly and in terms of distinct Latin, bilingual, and fully vernacular discourses not only shows the complexity of linguistic ideology in Iceland, but also points to the development of the discipline as both a pedagogical and more broadly intellectual discourse. *Grammatica* is not simply an educational discipline, or a few prescriptions on interpretation. It represents a key component of developing medieval worldviews on language and textuality, a massive cultural inheritance which became relevant to every medieval student who attempted to learn Latin. Whether at a monastery or cathedral, a small church or even a homestead, the teaching of this cultural inheritance interacted with native traditions and impacted ON literacy and literature. It connected Latinity and vernacularity, modelled understandings of correct ON language and style, and interacted with native forms of symbol and sign to alter ways of creating meaning. The study of Icelandic grammatical learning shows that linguistic authority, vernacularity and *latinitas*, were not simple or mutually exclusive, and depended both on context and the individuals involved. That authority, moreover, can be based on the type of text: from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, texts like *Lilja* and *Merlínusspá* show that tension and debate existed regarding linguistic authority even within vernacular discourse, informed by Latin culture but

not based on direct comparison to Latin texts. Grammatical thought could be vernacularized distinctly in both poetry and prose, but still come together in a text like the *4GT*, which more than any other text shows the complexity and potential contradictions of linguistic ideology that could exist in a single context, or even in a single author.

On the whole, this study has avoided focusing on chronological developments, as such developments are difficult to discern through limited, anecdotal evidence. A few observations have been made, however, regarding the growth of monastic schools, and the probability that literacy generally increased in Iceland over the course of the Middle Ages. Latin *grammatica*, as far as can be discerned through the almost complete lack of evidence, seem to have followed western European trends, in terms of the sorts of texts used, though the lack of surviving bilingual glosses and commentaries make the development of bilingual *grammatica* very uncertain. For vernacular *grammatica*, the chronological trend is towards more forms of vernacular *grammatica* with greater interaction and self-awareness, and this is certainly not independent from the general trend towards more education.⁷³⁰ Vernacular *grammatica* grew both from classroom practice – including glossing and commentary – and through the development of ON literature. However, the development of vernacular literacy and Old Norse textual culture in Iceland is all too often seen in terms of literary development: Latin texts led to translations, which led to original literary works, which is seen as the flowering of vernacular literacy. One goal of this study has been to argue that the educational dynamics which produce literacy, even vernacular literacy, are not always orientated around literature or the production of literary texts. The development of Old Norse as a written language in Iceland thus should not be seen strictly in teleological terms, in the development of distinctive literary forms, but also as the development of a pedagogical and scientific language which can function in a bilingual intellectual environment.

Much more work on looking for evidence of education in literary texts would be required to say more on this relationship and its development in the more neglected periods

⁷³⁰ Males also describes a growing development of vernacular *grammatica* from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, but ties it to a perceived literacy decline in the fourteenth century, and a certain break in the understanding of the past and vernacular authority between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Males 2016, 295, 301).

of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but for the moment the example of *Lilja* is telling. Part of the poem, as observed by Peter Foote, is based on a translation of a Latin poem from a Latin poetic treatise. The author, certainly a cleric, was educated in Latin *grammatica*, ON poetics, and existed in a context where the *Snorra Edda* had authority. The genesis of the poem comes thus from the traditional clerical education discussed in chapters 1 and 2, but as a form of literary expression and a potentially pedagogical text it is firmly in the realm of vernacular *grammatica* and chapter 3. Separating vernacular and Latin *grammatica*, as well as the intellectual/disciplinary and social/economic sides of education, is necessary for exploring them fully, but they must also be discussed together to gain a better understanding of the complexity of Icelandic intellectual culture.

Finally, in terms of the scholarly discussion, education and *grammatica* are key links between different types of history, between society, economics, literature, and intellectual culture, and they warrant further study. Advancing knowledge of old and major questions, such as the issue of how educated Snorri Sturluson was, and what role did skaldic poetry play in Icelandic intellectual culture, requires an educational history which takes into account factors from different disciplines. At the same time, this study has aimed to show that a better understanding of Icelandic educational history can in turn aid other fields of research, through the number of intersections between education and other aspects of society and culture. Education and grammatical learning created the priesthood that spread Christianity and literacy, produced literature and judged its quality, oversaw the writing of the law, charters, and legal contracts, and negotiated the interaction between native Icelandic culture and the important of European culture. It is difficult to overstate its significance.

Appendix 1: Diplomatic Evidence of Schools and Teaching

The aim of this appendix is to compile and translate all extant references to schools and teaching in the diplomatic sources compiled in the volumes of the *Diplomatarium Islendicum*. All effort has been made to construct as complete a collection as possible, and several additions have been made to the most comprehensive existing list in Magnús Már Lárusson 1967. However, it is still likely that some sources have been missed.⁷³¹ The pre-Reformation timeframe has been kept to as closely as possible, as well, and several sources from during and immediately after the Reformation – such as the dictates of Kristian III, which deal with education extensively – have been left out.

Summaries

1) 1358 Helgafell: Ásgrímr, abbot of Helgafell, promises to educate Loptr, the son of Þorgils Guðlaugsson, until he can be ordained as Mass-deacon, an unknown period of time. In exchange Þorgils pays 13.5 hundreds – 7.5 hundreds of land at Keflavík and 5 cow-values – plus a horse.

1b) A 1377 abbreviation of the 1358 document. Land value given as 8 hundreds.

2) 1362 Helgafell: Ásgrímr, abbot of Helgafell, promises to educate Þórbjörn, kinsmen of Einar Þorláksson, until his ordination as priest, as well as provide priestly equipment and 5 hundreds in books. In exchange, Þórbjörn gives land at Bótn and Þórisstaðir of unknown value, plus 10 hundreds in cattle.

2b) A 1377 abbreviation of the 1362 document.

3) 1380 Viðey: Abbot Páll of Viðey buys land at Synstu-Vallá at Kjálarnes for 20 hundreds, from Valgarður Loftsson, and in addition the abbot agrees to educate Valgarður's

⁷³¹ Benjamín Kristjánsson 1947, 161 mentions, without citation, that Alexius Pálsson, who would later be abbot at Viðey, taught the future Bishop Gísli Jónsson, and that Sigurðr Jónsson, presumably meaning the youngest son of Jón Arason, held a school while a priest at Grenjaðarstaðr, both presumably happening sometime in the sixteenth century. I have been unable to find his sources, however, among the diplomatic or annal sources.

son Björn for 6 years. If the boy dies or cannot be ordained, 4 hundreds per year worth of land may be paid back to Valgarður for each of the years which the boy was not educated, suggesting a total education cost of 24 hundreds for 6 years.

4) 1385 Unnamed: A deal between the magnate Jón Hákonarson and the couple Magnús Gizurarson and Ragnheiður, where Jón should take land at Viðidalstunga, Svölustaðr, Litlibakka, and Tindahraun, and the couple should receive land at Auðunarstaði in Viðidal, seemingly worth 60 hundreds. Jón shall also take their son Hallketill and have him educated until he is able to be a priest, and provide a chalice and 20 hundreds. No clear reference to the cost or length of the education. Further stipulations regarding property.

5) 1392 Unnamed: Björn Brynjólfsson at Blönduhlíð determines how his properties, totalled at least 150 hundreds, shall be divided among his children, and notes that enough shall be given to his son Óláfr so that he is never incapable of self-maintenance, and can provide an upkeep and education. No mention of ordination or clerical career.

6) 1413 Unnamed: Björgólfr Illugason pays 50 hundreds, paid out over three years, for his daughter Steinunn and his kinswoman Sigriður Sæmundardóttur to join the convent at Reynisnes, in addition to the cost of clothing. The document specifies that they must be educated, but the education must be paid for and taken care of separately.

7) 1422 Unnamed: As part of an extensive legal disagreement over property, it is noted that a certain Katrín had set aside an expensive cloak to pay for the education of her son Þorvarðr Ólafsson, and she had placed it in custody of a certain Ásgrímr Snorrason of unknown relation, but it appears that Þorvaðr had kept the cloak for his own purposes illegally.

8) 1440 Multiple: The priest Ketill Narfason legitimizes his five children, and agrees to pay 30 hundreds in *arflausn* to his brother Erlendr, another 50 hundreds for an unclear reason. Ketill also agrees to pay another 50 hundreds to provide Hallr Grímsson an education on behalf of Erlendr, either at Skálholt Helgafell, or another monastery or place where he can learn well, for up to 3 years.

9) 1443 Reynisstaðr: Guðmundr Björgólfsson and his wife Ragneiður Þorvaldsdóttir sell to the abbess Barbara of Reynisnes land in Skíðastaðr in Laxárdalur, and in return

abbotess Barbara grants them land in Skarð in Reykjaströnd and property worth a total of 50 hundreds. Barbara also agrees to educate their son Sveinn, at a cost of 20 hundreds over the value of Skíðastaðr. 4 hundreds shall be paid back for each year of the education which is not fulfilled, suggesting a total of five years of education intended.

10) 1463 Hólar: Jón Eyjólfsson sells Bishop Óláfr of Hólar the lands of Guðmundarlón. In exchange the bishop agrees to educate his 12-year-old son as a priest, and if the boy should fail in his education, Jón's second son shall be educated until an agreed sum of 12 years' worth of education are passed. Jón also pays 6 hundred to the bishop for an earlier charge.

11) 1466 Munkaþverá: The couple Magnús Jónsson and Margrét Finnbjarnardóttur become prebendaries of the monastery of Munkaþverá, granting the monastery the forestland of Öxarfjörður Skinnastaðrþing. In exchange, the monastery promises to clothe and feed them well, provide divine services for them in a house separate from the monastery, educate their son Magnús until he is a priest, and make sure all three of their children are cared for until they are 20.

12) 1474 Unnamed: Ingibjörg Hákonarson and her son Erlingr agree to a previous deal made by Jón Erlingsson with Halldór Hákonarson, to sell Halldór part of the land in Arnardalur in Skutilsfjörðr. In return Halldór shall have Hákon, the son of Jón Erlingsson and Ingibjörg Hákonarson, educated as a priest.

13) 1488 Helgafell: Loptr Jónsson sells to abbot Halldór of Helgafell the land of Hraunhafnarbakki. In return abbot Halldór agrees to educate his son Narfi until he can be ordained as a sub-deacon, with extensive conditions regarding how long the monastery will take care of the boy, potentially until he is 18 years old. The education can be refunded 2 hundreds for each year that is not fulfilled. Halldór shall also pay Loptr other goods of uncertain value.

14) 1492 Hólar: Guðmundr Jónsson, who is sick and may be implied to be dying, pays to Bishop Óláfr of Hólar 10 hundreds in land at Þorbjargarstaðr in Laxárdalur, in 8 hundreds in other goods. In return the bishop agrees to educate one son as the priest, and help the other to become a man.

15) 1495 Unnamed: Narfi Benediktsson sells Einar Benediktsson half the land of Grindr in Skagafjörður, valued at 10 hundreds. In return Einar will have Benedikt, the son of Narfi, educated and ordained as a Mass-deacon. If the deal is cancelled because of death, 2 hundreds will be returned for each unfinished year, suggesting the total education may have been intended to be 5 years.

16) 1502 Hólar: Magnús Jónsson sells Bishop Gottskálk of Hólar the lands of Sveinungsvík, and pays an additional 10 hundreds, for Gottskálk to arrange the education and ordination as a priest of his son Jón, who is 9 years old, and also to provide for him a benefice when he is a priest. Gottskálk also promised to properly clothe and feed Jón as befits a free man, and provide documentary proof of his education and ordination. If the land sale is intended to guarantee the provided benefice, it is possible that the cost of education and upkeep here is the 10 hundreds.

17) 1504 Skríða: Ásgrímur Ögmundsson sells Narfi, abbot of Skríða, 20 hundreds of land at Borgarhöfn, in addition to 8 hundreds of beach elsewhere, and 2 hundreds in livestock. In exchange abbot Narfi gives Ásgrímur 13 hundreds of land in Sumarliðabær, 6 hundreds in livestock, and agrees to educate a boy who belongs to Ásgrímur – the exact relationship is not clear – and teach him reading, song, writing, and computus until he is able to become a priest. Cost of the full education, of unknown length, appears to be app. 10 hundreds.

18) 1507 Hólar: Bishop Gottskálk at Hólar, in exchange for Yztagil in Langadal from Sveinn Þorfinnsson, agrees to teach his son Jón as a priest, and gives Sveinn custody over the *staðr* of Vestrhóphólar until his son can take control of it. Jón shall also be clothed during the length of his education from the property of the *staðr*.

19) 1507-1519 Unnamed: Loptr Magnússon sells half the land of Nes to Óláfr Eiríksson for an undisclosed sum of money, and in addition Óláfr agrees to teach Loptr's son and teach him something from a book. No mention of the priesthood or ordination.

19b 1512 Unnamed: Loptr Magnússon's right to sell other land at Nes to a certain Jón Steinsson is questioned, based on the idea that he had already sold it to Óláfr Eiríksson, and Loptr complains that Óláfr had not done the teaching of his son

that was agreed.

20) 1514 Helgafell: Bishop Stefán of Skálholt agrees to allow the farmer Eyjólfur Gíslason to oversee Selárdalstaðr until his son Magnús, who is at school at Helgafell, is ordained and able to take over the *staðr*.

21) 1519 Hólar: Bishop Gottskálk of Hólar makes a charge that he had not been paid 40 hundreds due to him for the upkeep and education of a certain Egill Hallsson, who was a young boy and is now a priest. But Egill is acquitted, and the farmer Teitr Þorleifsson, who had made the agreement on Egill's behalf, is charged responsible for the money, and an additional 10 hundreds.

21b) 1522 Hólar: A later judgment which reaffirms Teitr Þorleifsson's debts concerning Egill's education.

22) 1520 Hólar: A property list for Hólar made by Bishop Gottskálk, mentions a payment for the education of Jón Magnússon as a priest.

23) 1524 Skríða: Bishop Ögmundur of Skálholt acquits brother Jón Jónsson of Skríða monastery of several misdeeds, and likewise acquits his two students Jón and Guðrún for childish misbehaviors concerning touching consecrated objects. Brother Jón is given responsibility over the monastery school, and as sacristan.

24) 1525 Skálholt: Exchange of land in Öræfi and in the parish of Stafaholt between Ásgrímur Ásgrímsson and Bishop Ögmundur of Skálholt, education and ordination of a son included. No mention of value, cost, or length of education.

25) 1526 Skálholt: Bishop Ögmundur takes up responsibility for collecting the inheritance due to a poor man, Guðmundr Þorvarðsson, and in return promises to educate one of his sons and pay him an undisclosed sum of money.

26) 1532 Skálholt/Hamburg: Letter from Gizurr Einarsson in Hamburg to Bishop Ögmundur of Skálholt, discussing the bishop's funding of Gizurr's education abroad.

1) 1358 (DI VI 9, pg. 10-11)

Giöfabref fyrir halfre Kieflavvijk.

In nomine Domini Amen

var þetta kaup þeirra asgrimz med guds nad abota a Helgafelli og Þorgilz gudlaugssonar ad Abote tekur med Loffte syne hanz a þennan hatt ad hann jatar honum a stadarins vegna koste og kiendslu þar til ad hann er so fær fyrir namz saker ad biskup vilie vjgia hann til messudiaknz stiettar. Hier j mot lofar Þorgilz til stadarins til æfinligrar eignar land ad kieflavijk halftt fyrir 8^o. ef þad reiknast so mijkid med sannindum. ad fornnu lægie. enn leggja slijkt til sem vantar. med ollum þeim gognum og gædum sem þad hefur att ad fornu og nyo og hann vard eigandi ad og þar til v kugillde og hest.

sie pillturinn so torvelldur til námz eda deyr hann fyrr enn hann fær þessar vjgslur, eda einhuor forfoll ganga til ad eigi er von ad hanu fae þessar vjgslur. þa skilur þorgilz sier aptur so mikla peninga sem afganga koste hanz og næme. þurfe hann og so langa yfersetu til nams ad skynsomum monnum virdist ad stadurinn sie eigi halldinn af þessari forgipt. þa skal til leggja so jafnt þyke.

voro þesser vottar vid Jon Solmundarson. Snorre Andresson. Eyolfur biarnarson. gudmundur aurnolfsson et cetera.

Giving-document for half of Keflavík

In the name of the Lord, amen.

This agreement was between Ásgrímur, abbot at Helgafell by the grace of God, and Þorgils Guðlaugsson, that the abbot take up Loptr, his son, in that manner that he promises to him on the part of the *staðr* board and education there until he is so capable, because of study, that the bishop will ordain him to the rank of Mass-deacon. In turn Þorgils promises to the *staðr* permanent landownership at Keflavík, 7.5 hundreds – if that is reckoned so much truthfully according to ancient law, but add to it such as is lacking – with all that property and goods which it has possessed formerly and newly, and he also becomes owner there of 5 cow-values and a horse.

The boy may have a difficult time at study, or he might die before he obtains this

ordination, or some hindrance occur so that there is no hope that he might obtain this ordination. Then Þorgils may stipulate back for himself as much money as is left over from his boarding and study. He also needs so long at the task of study that he seems to wise men at the *staðr* to not have been held off from this payment. Then shall it be thought to be equally laid out.

These witness were there: Jón Solmundarson, Snorri Andrésón, Eyjólfur Bjarnarson, Guðmundr Árnóldsson, etc.

1b) 1377 (DI III 314)

Half kieflavijk

Þorgylz Guðlögsson gieffur klóstrinu halffa Kieflauijk viij^o ad dyrleika a dögum asgrijms abota. þar a mote loffar herra abotinn ad lata kienna syne hans. suo hann take subdiakna vjgslu þetta skiede Anno 1377.

Half of Keflavík

Þorgils Guðlaugsson gives to the monastery half of Keflavík, 8 hundreds in value, during the days of abbot Ásgrímur. In turn the lord abbot promises to have his son taught so that he might take the ordination of sub-deacon, at that time,⁷³² the year 1377.

2) 1362 (DI VI 13-14)

Kaupbrief fyrir Botne

In nomini Domini Amen

⁷³² Uncertain translation of *skiede*, taking it as being based on *skeið*.

var þetta kaup þeirra asgrimz abota og Einarz Þorlákssonar að abote tok með Þorbjörne frænda hans og jafnada honum koste. kiendslu og klæðum. þar til hann væri prestur að viðgöngu. ef honum yrði það ákveðið og þar með v^c j bókum og messuklæðum og kaleik. hær j mot lagði Einar til klaustrarsins Jord j botne og a Þorustodum. v kugilldi og v^c j haustlagie.

var þetta bref gíortt (j) grunnasundsnese post octavam Epiphaniæ þessum monnum híaerondum síjra Þorleife Jonssyni. Lopti diakna þorgilssyne. augmunde Þorvalldssyne og Olafe Þorsteinssyne.

Agreement-letter for Bótn

In the name of the Lord, Amen.

This was an agreement of abbot Ásgrímur and Einar Þorláksson, that the abbot took up Þorbjörn, his kinsman, and promises him board, education, and clothing until he might a priest in ordination, if that falls to his lot, and therewith 5 hundreds in books and vestments and chalice. In turn, Einar lays out to the monastery land in Bótn and at Þórisstaðir, 5 cow-values and 5 hundreds in autumn-cattle.

This document was made in Grunnasundsness after 8 epiph., with these men present: master Þorleifr Jonsson, the deacon Lopt Þorgilsson, Ögmundur Þorvaldsson and Óláfr Þorsteinsson.

2b) 1377 (DI III 312-13)

Botn og þorustader

Eynar þorláksson selldi klaustrinu og abota Azgrijme jördina j Botne og þorustodum. enn herra abote skal lata kienna sine hans til prestz. Datum 8 epiph. 1377.

Bótn and Þórustaðr

Einar Þorláksson grants to the monastery and abbot Ásgrímr land at Bótn and Þoristaðr, and the abbot shall have his son taught as a priest. Dated 8 epiph. 1377.

3) 1380 (DI III 354-55)

Bref vm synztv vallaa.

In nomine domini Amen.

Var þetta kavn herra þals med gvdz nad abota j videy oc conventvbrædra þess sama klavstvr af eine alfv ov vallgardz loptzsonar af annari halfv. at vallgardvr gefvr greindo klavstri jord ath synztv valla aa kialarnesi firir xx^c. med ollvm þeim gognvm ov giædvvm sem hann hefvr framazt eigandi at vordit.

Hier j moti jatar herra aboti syni nefndz vallgardz er biornn heiter kost oc kiendzlv vm vj ar svo sem gvd vill framazt vnna honvm at hann fai nvmid. innann greindz tima. kann oc svo til at bera edr falla at pilltvrvinn anddizt fyrr enn greindvr time sie lidin. edvr einhverer þeir hlvter kvnni at berazt med honvm at hann megi eigi firir laga saker fram vigiazt skal herra abotin leysa til sin þann part jardarinnar sem epter stendur. ath eigi hefur fallit j forgifft pilltzins vpp aa rieltann reikninsskap at iiij^c falli firir hann aa hvoriv ari. voro þesser kavpvottar hallvr magnvsson. olafvr gvnnlavgsson. hallvr halfdanarson.

Og til sanninda hier vm setti herra aboti sitt innsigle med kapitvlari innsigle oc vallgardvr sitt innsigle ov fyrnefnder kavpvottar sin innsigle firir þetta bref skrifad j videy manvdag næsta epter transitvm sancti martini episcopi anno gratie M. ccc. lxxx. ar. aa xxv ari rikis virdvligs herra hakonar med gvdz nad noreges ov svia Rikis kongs.

Letter concerning Synstu-Vallá

In the name of the Lord, amen.

This was the agreement of lord Páll the abbot in Viðey, with the grace of God, and the

convent-brothers of this same monastery, on one side, and Valgarður Loptsson on the other side, that Valgarður gives the named monastery land at Synstu-Vallá at Kjálarnes for 20 hundreds, with all that revenue and goods, which he had as far back as he had been owner of.

Here in return the lord abbot agrees to the board and education of the son of the aforementioned Valgarður, who is called Björn, for 6 years, as God wishes foremost to grant to him that he might be able to learn within the allotted time. It may also happen or befall that the boy die before the allotted time is passed, or some things might be able to happen to him so that he is not able to be ordained, because of the law. The lord abbot shall release to him that part of the land which remains, that has not fallen in the payment of board of the boy, up to correct accounting that 4 hundreds might fall to him in each year. These were the witnesses: Hallr Magnússon, Óláfr Gunnlaugsson, Hallr Hálfðanarson.

And for evidence here the lord abbot sets his mark for this document, written in Viðey the nearest Monday after the translation of St. Martin the bishop, in the year of Grace 1380, in the 15th year of the worthy king lord Hákon, king of Norway and Sweden by the grace of God.

4) 1385 (DI III 382-4)

In nomine domini amen.

giordiz sva felldr kaupmali med fullu handabandi. Mille jons hakonarsonar af einni halfu en magnus gizardarsonar oc ragneidar hustru hans af annari at sva firir skildu at sogð hion Magnus og ragneidr selldu nefndum joni þessar jarðir vididalstungu. svaulustadi oc litla baca oc tindhraun med aullum þeim gaugnum oc gædum veidum oc hlunendum sem þessum jordum fylgir at fornu oc nýiu at eingu fraskildu oc hann vard eigandi at. her j moti gaf adr nefndr jon jord a audunarstaudum j videdal med aullum þeim gaugnum oc gædum sem þeirri jordu hefir fylgt at fornu oc nýiu oc hann hefir eigandi at vordit oc þar ofan aa sex tigi hundrada med þessum saulum oc fridleika.

j fyrstu grein at þrattnefndr jon skýllde taka at ser hallkel son þeirra og lata kenna honum til prestz sva hann se sæmiligha fær til þess embættis oc ta honum kalek oc taka med

honum tuttugu hundrut af greindu jardar verdi halft huort kugillde oc vauru. jtem skal jon undir ser taca tirkiunnar uegna j tungu þau tuttugu hundrut sem hon a med þessum fridleika. atta kyr. atian ær. tuævett naut. halft niunda hvndrat vöru. enn af fýr saugdu jardar verde her a ofan skal tittnefndr jon luka a næstum fardaugum fim asaudar kugillde. sim kýr. oc asaudar kugillde. oc hundrat vauru er kirkian a audunarstaudum aa. j anatt sal þriar kýr oc tolf ær oc fim hundrad j þui er Magnusi hentaz at taca en joni at luka.

sagdi greindr Magnus þa skýlld at heimilisprestr ætti at vera j tungu oc hann hefði heyrt at kirkian ætti þridiung j heimalandi en ætladi eigi at veri en skilde af ser abyrgd aa hversu sem profadiz efter lögum. sva skilde hann af ser abyrgd vm fyrnd a kirkiu oc aullum ornamentum hennar. sagde hann at tungu kirkia ætti fiordung j veidi j kerum oc fiordung j fitiaa ofan fra kerum. sagdi þrattnefndr jon þa skyllde aa audunarstaudum at þar veri fiordungskirkia oc skilddi af ser fyrnd a sagdri kirkiu oc aullu þui er henni bæri til. skyllddi þrattnefndr Magnus suara laga riptingum a aullum þeim jordum er hann selldi en jon a þeirri er hann selldi en huor hallda til laga þeim er keypti.

for þessi kaupmali fram j vididalstungu fimtudag næsta firir festum fabiani et sebastiani Martirum þessum monnum hiaverandum sir Einari haflidasyni officialis heilagrar holakirkiu er firir sagdi fyrgreindu kaupi. birni aslakssyni. haflida steinssyni prestum. sturla bōduarssyni. þordi biarka. halluarde jllugasyni. snorra brannzsyni oc steini haflidasyni leikmonnum.

Ok til sannýnda her vm setvm ver fýrnefndir menn vor jnsigli firir þetta kaupmalabref er gort var a asgeirsa j vididal næsta dag eptir festum skolastice virginis ad sub anno gracie M. ccc. lxxx. quinto.

In the name of the Lord, Amen.

A contract is made thus, fallen with full hand-shaking, between Jón Hákonarson on one side and Magnús Gizurarson and Ragnheiðr, his housewife on the other, that they dictated that it be declared, that the married couple Magnus and Ragnheiðr hand over to the afore-named Jón these lands: Víðidalstunga, Svölustaðr, Litlibakka, and Tindahraun, with all those goods and emoluments which have accompanied that land, formerly and newly, and he

has become owner also thereover. Here in turn the aforementioned Jón gives back land at Auðunarstaðr in Viðidal with all those goods and emoluments which have accompanied this land formerly and newly, and he has become owner there over 60 hundreds, with these sales and paid in kind:

In the first part, that the aforementioned Jón shall take to him Hallketill, their son, and have him taught as a priest, so that he might be suitably capable of this office, and give to him a chalice, and take with him 20 hundreds of the recorded land-price, half of each cow-value and wadmal. Also, Jón shall take under him on behalf of the Church those 20 hundreds which it owns with these paid in kind: 8 cows, 18 ewes, a 2-winter *nautr*, 8.5 hundreds of wadmal, and from the aforementioned land-price the aforementioned Jón shall pay on the next Removing Days 5 cow-values of ewes, 5 cows, and 1 cow-value of ewes, and 1 hundred of wadmal which the church at Auðunarstaðr owns, in another sale 3 cows, and 12 eyes, and 5 hundred in that which is fitting for Magnús to take and Jón to pay.

The mentioned Magnús said then that he should possess a resident-priest, to be in Tunga and he had heard that the church possesses a third in the home-estate, but did not intend yet to decline its responsibility, whatever might be proven by law. Thus he declined his responsibility concerning the dilapidation of the church and all its ornaments. He said the Tungukirkja possessed a quarter in hunting and fishing in Ker, and a quarter in riverbank-land over Ker. The aforementioned Jón then said that there should be at Auðunarstaðr a quarter-church and declined his responsibility for the dilapidations on the mentioned church, and all that which happens to it. The aforementioned Magnús should answer a legal withdrawal from all this land, which he sold, and Jón of that which he sold, but each hold to that law which is kept.

This matter of sale went forth on Viðidalstunga, the fifteenth day nearest before the feast of Fabianus and Sebastian the Martyr, with these men being present: master Einar Haflíðason, officialis of the holy church of Hólar, which was spoken of in the aforementioned agreement, Björn Ásláksson, Haflíði Steinsson, priests, Sturla Böðvarsson. Þórður *bjarki*, Hallvarðr Illugason, Snorri Brandsson, and Steinn Haflíðason, laymen.

And for evidence here we, the aforementioned men, set our marks for this sale-

document which was made at Ásgeirsá in Viðidal, the nearest day after the feast of the virgin Scholastica, in the year of Grace 1385.

5) 1392 (DI III 484-5)

Akra jtak a Oxnadalsheidi

Þeim godum monnum sem þetta bref sia ædr hæýra senda lýtinghr hialltason. dadi brýniolfsson. stæingrimur boduarsson. Einnar boduarsson. stulli þorgrimsson oc bærdur gudmundarson kuediu guds oc sina kunnickt gerandi ad þa er lidit war fra heghat burd kriz þudhundrad þriu hundrad niutigher oc tuo ær Maghnus Messo dagh a jola faustu ad syndrum okrum j blonduhlid vorum ver j hia sam oc hæýdum aa ad biornn bryniolfsson handlagdi olafui syni sinum j iafnadar hlutskipti vid systur sinar syghridi oc maalfridi til fullrar æighnar jardir er suo hæita sydri akrar. ýtri akrar. brecka oc fiordunghr j vika londum med þilikum rekum sem þeim part til hæýra. sier hueria jordina vm siigh med ollum þeim gaughnum oc gædum sem saghdar jardir aatu oc haufdu ætt ad fornu oc nýiu oc nefndur biorn vard fremst æigandhi ad. saghdi biorn sydri akra æigha skoghar part fram a oxnadals hæidi. hris oc grafua giord vpp ad ræidgøtum fram ad kuserpiss huammi oc ofuan at aamotum. jtem allan gellnæýta rextur fram fra wodum oc til kalldbaksær aa oxnadals hæidi af græindum jordum.

skllidi biornn æighnazst sialfur allan avoxt af þessu godzi sem hann taaldi halft annat hundrad hundrada þar til sem fyrr næfndur olafur væri af omagha alldri æn saghdur olafur hafua þar imot kost oc klædi oc kennzslu sæmiligha. jtem handlaghdi biornn siighridi dottur sinni til fullrar æighnar j sinn modur arf j fyrstu alla þorleiksstadi j blonduhlid þar til x kugilldi og x hundrud j voruuirdu gods. jtem j iafnat vid þat godz sem hann hafdi adur ræiknat olafui sýni sinum jarder vaghla oc mosagrund firer fioratighi hundrada. bresta siighridi þar til fimtigir hundrada æn maalfridi niutigher. huar firer oft nefndar sýstur sighridur oc maalfridur skolu taka þessar jardir æf biorn faadir þeira kann fyrr andazst en hann hefuer þeim afhent j odru gods suo margha peningha sem adur er talt. er þat sydri dalur j blonduhlid. sýndzsta grund. vellir j vaallholmi. ræykir oc dadastadir. allar samt æfter maati

sex skýnsamra manna. skilddi fimtíger hundrada j iafnat siighridar ecki fyrr wtlukazt en biorn villdi.

Oc til sannýnda her vm settum vær fyrr næfndir menn vor jnzsihli firer þetta bref giort j soghdum stad deggi ov aari sem fyr seger.

Partial property right of arable land in Öxnadalsheiði

To those good men who see or hear this letter Lýtingr Hjaltason, Daði Brýnjólfsson, Stængrímr Bóðvarsson, Einarr Bóðvarsson, Stulli Þorgrímsson and Bárðr Guðmundarson send the greeting of God and themselves, making know that then when 1392 years were passed from the birth of our Lord Christ, on Magnús' Mass day during Advent at the visible acres in Blönduhlíð, we were present, we saw and heard that Björn Brynjólfsson pledged to Óláfr, his son, in equal shares with his sisters Sigríðr and Málfríðr, full possession of the lands which are thus called the visible acres: the outermost acres, slopes and a quarter in inlet-land, with such jetsam as for that part is due to them, to each the land for them with all those goods and emoluments which the mentioned lands possess and have possessed formerly and newly, and the named Björn becomes the foremost owner thereof. Björn was said to possess the visible acres, part of the forest from Öxnadalsheiði, brushwood and coal-digging up on the riding-path forward to Kúskerpishvammr and at the uppermost part adjoining. Likewise all the barren cattle driven forth from the ford and to Kaldbaksá at Öxnadalsheiði from the recorded lands.

Björn appoints himself to be the owner of all the produce from these properties, which he reckoned 150 hundreds, so that the aforementioned Óláfr might never be incapable of self-maintenance Óláfr is yet said to have there in return board and clothing and education. Likewise Björn pledged to Sigríðr, his daughter, full possession of his maternal inheritance: first, all of Þorleiksstaðr in Blönduhlíð, thereto 10 cow-values and 10 hundreds in marketable goods. Likewise in equal share with those properties which he had before counted to his son Óláfr, the lands of Vaglar and Mosagrund for 40 hundreds; there is lacking to Sigríðr thereto 50 hundreds and Málfríðr 90 [hundreds], wherefore the often-named sisters Sigríðr and

Málfríðr shall take these lands, if Björn their father can, before he dies, have handed over in other goods as much money as before was reckoned, that is the southerly dales in Blönduhlíð, the most visible ground, Vellir in Vallhólmr, Reykir and Daðastaðir, all together after the estimate of six wise men. The 50 hundreds in equity of Sigríðr shall not be assigned before Björn wishes to pay.

And for evidence hereabout we aforesaid men set our marks on this document, made in the recorded place, day, and year as before was said.

6) 1413 (DI III 751-2) (Not in Magnús)

In nomine domini amen.

gerdiz sua felt kaup millum klaustrsins a reynisnesi af einni halfu ok sira biorgolfs jllqghasonar af annarri halfu. ath sira biorgolfr gaf j klaustrid steinunni dottur sina. ok sigridi sæmundardottur frændkonu sina til þess ath þær skylldu verda systir vnder reglu hins heilagha benedicti. gaf nefndr sira biorgolfr klaustrinu adr nefndu tim tighi hundrada j forgift fyrir fyrgreindar sinar frændkonur. halfr þridi togr kugillda. fimtan hundrath j slatrum. sex tighi vætta skreidar. luka vth aa þrimr aarum. var ok sua fyrir skilt þ oath meyiarnar deydi jnnann þriggia ara skilddi klaustrid eignaz þessa þeninga. sua ok þo ath steinunn dottir hans uili venda sigh aptr til veralldar lifs þa er hon kemr til sinna aara sua at hon aa sialf ath raada ser skal klaustrid godz sith eignaz sem fyrr segir. skildi sira biorgolfr pikunum læring af klaustrinu. ok tuitogha hafnar vod huarri þeirra til klæda ser aarligha. var ek broder jon officialis heilagrar hola kirkiu nærri heima ath holum aa aartidardagh hins goda gudmvndar sub anno domini M. cd. xiiij.

þa er þessi gerd for fram ok systir þorunn ormsdottir var priorissa fyrir greindu klaustri. ok margir adrir dughandi men lærdir ok leikir samþyckiandi alla þessa gerd. Ok til audsyningar ok meiri stadfestu her vm seta ek officialatus jnsigli. ok systir þorunn kapitula jnsigli. ok sira biorgolfr sitt jnsigli fyrir þetta bref scrifuath j reynisnesi jn festo sanctorum apostolorum simonis et iude aa sama aari sem fyrr segir.

In the name of the Lord, Amen.

An agreement is made thus, fallen between the convent at Reynisnes on one side, and master Björgólfr Illugason on the other side, that master Björgólfr gave into the convent his daughter Steinunn and Sigríður Sæmundarsdóttur his kinswoman, so that they would become sisters under the rule of St. Benedict. The aforementioned master Björgólfr gave to the aforementioned convent 50 hundreds in payment for their maintenance for his previously named kinswomen: 25 cow-values, 15 hundreds in flesh-meat, 60 weights of dried fish, paid out over three years. It was also thus dictated that though the maids might die within three years, the convent should become the owner of this money, and though Steinunn his daughter might wish to return to worldly life when she comes of age, so that she herself is able to rule herself, the monastery will retain ownership over its goods, as before was said. master Björgólfr shall select the education for the girls separately from the convent, as well as 20 of plain wool yearly for each of them to clothe themselves. I was brother Jón, *officialis* of the holy church of Hólar, in the vicinity of home at Hólar, on the anniversary of the death of Guðmundr the good, in the year of our Lord 1413.

When this deed was done, sister Þorunn Órmsdóttir was prioress of the previously named convent, and many other doughty men, learned and lay, assenting to this deed, and for evidence and confirmation here I set the *officialatus insigli*, and sister Þorunn the *kapitula insigli*, and master Björgólfr his mark for this document, written in Reynisnes during the feast of the holy Apostles Simon and Jude, in the same year as before was said.

7) 1422 (DI IV 298-300)⁷³³

Domur vm Rangligt halld aa peningum

Ollum monnum þeim sem þetta bref sia eda heyra senda Matteus Pietursson. Hakon Magnusson. Arnbiorn Einarsson. Gudmundur Þorlaksson. Kolbeinn Andriesson. Ari Vigfusson. Þorualldur Berþorsson. Þorarinn Oddzson. Þorkiell Asbiarnarson. Magnus

⁷³³ Only part of this document has been presented here, as it is long and it appears that the mention of education is only a very incidental detail.

Þormodsson. Ófeigur Þorgeirsson. Svartur Stephansson. kuediu Guds og sijna. kunnigt Giorandi a Torfustaudum j Midfirdi aa almenniligu þingi. vorum vier I dom nefndir af ærligum manni Asgeiri Arnasyni er þa hafdi kongs vmbod yfir allt Hunauatzþing. Ad dæma aa milli þeirra Jons Arnbiarnarsonar. Hrafns Sueinbiarnarsonar. og Þoruardar Olafssonar af annari alfu. og Greindur þoruardur var þar þa Riетtiliga firir kalladur og stefndur. og sakir þess ad adur greindur Jon og Hrafn. kiærdu það til Þoruardz Olafssonar ad hann hefdi ad halda vostack med Briggishnappa med vir og spensl med silfur. er Katrin modir hans hafdi skipad sera Asgrimi Snorrasyni firir Bord og kenzlu Þoruardar sonar sins og hennar bref þar firir giort uottar.

Þui dæmdum vier þrattnefndir domsmenn. þrattnefndann Þoruard Olafsson skyllidugann ad afvenda og luka adurgreinda Gripi Jone Arnbiarnarsyni og Hrafn Sueinbianarsyni. eda þeirra laugligum vmbodzmani jnnann manadar ad heyrðum dominum. hier aa Torfustada þingi j midfirdi ef þeir ero til.

Judgment concerning wrong holding of money.

To all the men who read or hear this letter, Matteus Pétursson, Hákon Magnússon, Arnbjörn Einarson, Guðmundr Þorláksson, Kolbeinn Andrésson, Ari Vigfússon, Þorvaldr Bergþórsson, Þórarinn Oddsson, Þorkell Ásbjarnarson, Magnús Þormóðsson, Ófeigur Þorgeirsson, Svartur Stefánsson send the greeting of God and themselves. An arbitration [was] known in Torfustáðr in Miðfjörðr at the general Þing. We were called into judgment by the honest man Ásgeirr Árnason, who then had the commission of the king over all the Húnavatnsþing, concerning the incident between Jón Arnbjarnarson, Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, and Þorvarðr Ólafsson on the other side, and the named Þorvarðr was there and then duly called forth and given notice, and because the aforementioned Jón and Hrafn brought this charge against Þorvarðr Ólafsson, that he had kept a rain-cloak with a *Briggishnappa*⁷³⁴ with wire/metal-thread and a clasp with silver, which his mother Katrín had placed Ásgrímr Snorrason in charge of, for the board and education of Þorvarðr, her son, and her document

⁷³⁴ Hapax, ONP suggests possible a ‘button (*hnappr*) from Bruges’, as *bryggiskr* has three appearances as an adjective meaning ‘from Bruges’, twice in reference to cloth.

made thereabout bears witness.

To that we often-mentioned judges give judgment on the often-mentioned Þorvarðr Óláfsson, bound/due to transfer and pay the aforementioned property to Jón Arnbjarnarson and Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, or their lawful steward within a month from the heard judgment, here in Torfustáðr Þing in Miðfjörðr, if they are here . . .

8) 1440 (DI IV 614-15)

Sera Ketill Narfason ættleyder born sijn

Þeim godhum monnum sem þetta bref sia edr heyra senda sira gisle þorlaksson prestur. jnngimundr snorason. þeorgieir halldorsson. eyioldur þorualdzson. gudlaugur kolbeinsson. þorðr þorgrimssonþ gudlaugur jmason. leikmenn. kuedio guds ok sina kunnigh giorandhi. þe er lidhit var fra hinghat burdh vars herra jehsu Christi þusundh fiogr hundruth ok fiorir tighir ara. a kolbeinstodhum fyrer kirkiodyronom. sunnodagh næsta efter michaelsmesso. vorum vær j hia soaum ok heyrdhum aa ath sira ketill prestr narfason ættleiddi baurn sin. ion ok annan ion. gudruno. oddnyio. herdisi. hielldu þau aa einne bok sira ketill er ættleiddi ok erlendhr narfason broðhir hans lofadhi ok vþplagðhi ættleidhingina. joni ok audhrum joni. gudruno. oddnyio. herdisi. er ættleid voro. taladhi sira ketill sva.

ek ættleidhi hier I dagh. baurn min er sva heita. jon ok jon. Gudrun. oddny. herdis. til fiar þess ere k gef þeim. til gialldz ok gi afar. til sess ok til sætis. til arfs ok allz rettar þess sem logbook skyrir ok ættleidhingur a ath hafa at loghum.

heyrdhum vær ath erlendhur narfason jatadhi þessa ættleidhing ok vþp gaf sva framarligha sem hann matti med loghum. en efter ættleidhingina gaf sira ketill bornum sinum. jarnhatt ok panzara huorum sona sinna. en dætrum sinom hundhrads grip huerri þeirra. sva ok æigi sidhr vorum vær j hia j stora stofunne j fyrsogdhum stadh ath sira ketill lofadhi erlendhi broðhur sinum j arflausn. þriatighi hundradha med handabandhi. skylldu fimtan hundhrut lukazt j þeim peninghum sem þeim kæmi vel saman j þarflighum hlutum. en aunnor fimtan hundhrut skyllði leggiast fyrer hall grimsson vegna erlendz. er sira ketill

skyllði taka ath sier ok koma honum j skola til skalholltz vpp aa þriu aar ok lata kenna honum sva ath hann mætti verda prestur fyrer lærdoms sakir eda annan stadh þar sem hann mætti vel læra. ath helgafelli ædr j audro klaustri ef hann giæti æigi komit honum j fyr sagdhan stadh til læringhar forfallalaust. en ef gengi til omenzka eda forsoman sira ketils ath fyr nefndr hallr væri æigi lærdr. þa skylldo sva maurgh hundrut leggiazt vpp j iordhina laugarbrecko sem hann kostadhi æigi optnefndum halli til kenzlu af þeim fimtan hundrudum sem adur voro greindh. en ef sira ketill kiæmizt med minna af ath lata læra hann þa skyllði hann þess sialfur niota. en ef tittnefndhr hallr andadhizt fyr en þessi timi væri vti þa skyllði skipa annan mann j stadhin jafn lærdhan honum.

Ok til meire syninghar ok sannindha hier vm setto fyr nefndhi men sin jncighli fyrer þetta bref er giort var j sama stadh degi ok aare sem fyr seghir.

Master Ketill Narfason legitimates his children.

To those good men who see or hear this letter, master Gísli Þorláksson, a priest, Ingimundr Snorrason, Þorgeir Halldórsson, Eyjólfur Þorvaldsson, Guðlaugr Kolbeinsson, Þórðr Þorgrimsson, Guðlaugr Ímason, laymen, send the greetings of God and themselves, making known, then when there was passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1440 years, at Kolbeinsstaðr before the church doors, the nearest Sunday after Michael's-Mass, we were present, saw, and heard that the priest master Ketill Narfason legitimated his children: Jón and a second Jón, Guðrún, Oddný, Herðís. Master Ketill held them in a book, who legitimated, and Erlendr Narfason his brother. They permitted and handed over the legitimation to Jón and the other Jón, Guðrún, Oddný, Herðís, who were legitimated. Master Ketill spoke thus:

“I legitimate here today my children who are thus named: Jón and Jón, Guðrún, Oddný, Herðís, to that property which I give to them, to compensation and gift, to seat and to seat, to inheritance and all right which the law-book expounds and legitimized children have a right to have legally.”

We heard that Erlendr Narfason agreed to this legitimizing, and gave up as fully as he was permitted by law, and according to the legitimation master Ketill gave to his children: an iron helmet and coat of mail for each of his sons, and to his daughters property of a hundred to each of them. Also no less were we present in a large sitting-room, in the aforementioned place, when master Ketill promised to his brother Erlendr in *aflausn*⁷³⁵ 30 hundreds with hand-shaking. 50 hundreds should be paid in that money which might for him come together well in useful things, and another 50 hundreds should be paid out for Hallr Grímsson, on the part of Erlendr, who master Ketill should take to him and bring him into school at Skálholt, up to 3 years, and have him taught so that he might be able to become a priest, because of his learning, or another place there where he will be able to learn well, at Helgafell or in another monastery, if he is not able to bring him into the aforementioned place for learning, in case there be no hindrance. And if it goes, because of unmanliness or neglect of master Ketill that the aforementioned Hallr does not become learned, then shall so many hundreds shall be paid up in the land of Laugarbrekkr as did not cost him for the teaching of the aforementioned Hallr, from that 50 hundreds which were mentioned before. And if master Ketill comes to the end with less taken away, than he lost to teach him, then he should himself have the use of it. And is the aforementioned Hallr dies before the time is up, then should take up another man be taken in the place, equally learned to him.

And exhibition and evidence here the aforementioned men set here their marks for this document which was made in the same place, day, and year which was said before.

9) 1443 (DI IV 642-44)

bref vm skidastade

Þeim godum monnum sem þetta brefa sia edr heyra senda sir teitur finnzson. jon diakne snorrason. halldor steindorsson. bergvr vigfvsson. einar bavidvarsson kvediu gvds ok sina kvnnigt giorandi ath þaa er lidet var fra hinngatbvrði vors herra jehsv Christi þvshvndrvt

⁷³⁵ Sum paid to other potential inheritors, to gain full control over the inheritance.

ok cccc hvndrvt fiorirtiger ok iij ar. ath drottensdaginn fyrer þorlaxsmessv vm sumaret j bænhsenv aa skidastavdvm j laxardal vorvm ver j hia ok heyrdivm aa ord enn savm aa handaband þeirra frv barbarv abbadisar er þaa var formann klavstursens ok stadarens j reynesnesi af einne alfv. Enn gvdmvndar biorgolfssonar ok ragneidar þorvardzdottur konv hans af annari ath svo fyrer skildv ath greind hion gvdmvndvr ok regneidvr selldv stadnvm j reynesnesi jordena aa skidastavdvm j laxardal er stenndvr j hvams kirkiv sokn til ævenlegrar eignar vndan sier ok avllum sinvm erfingivm ok epterkomendvm med avllvm þeim gaugnvm ok gædivm eignvm ok jtavlavm hlvtum ok hlvnenndvm sem greindri jordvne aa skidastavdvm hefer fyllgt ath fornv ok nyiv ok þav yrdv fremz eigandi at. enn þar aa moti gaf frv abbadis stadarens uegna fimtuge hvndrada j svo ordnvm peningvm. jordina j skardi er stendvr aa reykiastravnd j fagranes kirkiv sokn fyrer þritigi hvndrada.

þar til skyllði fru abbadisen taka son gvdmvndar vpp aa stadarens kosnat til skola. klæda hann ok fæda þar til er hann mætti vel vigiazt fyrer kvnnattv sake ref hann villde. skyllði saa kostnadur lvkazt fyrer .xx. hvndrvt j fur greint verd skidastada. Enn ef sveinnenn kynne ath deyia eda ef hann vildi eigi læra þaa skyllði fram falla fyrer hann iogur kvgillde aa hverivm tolfmanavdvm vpp j iordna aa skidastavdvm. skildre frv abbadis allar flytningar huala ok vidar ok skreidar frialst aa land leggja aa skardz rekka seynesnes stadar vegan. ok svo skips satvr med. kynne jorden j skardi aa nakkvn mata favl ath verda skilldi frv abbadis hana aftur af gvdmvndi ok ragneidi j þeirra hanndabanndi vnder stadinn ok klavstvrít j reynesnesi fyrer þriatigi hvndrada en þav savgdv bædi jaa vitt. En ef Jordin skidastadir kynni med logvm af ath gangga skyllði iordin skard faalla vnnder stadin aftur til fvllrar eignar. ok þar til .xx. hvndrvt j þarfligvm peningvm fyrer kostnad ok kenzlv sveinsins sonar gvdmvndar ok ragneidar. skylldv þratt nefnd hion gvdmvndvr ok ragneidr svara avllvm laga riftingvm aa jordinni skidastavdvm. Enn stadarens vmbodsmadr hallda til laga.

ok til sannenda hier vm settvm ver fyrnefndir men vor insigle fyre þetta jardarkavps bref er skrifat uar ath stad j reynesnesi midvikvdaginn næsta fyrer Jacobs Messo a sama are sem fyr seger.

To those good men who see or hear this document, master Teitr Finnason, deacon Jón Snorrason, Halldor Steindórsson, Bergr Vígfússon, Einar Böðvarsson send the greeting of God and themselves, making it known that then when it was passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1443 years, on the Lord's day before Þorlákr's Mass during the summer in the chapel at Skíðastaðr in Laxárdalur, we were in the presence and hearing of words, and we were at the shaking of hands of abbess Barbara, who then was the head of the convent and the *staðr* in Reynisnes, on one side, and Guðmundr Björgólfsson and Ragneiðr Þorvaldsdóttir, his wife, on the other, that thus should the household of Guðmundr and Ragneiðr be divided: they sell to the *staðr* in Reynisnes the land in Skíðastaðr in Laxárdalur which stands in the parish of Hvammskirkja, forevermore in their possession and to all their heirs and descendents with all those goods and valuables, property and shares in common pasture, shares and emoluments which has belonged to the recorded land at Skíðastaðr formerly and newly, and they become the foremost owners thereof. In turn, the lady abbess on behalf of the *staðr* gave 50 hundreds in property thus accounted: the land in Skarð which stands at Reykjaströnd in the parish of Fagranes Kirkja, for 30 hundreds.⁷³⁶

In addition, the lady abbess shall take up the son of Guðmundr to school at the cost of the *staðr*, clothe and feed him until his is well ready to be ordained, because of knowledge, if he wishes. That maintenance shall be paid at 20 hundreds over the recorded worth of Skíðastaðr. But if the boy happens to die, or if he does not wish to learn, then shall fall from him 4 cow-values for each 12-months, up in the land at Skíðastaðr. The lady abbess reserves all transport of whales and timber and dried fish to lay freely on the land at Skarð on the part of the flotsam of Reynisnesstaðr, and thus the ship-contracts as well.⁷³⁷ Should the land at Skarð be able to become in some way for sale, the lady abbess divided it back from Guðmundr and Ragneiðr in their hand-shaking under the *staðr* and the convent in Reynisnes for 30 hundreds, and they both agree.⁷³⁸ And if the land of Skíðastaðr is able

⁷³⁶ This is being taken as 50 hundreds of property total, with 30 hundreds covered by the land in Skarði, but could also be taken simple as 80 hundreds total, though that would seem to be an unusually large exchange of property.

⁷³⁷ Uncertain how to translate *skips satvr*.

⁷³⁸ *favl* is being taken here as from the adjective *falr*, but this whole sentence is highly uncertain.

legally to go, the land of Skarð shall fall under the *staðr* in full possession, and thereto 20 hundreds in useful property for the board and education of Sveinn, the son of Guðmundr and Ragneiðr. The previously named household of Guðmundr and Regnheiðr shall answer all legal withdrawal at the land of Skiðastaðr. And the steward of the *staðr* holds to law.

And for evidence he we, the aforementioned men, set out insiglia before this land-agreement document which was written at the *staðr* in Reynisnes, the nearest Wednesday before Jacob's-mass in the same year as was said earlier.

10) 1463 (DÍ V 390-91)

vm jordina guðmundarlon

Þat giorvm uier sveinbiornn prestur þordarson officialis heilgrar holakirkíu. hallr arnason. oddr guðmundzson. petur hannisson. prestart. pall brandzson ok olafur ionsson leikmenn godvm monnum vitvrligt med þessv voro opno brefue at uier uorvm þar I hia saum ok heyrðum aa midkudagin næsta fyrer egidivsmessv I guðmundarlóni a langanesi ord ok handaband uors nadvga herra olafs med gvds nad biskups a holum ok ions eyolfssonar at suo firer skildv ath ion eyolfsson feck biskupinum til fvllrar eignar alla iordina I gvdmundarlóni er liggr I savdanes kirkíu sokn med ollvm þeim gognvm ok gęðvm sem greindre iordu fylger ok fylkt hefer ath forno ok nyo ok hann uard fremzt eigandi ath med svo vordnum skildaga at biskupin skyllði taka at sier son ions tolf uetra gamlan ok lata kenna honum til prestz. kynni pilzins vid ath missa þa skyllði ion setia annan sinn son aptur i kenzluna þar til allz tolf ara vęri lidin

hedan fra en iordin skyllði obrigdilig eign biskupsins ok kirkíunnar a holum hedan fra. suo eige sidr feck adr greindr ion fyrr sogdvm biskup olave ok kirkivne a holvm til fullrar eignar allan þann rekapart sem atti I dritvik a langanesi ok þar til feck þrattnefndr ion fyrskrifudum biskup olave vj malnytukvgilldi til fvllrar eignar fyrer þa akęru er biskupinn kęrdi til hans ath hann hefði gripit holastadar uidv rangliga skyllði hann þar vm kvittr. ath þessv avllv fyrskrifvdu haultdnu skyllði ion svara laga riptingum a greindre iordu en

biskupinn hallda til laga.

ok til saninda hier vm settum ver fyr nefndr men vor incigle fyrer þetta skrifat a skinnastodvm i avxarfirdi a faustudagin næsta epter egidivsmesso anno domini M cccc sexagessimo tercio.

Concerning the lands in Guðmundarlón

We – the priest Sveinbjörn Þorðarson, *officialis* of the holy church of Hólar, Hallr Árnason, Oddr Guðmundsson, Pétur Hannisson, priests, Páll Brandsson, and Óláfr Jónsson, laymen – make that known to good men with this, our open letter, that we were there present, we saw and heard, on the nearest Wednesday before Aegidius-mass, in Guðmundarlón at Langanes, words and hand-shaking of our merciful lord Óláfr, bishop of Hólar by the grace of God, and Jón Eyjólfsson, that it was dictated thus, that Jón Eyjólfsson granted to the bishop full possession of all the lands in Guðmundarlón which lies in the parish of Sauðaneskirkja, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany, appointed to the land, and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he becomes owner to such an extent, with terms laid out thus, that the bishop shall take to him the son of Jón, 12 years old, and have him educated up to a priest. If the boy should happen to fail, then Jón shall set his second son again into the education there, there until all 12 years are passed.⁷³⁹

And hereafter the land shall [be] the unchangeable possession of the bishop and the church at Hólar henceforth, thus no less does does the aforementioned Jón hand over to the previously mentioned Bishop Óláfr and the church at Hólar to full possession all that share in jetsam which he possessed in Drítvík in Langanes and thereto the aforementioned Jón hands over to the before-written Bishop Óláfr full possession of 6 milk-cow values for that charge, which the bishop made against him, that he had seized the timber of Hólastaðr wrongly. He should [be] acquitted thereabout, to all this written and held above, should Jón answer the legal withdrawal from the reported land, and the bishop hold to the law.

⁷³⁹ This seems like an excessively long period of education, and there may be some sort of error or misreading. However, without knowing the value of Guðmundarlón, there is no way to be certain.

And for evidence, we aforementioned men set here our marks for this document, written at Skinnastaðr in Öxarfjöður on the nearest Friday after Aegidius-mass, in the year of the Lord 1463.

11) 1466 (DI V 458-9)

Skogar j oxarfirde geffner j proventu

Þat giorum vær hallr arnason ok kolbeinn ingimundarson. prestart. asgrimr hallzson. magnus þosteinnsson. ion vlfsson ok arnorr klængsson leikmenn godum monnum uitrligt med þessv uoru brefe ath þa er lidith uar fra hingathbvrð vors herra ihesv christi þushund fiogur hvndrdth sex tiger ok sex aar j klifshaga I auxarfirdi I festo marie magalene uorum vær i hia saum ok heyrdvm aa ord ok handaband herra einars abota a munkapvera af einni alfo magnus ionssonar ok margretar finnbiarnardottvr konv hans af annari ath suo fyrer skildv ath greind hion magnus ok margreth gafu i prouentv med sier klaustrinv a munckapvera iavrdina skoga er ligr i avxarfirdi i skinnastada þingum med avllum þeim gavnum ok gædvum sem greindri iavrdv fylger ok fylgt hefer ath fornv ok nyiv ok þav vrdv fremzt eigandi ath. handselldv þav bædi fyrr greinda iavrd stadnvm ok klavstrinv til æfuinligrar eignar en fra sier ok sinum erfingium.

Hier a mot skildo þav hafa æfenligt framfæri a stadnum. sæmiligt bordhalld sua sem frialsvm manni berr. þionvstv af stadnum sierlega hvs þeim til inndælis frialst ok lidugt. skilldi hann hafa tuituga uod ok klædis stiku arliga. suo ok hun adra uod ok lereptstiku arliga. hier med skilldi abotinn taka magnus son sagdrar margretar vpp a klavstrid ok skilldi formadr klavstrins lata kenna honum suo hann megi vigiazt til prestz ef hann uill lata uigia sik ok hialpa honum. þar til skilldi hann bædi hafa mat ok vadmals klædi af stadnvm þar til hann er tvitvgr.

kann ok adr greindr magnus ath devia fyr en hann er tvitugr þa skal þar einginn i skipazt i stad hans. en ef magnus ionsson salazt eda uerdr sva ofær ath hann megi eigi hialpa eda fram færa dætr margretar gvdrvkv ok unv þa skal klavstrid fæda þar ok klæda þar til þær

erv tvitugar nema þær giptizt eda giori annat rad fyrir sier fyrir. skilldi magnus ionsson ok Margret kona hans svara laga riptingu a fyrir skrifadri iavrdv. en formann stadarins ok klavstrid hallda til riettra laga.

ok till sanninda hier um settv ver fyrir skrifader men uor innsigli fyrir þetta bref skrifat i sama stad ok ari degi sidar en fyr segir.

Forest in Öxarfjörðr given in prebend.

We – Hallr Árnason and Kolbeinn Ingimundarson, priests, Ásgrímr Hallsson, Magnús Þorsteinsson, Jón Úlfsson and Arnoorr Klængsson, laymen – make it known to good men with this, our letter, that then when there was passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ 1466 years, in Klifshagi in Öxarfjörðr during the feast of Mary Magdalene we were present, we saw and heard words and hand-shaking of the lord abbot of Munkaþverá on one side, of Magnús Jónsson and Margret Finnbjarnardóttur, his wife, on the other, that it was dictated thus, that the recorded household Magnús and Margrét give with themselves in prebend to the monastery at Munkaþverá the forest land which lies in Öxarfjörðr in Skinnastaðrþing, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the recorded lands, and have accompanied formerly and newly, and they become owners to such an extent that they both made over the aforementioned land to the *staðr* and monastery, owners forevermore, and from them also to their heirs.

Here in turn they shall have everlasting maintenance at the *staðr*, honourable food-maintenance, just as one gives to a free man, divine services in a house for them apart from the *staðr*, for comfort, free and unhindered. He shall have 20 of wadmál and 2 ells of clothes yearly, and also she another wadmál and a yard of linen yearly. Here with this the abbot shall take up Magnús, the son of the mentioned Margrét, at the monastery and the foreman of the monastery shall have him taught so that he might be able to be ordained a priest, if he wishes to let himself be ordained, and help him. In addition, he shall have both food and woolen cloth from the *staðr*, until he is 20. It could also happen that the aforementioned Magnús die before he is twenty; then there shall no one be assigned in his place.

And if Magnús Jónsson dies or becomes so disabled that he is not able to help or maintain the daughters of Margrét, Guðrún and Una, then the monastery shall feed and clothe them until they are 20, unless they marry or make another condition for themselves beforehand. Magnús Jónsson and Margrét, his wife, shall answer a legal withdrawal from the afore-written lands, and the foreman of the *staðr* and the monastery hold to the correct law.

And for evidence here, we afore-written men set our marks for this document, written in the same place and year [and] day as before is mentioned earlier.

12) 1474 (DIV 772-3)

Arnardals bref

Ollum monnum þeim sem þetta bref sia edr heyra senda jon aasgeirson. olafur jsleikson. þordur knararson. tiorfui þorsteinson. Godum monnum uiturligt med þessu voro opnu brefui worum uær j hia saum og heyrdum a ord og handaband þessara manna vpp aa mariumessu dag j augri j isafirdi af eirni alfu halldors hakunarsonar enn af annari jngibiargar hakunardottur systur hans og erlings sonar hennar. faldizt þat og skildizt under þeirra handabandi ad fyrgreind mædgin medkenduizt ad þav hefði samþykkt med fullu handabandi. þa jardarsaulu er jon erlingsson fieck adr greindum halldori jardar partinn j arnardal enum nedra j skutilsfirdi er liggur j eyrar kirkiu sokn med aullum þeim gagunum og gædum sem greindum jardar parti til heyreir og hann hafði fremst eigandi ad ordit og hans jardarkaupsbref utuisar.

hier j mot skylldi opt nefndr halldor taka ad sier hakun son jons erlingssonar og lata kenna haunum suo ad hann mætti uigiast til prestz fyrer kunnattu saker. Suo enn af nyiu j sama handabandi fieingu fyrgreind mædgin jngibiorg og erlingur tittnefndum halldori fyrgreindan jardar part til fullrar eignar med samþycki hakunar jonssonar sonar optnefndrar jngibiargar med aullum þeim gaugnum og gædum sem þau haufdu fremst eigandi ad ordit med sama skilmala sem j fyr greindu jardar kaups brefui stendur.

Og til sanninda hier um settum uer fyr nefnder men vor jnsigli fyrer þetta jardar

kaups bref er skrifuat uar j augri j isaafirdi upp aa þridia dag j jolum þa er lidit uar fra hingatburd uors herra jhesu christi. M. cccc. lxx. iiij áár.

Letter of Arnardal

To all those men who see or hear this letter, Jón Ásgeirsson, Óláfr Ísleiksson, Þórðr Knararson, Törfi Þorsteinsson make it known⁷⁴⁰ to good men with this our open letter, [that] we were present, saw and heard words and hand-shaking of these men, on Mary-mass day in Ögri in Ísafjörðr: on one side, Halldór Hákonarson, and on the other Ingibjörg Hákonarson, his sister, and Erlingr, her son. It happened and was dictated under their agreement that the aforementioned mother-and-son confess that they had agreed with full hand-shaking to that sale-of-land which Jón Erlingsson made with the aforementioned Halldór, the part of land in Arnardalur, underneath in Skutilsfjörðr, which lies in the parish of Eyrarkirkja, with all those goods and emoluments which belong to the record part of land, and he became foremost owner there of, and his land-agreement-document points this out.

Here in turn the often-named Halldór shall take up Hákon, the son of Jón Erlingsson, and have him taught so that he might be able to be ordained a priest, because of his knowledge. Thus also again, in the same agreement, the aforementioned mother-and-son Ingibjörg and Erlingr give to the aforesaid Halldór full ownership of the aforementioned part of land, with the agreement of Hákon Jónsson, the son of the often-named Ingibjörg, with all those goods and emoluments which they have become foremost owners of, with the same stipulations which stand in the aforementioned land-agreement-document.

And for evidence here we aforementioned men set our marks on that land-agreement-letter which was written in Ögri in Ísafjörðr, upon the third day in Yule, when 1474 years were passed from the birth of our Lord.

13) 1488 (DI VI 612-14)

⁷⁴⁰ *Senda* here appears to be a mistake for *görum*, a mixing up of two formulas.

Kaupbrief fyrir HraunHaffnar Backa

Það giorum vier Helgi prestur Jonsson. Einar Þorleiffsson. Jon Sonsson. Einar Þordarson og Skwle Þordarson godum monnum kunnugtt með þessu voro opnu briefe að a þridiudaginn j þaskum Anno domini 1488 a Helgafelli j Helgafellz sveit vorum vier j hia saum og heyrðum a ord og handaband þessara manna. af einne alfu Herra Halldorz Abota a Helgafelli með samþycke hanz conventubrædra. Enn af annare alffu Lopttz Jonssonar. að so fyrirskildu. að greindur Lopttur Jonsson selldi firskrifudum abota Halldore með samþycke Jngbiargar Jngmundardottur konu sinnar Jordina Hraunhafnarbacka. er liggur j stadarsueit vnder ollduhrygg klaustrinu a helgafelli til æfinligrar eignar með þeim gognum og giædum sem greindre Jordu fylger og fyggt hefur að fornu og nyiu og þau vrdu fremst eigandi að.

Hier j mot jatadi og lofadi firskrifadur Abote Halldor með samþycke conventubrædra Narffa syne greindz lopttz og Jngbiargar konu sinnar kost og kiendslu a klaustrinu. vadmalz klæde og skiædi framan til þess hann væri subdiakne. með so ordnum skilmala. að ef pilltinum kynni þau nockur forfoll til að falla að hann mætti ecki vijgiast eða villdi ecki vijgiast þa er hann væri xvj vetra gamall þa skilddi klaustrid og abotinn skilinn vid pilltinn. en Jordin æfinlig klaustursinz eign. enn ef hann væri þa ecki vijgdur subdiakne er hann væri xvij vetra gamall og villdi þa eigi þo hann mætte. þa skilddi hann vera til þess hann væri vigdur subdiakne. edur ef hann være vijgdur fyrr enn hann væri xvij vetra. þa skilddi hann þo vera a klaustrinu þar til hann væri xvij vetra. enn ef presturinn kynne fyrre að deyia. da skilddi greindur abote Halldor lwka greindum loffte ij^e vppa huoria xij manude sem epter væri thil þess hann være xvij vetra. Hier til skilddi Abotinn giallda loffte að næstum fardogum iiij málnytu kugilldi og iiij sandi gamla að hausti komandi. xij fiordunga smiorz. j^e j vadmalum og j^e j varninge. ef sigling yrði. skilddi abotinn að sier taka Jordina til æfinligrar eignar að næstum fardogum. Lofade Lofftur að suara lagariptingum a greindre Jordu. enn abotinn hallda til laga.

Og til sanninda hier vm et cetera.

Letter of agreement for Hraunhafnarbakki

We – the priest Helgi Jónsson, Einar Þorleifsson, Jón Jónsson, Einar Þorðarson, and Skúli Þorðarson – make it known to good men with this, our open letter, that on the third day of Easter in the year of the Lord 1488 at Helgafell in the district of Helgafell, we were present, saw, and heard word and hand-shaking of these men: on one side lord abbot Halldór at Helgafell, with the agreement of his brothers, and on the other side Loptr Jónsson, that they dictated thus, that the recorded Loptr Jónsson sold to the afore-written abbot Halldór, with the agreement of Ingibjargar Ingmundardóttir, his wife, the land of Hraunhafnarbakkí, which lies in the district of the *staðr*, under Ölduhryggr, for the monastery at Helgafell, as permanent owner, with those properties and emoluments which accompany the recorded land, and have accompanied it formerly and newly, and they become foremost owners thereof.

Here in turn the afore-written abbot Halldór agrees and promises, with the agreement of his brothers, to Narfi, son of the recorded Loptr and Ingibjargar, his wife, board and education at the monastery, woolen clothing and skin for shoe-making henceforth until he is a sub-deacon, with stipulations thus in place, that if it happens to that boy that some hindrances befall him, that he is not able to be ordained, or does not wish to be ordained then when he is 16 years old, then the monastery and the abbot shall be parted with the boy, but the land [is] the eternal possession of the monastery. But if he is not ordained sub-deacon when he is 18 years, and does not wish it, though he is able, then he shall be retained until he is ordained sub-deacon, or if he is ordained before his is 18 years old, then he shall still be in the monastery until he is 18 years old. Yet if the priest happens to die before, then shall the recorded abbot Halldór pay to the recorded Loptr 2 hundreds for each 12-months which remains until he would have been 18 years old. Hereto the abbot shall pay Loptr at the next Removing Days 4 milking-cow-values and 4 old sheep during the coming Autumn, 12 10-pound-weights of butter, a hundred in wadmál and a hundred in goods/cargo if a voyage occurs. The abbot shall take to him the land at the next Removing Days. Loptr promised to answer a legal withdrawal of the concerned land, and the abbot to hold to the law.

And for evidence hereof etc.

14) 1492 (DI VII 108-9)

Þorbiargarstader giefner Hola kirkiu

Þath giorum wær eirikur prestur sigmundsson. sijmon pallsson. jon ketillsson ok þorgeir olafsson leikmenn. godum monnum uiturligt med þessu uoro opnu brefe ath þar uorum uær j hia savm ok heyrðum aa. miduikudagen j ymbryviku um haustit j myklagardi j eyiafirdij ath gudmundr jonsson siukur j likama en heill ath samuizku gaf heilagre holakirkiu ok biskup olafe jordina þorbiargarstadi j laxardal. er liggur j huams kirkiu sokn fyrir tu hundred med aullum þeim gognum ok gædum er greindri jordu fyllger ok fyllgt hefer ath fornu ok nyu ok hann uard fremzt eigandi ath. ok þat til fiogr kuillde er standa med jordunne. ok fiogur hundred j odrum peningum.

hier j motti bad hann biskupin fyrir gudskuld. ath taka ath sier tuæ sønu sina ok lata læra annan til prestz en hiallpa odrum til mannz. Suo ok giordi biskupin. tok billtana til sin. Woro hia þessum giorningi marger dandimenn adrer badi lærder ok leicker.

Ok till sanenda hier um settum wær fyr nefnder prestart ok leikmenn vor jncigle fyrir þetta bref er skrifat uar aa holum j hialtadal fimtudagen næsta fyrir mariu Messo j langafaustu. anno domini M. cd. xc. secundo.

Þorbjargarstaðr given to Hólarkirkja

We – the priest Eirik Sigmundsson, Símon Pálsson, Jón Ketillsson and Þorgeir Ólafsson, laymen – make it known to good men with this our open letter that we were present there, we saw and heard, on Wednesday in Ember week in the Autumn in Mikligarðr in Eyjafjörðr, that Guðmundr Jónsson, sick in body but healthy in mind, gave to the holy church of Hólar and Bishop Óláfr the land of Þorbjargarstaðr in Laxárdalur, which lies in the parish of Hvammskirkja, for 10 hundreds, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the recorded earth and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he became foremost owner, and thereto the 4 cow-values which stand with the land, and 4 hundreds in other

money.

Here in turn he asked the bishop for God's-due⁷⁴¹ to take to him his two sons and have one educated as a priest and help the other to be a man. And so the bishop did, he took the boys to him. There were present at these doings many other worth men, both learned and lay.

And for evidence here we, the aforementioned priest and laymen, set our marks for this letter which was written at Hólar in Hjaltadalur, the nearest Thursday before Mary-mass in Lent, in the year of the Lord 1492.

15) 1495 (DI VII 235-6)

vm halfar grinder i hofs kirkiu sokn.

Þat giorum vier asgrimur hallzson. Sigvrdr sveinbiarnarson. Magnus jonsson og halldor avgmvndzson godum monnum kunnigt med þessv voru brefi at svb anno gracie M cd xc v. aa midvikvdagin næsta epter hinn þrettanda dag jola aa skinnastavdum j avxarfirdi vorvm vier hia saavm og heyrðvm aa ord og handaband sira einars benedictzsonar og narfa benediktzsonar at sua firir skildv at fyrr nefndr narfi selldi adrnefndvm sira einari med handabandi til fvllrar eignar ok frials forrædis jordina halfa grindr er liggr aa havfdastrond j skagafirdi j hofs kirkiu sokn med avllum þeim gavgnvm og giæðvm. eignum og itokum sem adr greindri jordu halfri fylger og fylgt hefer ath fornv og nyiv og hann hafdi fremzt eigandi at ordith hver er reiknadizt. xx. hvndrvth half.

hier j moti lofadi hefndr sira einar at sier at taka til lærdoms og uppfædis benedict son tijtt nefndz narfa og lata vigia hann messvdiakn. en ef avdrvm hvorum sira einari edr benedict endizt hier ei lijfdagar til þa skylldi firir sveininn. ij. hvndrut fallit hafa vpp aa hveria tolf manadi en sira einar eiga þessa somv jord sem adr. en giallda narfa sva morg hvndrvth annad hvort vpp j adra jord ellegar onnur hvndrvth annad hvort vpp j adra jord ellegar onnur hvndrvth frid edr fridvird sem ei hefði firir sveininn fram fallid edr saa sem þa

⁷⁴¹ *Gudskuld* appears to be a hapax, and the meaning is uncertain.

very eignarmadur greindrar jardar. skyldi sira einar fullkomliga eiga þessa somv iord þo optnefndr benedift yrði fyr vigdr til diakna en þessi greind iord hefði at riettum Reikningi firir hann fram fallid. Og til sanninda hier vm settvm vier fyrnefnder men vor jnscigli firir þetta bref skrifad j sama stad degi ok áári sem fyr segir.

Concerning half of Grindr in the district of Höfskirkja

We – Ágrímr Hallsson, Sigurðr Sveinbjarnarson, Magnús Jónsson and Halldór Ögmundsson – make it known to good men with this our letter, that in the year of Grace 1495 on the Wednesday nearest after the thirteenth day of Christmas, at Skinnastaðr in Öxarfjörðr, we were present, saw, and heard the words and hand-shaking of master Einar Benediktsson and Narfi Benediktsson, that they dictated thus, that the aforementioned Narfi sell to the aforementioned master Einar with hand-shaking, to full possession and free management, half the land of Grindr, which lies on Höfðaströnd in Skagafjörðr in the parish of Höfskirkja, with all those goods and emoluments, possessions and partial property rights in other estates, which accompany the half-land recorded before, and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he had foremost possession according to each word which is reckoned, half of 20 hundreds.

Here in turn the named master Einar promises to take to him, for learning and raising up, Benedikt, the son of the aforementioned Narfi, and to have him ordained as a Mass-deacon, but if either master Einar or Benedikt should not live here long enough, then the boy shall have 2 hundreds paid for each 12-month, and master Einar possess this same land as before, and Narfi pay so many hundreds - either from other land or other hundreds in kind or of the same worth– as had not gone towards the boy or he who then was the owner of the recorded land. master Einar should fully possess this same land, though the often-named Benedikt become ordained as deacon before this recorded land has, according to correct reckoning, fallen to him.

And for evidence hereof we aforementioned men set our marks on this letter, written in the same place, day, and year as was said before.

16) 1502 (DI VII 618-20)

Brief um Sveinungsvíjk.

Þath giorum vier gudmundr prestr olafsson. magnus arnason. narfi benedictzson. jon andresson. og asgrimr hallzson godvm monnum kvnnigt med þessv vorv brefi. at svb anno gracie M d ij. a skinnastodvm i auxarfirdi. a fimta daginn næsta epter bartholomeusmessv vorum vier hia. sáávm og heyrdvm aa ord og handaband. virduligs herra biskups godskalks og magnvsar jonssonar. at sua fyrir skildu. j fystu at magnus jonsson selldi med handabandi biskup godskalk og heilagri hoola kirkiv til fvllrar eignar og frials forrædis jordina sveinvngsvíjk er liggr j svalbardz kirkiv sok j þistilsfirdi. med ollvm þeim gögnvm og giædvm. sem greindri jordv fylger og fylgt hefer at fornvm og nyiv og hann hafdi fremzt eigandi at ordith. og þar med .x. hvndrvth.

hier i mot biskup godskalk at taka til sín son magnusar jonssonar. er jon heiter. ix vetra gamlan. til vppfædis og lærdoms og at fa fyrir hann leyfi af pafaligv valldi til at verda prestr og þar epter lofadi hann at vigia hann til prestz og veita honum eithvert beneficivm. skyldi þessi giorningr og lofan standa obrigidiliga fyrir hvorra tveggia hond hverr sem kirkivnnar formann kynne at verda. at sveinnin skyldi sitt frialsmannligt vppfædi fa matar og klæda. þar med lærdom og vigslvr. ef hann endiz til. en ef hans kynne vid at missa þa skyldi þo kirkivnnar eign jordin og peningarner. lofadi biskupinn ogh. at giefa sitt bref og jnnscigli vpp aa vm sveinsins framfæri. lærdom og vigslvr. sva at þat mætti synazt at biskupsstolnvm ef biskupsins kynne vid at miss.

Skyldi þessi greind jord sveinvngsvíjk greidazt og gialldazt þa biskupinn villdi og piltrinn er aa framfærid kominn. en þav .x. hvndrvd sem þeim fylgia. skyldi magnus giallda þa hann mætte vel vid komazt og hvorvm tveggivm væri hentiligt. at af skildvm kopplvm. hier til lofadi greindr megnus enn .x. hvndrodvm. og giallda þa vt er honum very hægt vm. en ef magnus kynne fyrr fra at falla en þessir peningar væri golldner efr greidder þa lofadi hann at lysa fyrir vottum hvad epter stædi ogollidith af greindvm peningvm. Skyldi tíjtt nefndr

magnus svara lagaríptingv aa opt nefndri jordv sveinvngsvík. en biskup edr kirkivnnar vmbodsmadur hallda til laga.

Ogh til sanninda hier vm settum vier fyrr nefnder men vór jnnsvigli fyrir þetta bref giort aa skinnastodvm j oxarfirdi. aa svnnvdaginn næsta epter calixtusmessv. aa ama áári sem fyrr segir.

Letter concerning Sveinungsvík

We – the priests Guðmundr Ólafsson, Magnús Arnason, Narfi Benediktsson, Jón Andresson, and Ásgrímur Hallson – make it known to good men with this our letter, that in the year of Grace 1502, at Skinnastaðr in Öxarfjörðr, on the fifth day nearest after Bartholomeus Mass, we were present, saw, and heard words and hand-shaking of the worthy lord Bishop Gottskálk and Magnús Jónsson, that they dictated thus: first, that Magnús Jónsson sold with hand-shaking to Bishop Gottskálk and the holy church of Hólar full possession and free administration of the lands of Sveinungsvík, which lie in the parish in Svalbarðskirkja in Þistilsfjörðr, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the recorded lands and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he had foremost ownership thereof, and therewith 10 hundreds.

Here in turn the Bishop Gottskálk promised to take up the son of Magnús Jónsson, who is called Jón, 9 winters old, for raising up and learning, and to obtain from him leave from the papal authority to become a priest, and thereafter promised him to ordain him as a priest and grant him some benefice. This deed and promise should stand unchangeable on either side, whatever the church's foreman should be pleased to do, that the boy should obtain his upbringing, food, and clothes appropriate to a free man, therewith education and ordination, if he holds out, but if it happens with him to fail, then the church should still possess the lands and money. The bishop also promises to give his document and mark upon the boy's upbringing, learning, and ordination, that it is can be seen at the bishopric if it happens to the bishop to fail.

This recorded land of Sveinungsvík should be discharged and paid then when the

bishop wishes, and the boy has come upon his maintenance, but those 10 hundreds which accompany that Magnús should pay then when he can be well able and it is befitting to each of them, for the arranged transaction.⁷⁴² Hereto the recorded Magnús also promised 10 hundreds and to pay them out when it is convenient to him, and if it happens to Magnús that he dies before this money is paid or given out, then he promised to proclaim before witnesses whatever stands left unpaid of the recorded money. The aforementioned Magnús shall answer legal withdrawal concerning the often-named land of Sveinungsvík, and the bishop or the steward of the church shall hold to the law.

And for evidence her we aforementioned men set our marks for this letter, made at Skinnastaðr in Öxarfjöðr, on the nearest Sunday after Calixtus-mass, in the same year as before was said.

17) 1504 (DI VII 714-15)

vm parten j borgarhofn.

Það giörum vier kollgrimur kodransson. jon eireksson prestar
skaalholltzbiskupsdæmis. ellendr biarnason og sniolfur hrafns son leikmenn. godum monnum
kunnigt med þessu uoru opnu brefi. ad sub anno gracie M. d. iiij. j skaalholtti jn festo
translacionis sancti martini episcopi et confessoris. vorum vier j hia saum og heyrdum aa ord
og handaband þessara manna. af einne alfu herra Narfa med Gudz naad prioris aa skridu
klaustri. enn af annare asgautz ogmvndzsonar. faldizt það og skildizt vnder þeirra
handabande ad greindr asgautur selldi prior narfa tuttugu hundrut j jordinne borgarhogn er
liggr j hornafirde j kalfafellz kirkiusokn med aullum þeim gognum og giædum sem greindum
xx. hundrada jardapard fylger og fylgt hefer ad fornu agh nyiu og hann vard fremst eigandi til
yztv vmmerkia vid adra menn. og þar med selldi fyr nefndr asgautur greindum prior narfa.
atian hundrut fioru er liggr j qraefum milli kviaar og hamraenda halfa vid sandfellinga. og ad
auk malnytu kugilldi og ofritt hundrat er fylger partinum j borgarhaufn.

⁷⁴² This translation is speculative, it is unclear what *af skildum kopplum* actually means here.

Enn hier j mote gaf adur nefndur prior narfe opt greindum asgaute þrettan hundrot j jörðinne sumarlidabæ er liggr j holltamanna hrepp j kalfholltzkirkjusokn med öllum þeim giædum og hlunnendum sem sögdum jardar parte fylgir og fylgt hefir ad fornu og nyiu og hann vard fremzt eigande ad eptter logum og þar med sex malnytu kugilldi ad auk og hier um fram lofode titt nefndr prior narfi ad taka til sin pillt er asgauti heyrde til og læra hann les og saung. skrif og rijm. og það fleira sem honum er naudsynligt ad kunna suo ad hann megi vigiazt prestr. Enn ef nõckr hindran yrde vppaa. suo ad pillturinn feinge ecki lærdominn. þa skyllde priorenn bitala þratt skrifudum asgauti. x^c. jnnan tolf manada surd a lande j aullum þarfligum peningum frateknum kavplum. skylldi huor þeirra priorin og asgautur hallda sinu kaupe til laga. en sa suara lagariptingum sem sellt hefði. samþyckti þennan giörning virduligr herra. herra Steffan med Gudz naad biskup j skalholli med þui moti ad hann gaf asgauti ögmundzsyni kuitta og akiærulausa þa klagan og tilkall sem biskupin hafði til greindra peninga vegan sira ögmundz heitins andressonar.

Og til sanninda hier vm setti adr nefndur herra biskup steffan sitt jnsigle med vorum jnsiglum fyr þetta giorningsbreft skrifat j sama stad degi og are sem fyr segir.

Concerning the parts in Borgarhöfn

We – Kolgrímr Koðránsón, Jón Eiríksson, priests of the bishopric of Skálholt, Erlendr Bjarnarson and Snjólfur Hrafnsson, laymen – make it known to good men with this our open letter, that in the year of Grace 1504, in Skálholt in the feast of the translation of St. Martin the bishop and confessor, we were present, saw and heard words and hand-shaking of these men: on one side lord Narfi, prior at Skriða monastery by the Grace of God, and on the other side Ásgautr Ögmundsson. It happened and was stipulated under their hand-shaking that the aforementioned Ásgautr sell to the prior Narfi 20 hundreds in the land of Borgarhöfn, which lies in Hórnafjörður in the parish of Kálfafellskirkja, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the recorded 20 hundreds of land, and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he became foremost owner to the outermost boundary with other men. And therewith the aforementioned Ásgautr sold to the recorded prior Narfi 8 hundreds of

beach which lies in the open coastland between Kvía and Hamraendar, half at Sandfellingar, and added to this a milking-cow-value and a hundred not in kind, which accompanies the part in Borgarhöfn.

And here in turn the aforementioned prior Narfi gave the often-named Ásgautr 13 hundreds in the land of Sumarliðabær, which lies in Holtamannahrepp in the parish with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the mentioned part of land and have followed formerly and newly, and he became foremost owner thereof according to the laws, and therewith 6 milk-cow-values in addition, and herewith the aforementioned prior Narfi promised to take to him the boy who belonged to Ásgautr, and teach him reading and singing, writing and computus, and what more is necessary for him to know so that he will be able to be ordained a priest. And if some hindrance comes up, so that the boy is not able to obtain learning, then the prior should pay the aforewritten Ásgautr 10 hundreds, within 12 months, south in the land, in all useful money taken from the agreement. Each of them, the prior and Ásgautr, should hold to the bargain legally, and thus answer a legal withdrawal which has been delivered. The worthy lord Stefán, bishop of Skálholt by the grace of God, consented to this deed, with that in addition, that he made Ásgautr Ögmundsson acquitted and unimpeached [for] that complaint and claim which the bishop had for the recorded money on the part of the promise of master Ögmundr Andresson.

And for evidence here the aforementioned lord Bishop Stefán sets his mark, with our marks, for that deed-document written in the same place, day, and year as before was mentioned.

18) 1507 (DI VIII 176-77)

bref um Jordena ystagil i langadal.

Þath giorum vi jon prestur jonsson radzman holastadar. jon þorgeirsson leikman godum monnum uiturligt med þessu ockru opnu brefi at uid uorum þar j hia saum ok heyrðum aa ord ok handaband þessara manna biskups godskalks af einne halfu ok sueins

Þorfinnzsonar af annari at suo fyrir skildu at sueinn þorfinnzson feck biskupinum til fullrar eignar jordina yztagil j langadal er liggur j holltastada kirkiusokn med ollum þeim gognum ok gædum sem greindri jordu fylger ok fylgt hefer at fornu ok nyo ok hann uard fremst eigandi at. lysti ok adr greindr sueinn at gil ætti torfskurd attfedming j breidauads jord j underhaganum.

hier j mot feck biskupinn sueine þorfinnzsyni stadenn uesturhopshola til halldz ok medferdar uegna jons sonar síns er hafa skal adr greindan stad til æuinligrar eignar þegar hann uigizt prestur. Enn biskupinn skal lata kenna pilltinum til prestz. skal hann hafa af stadarins eign hempuefni og brokaefni upp aa huert aar. þat til hann uígizt prestur. skal ok adr nefndr sueinn hafa ok hallda alla stadarens peninga kuika ok dauda fasta ok lausa til medferdar ok abyrgdar þar til hann afhender stadenn. skall hann ok ecki giallda af stadnum edur stadarens peningum nema biskupsgisting edur utlausn þa hann ridr.

Ok til sanninda hier um settum uid ockr jnnsigli fyrr greinder men fyrir þetta bref er giot uar j huammi j uazdal jpsa die sancta katerine uirginis. anno donimi M quingentesimo septimo.

Letter concerning the lands of Yztagil in Langadal

We two – the priest Jón Jónsson, steward of Hólar-*staðr*, the layman Jón Þorgeirsson – make it known to good men with this our open letter, that we were present there, we saw and heard the words and hand-shaking of these men, Bishop Gottskálk on one side and Sveinn Þorfinnsson on the other, that they dictate thus, that Sveinn Þorfinnsson gives to the bishop full possession of the lands of Yztagil in Langadal, which lies in the parish of Holtastaðakirkja, with all those goods and emoluments which accompany the recorded lands, and have accompanied formerly and newly, and he becomes foremost owner. The aforementioned Sveinn also proclaims that [Yzta]gil possesses eight fathoms of turf-cutting in the lands of Breiðavað in the underpasture.

Here in turn the bishop gives Sveinn Þorfinnsson the *staðr* of Vesturhópshólar, for keeping and management on behalf of Jón, his son, who shall have the aforementioned *staðr*, as

permanent owner, when he is ordained a priest. And the bishop shall have the boy educated as a priest. He shall have from the possessions of the *staðr* material for a priest's gown and material for breeches, every year, until he is ordained a priest. The aforementioned Sveinn shall also have and hold all the property of the *staðr*, living and dead, fast and moveable, for management and responsibility until he hands over the *staðr*. He shall also not make payments from the *staðr* or the money of the *staðr*, except for night-lodgings of the bishop or paying-out when he goes riding.

And for evidence here we two, the aforementioned men, set our *insiglia* on this letter who was made in Hvammr in Vatnsdalr on the day of St. Katherine the virgin, in the year of the Lord 1507.

19) 1507/8 (DI VIII 205)⁷⁴³

Þat giorum við Þorkell prestur Pálsson og Landbjartur Barðarson godum monnum kunigt með þessv ockrc opnv brefi. að við vorum hía stadder j badstofuni aa stad j grvnnavik savm við og heyrðum at loptur magnusson fieck olafi eireckssyni balfa jordina nes er þar liggur j greindrar grvnnavikur kirkiv sokn með fullv handabandi til efinligrar eignar. skyldi skrifadur loptur peninga vpp bera fyrir greinda jord þa honum bihagadi sialfum at taka. beiddizt opt nefndur loptur at fyrrsagdur olagur skyllði taka af honum son hans og þvi lofadi titt ritadur olafur og kenna honum nockvt áá bok.

og til sanninda hier vm settum við ockur jnsigli fyrir þetta vitnisbvrðarþref er skrifad var áá savgdvm stad manvdagin j efztv vikv anno domini. M. d. viii.

We two – the priest Þorkell Pálsson and Landbjartur Barðarson – make it known to good men with this our open letter, that we were present in the sitting-room at the *staðr* in Grunnavík, we saw and heard that Loptr Magnússon gave to Óláfr Eiríksson half the land of Nes, which lies there in the mentioned parish of Grunnavíkurkirkja, with full hand-shaking

⁷⁴³ Beyond the two documents presented here, additional documents dealing with this case appear on *DI VIII* 227, 276, 417, 513, and 715, going as late as 1519. See *DI VIII*, 205, note 1 for the question of dating this document.

for permanent ownership. The written Loptr should receive money for the mentioned land, then [when] it is convenient for him to take it. The often-named Loptr requested that the aforementioned Óláfr should take from him his son, and the before-written also promised to teach him something from book(s).

And for evidence here, we two set our marks for this letter of testimony, which was written at the mentioned place, Monday in the last week of the year of the Lord 1508.

19b) 1512 (DI VIII 368-9)

Þat giori eg jon olafsson godvm monnvm lunnigt med þessu minv opnu brefi at um uorit aa þridia daga paska þa lidit uar fra hingatburdi vors herra jesu christi þusund .u. hundrut og xij. ar uar ec hia sa og heyrði áá at loptur selldi med handabandi joni steinssyni frænda sinum flogur hundrut j jordune nesi er liggur j grvnauik j stadar kirkiu sokn med soddan uerdi at adr greindr jon steinsson lofadi at greida fyr skrifudum lopti magnussyni. iiij. hundrut j þridiunga peningum j malnytu fridu og daudum peningum. skyldi þetta jardar verd greidaz a þrenum tolf manudum en hvad er þa uæri ogreitt af þessum peningvm skyldi jon steinsson fullu leiga huad epter sinu lagi. suo heyrfa eg og jon olafsson fyrskrifadr at tittnefndr loptur Magnusson var ad frettr þa j þat sama sine huort hann mætti þetta giora med logum. en hann sagdi þat satt vera og kuezst alldri olafi eirigssyni hafa sellt ne lofatt þessum jardar parti j nesi nema hann fylgdi honum til retra laga þa snori aklagadi hann vm hlið j alftafirdi. svo og sagdi titt nefndur loptur at þrattnefndr olafur hefði lofad at taka son sin til kenlzlu og fa ser smor nockut og sagdi hier aungua raun a hafa ordit. og hier epter uil ec adr greindr jon olafsson sueria.

Og til saninda hier vm seta eg mit jnnsigli fyrir þetta uitnisbvrðarþref huert er giort uar þridiudagin næsta fyrir geisladag j sama stad ari sidar en fyr seiger.

I, Jón Ólafsson, make it known to good men with this my open letter, that during spring, on the third day of Easter, when 1512 years were passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, I was present, heard, and saw that Loptr sold, with hand-shaking, to Jón

Steinsson, his kinsman, 4 hundreds in the land Nes which lies in Grúnavík in the parish of the *staðr*-church, with such price as the aforementioned Jón Steinsson promised to pay to the afore-written Loptr Magnússon, 4 hundreds in thirds: in money, in fine milk-cows, and inanimate property. This land shall be paid for over three 12-months, but whatever is at that time unexpeditious from this money Jón Steinsson shall fully pay what lay unpaid. I, the aforementioned Jón Ólafsson, also hear thus, that the aforementioned Loptr Magnússon was asked then at that same time, whether he could do that legally, and he said it was true, and said that he had never sold to Óláfr Eiríksson, nor promised this part of land in Nes, except that he followed him legally, then [when] Snorri charged him concerning Hlíð in Alftafirði. Thus the afore-named Loptr also said that the afore-named Óláfr had promised to take his son to teaching, and give him some butter, and said here that that had not actually been done and hereafter I, Jón Ólafsson, will swear.

And for evidence hereupon I set my mark for this letter of testimony, which was made on the third day nearest before Beam-day in the same place and year as before was said.

20) 1514 (DÍ VIII 516)

Ver Stefan med guds nad biskup j Skalholti giorum godum monnum kunnigt med þessv vorv opnv brefi ad epter frafall sira loptz philippussonar godrar minningar hefer komid firir oss eyolfur bondi gislason mokollur oc talad vegan magnus sonar síns sem nv er tils kola med herra Narfa abota a helgafelli. ef wer villdum weita honum stadinn j selardal. nv af þui ad ver hofum goda von a þessum vnga manne ad hann mvne þroazt j kvnnattv oc sidferdi vnder þuilikvm lærifodr þa hofum wer skipad greindan selardalsstad fyrr nefndvm eyolfe bonda ad sier ad taka med ad fara oc forstanda stadinn oc hans peninga. vppa sig oc sína abyrgd svo ad kirkian oc stadurin se sæmeliga halldin. þat til ad fyrr nefndr magnus eyolfsson er svo mannadur j kvnnattv sidferdi og alldre ad hann megi med likendvm goda forstodu veita. oc vilium wer þa med wors herra forsia veita honum stadinn med collacionisbrefi.

Oc til sannenda hier vm festvm wer wort jnnsigle firir þetta vmbodsbref skrifad j

selárdal jn profesto exaltacionis sancta crucis anno domini. M d xiiij.

We – Stefán, bishop with the grace of God in Skálholt – make it known to good men with this our open letter that after the death of master Loptr Philippusson of good memory, the farmer Eyjólfur Gíslason *mókollr* came before us and spoke on behalf of Magnús, his son, who is now at school with lord abbot Narfi at Helgafell, if we would grant to him the *staðr* in Selárdal, now because we have good expectation for that young man, that he will grow into knowledge and morality under such a teacher. Thus we have assigned the recorded Selárdalstaðr to the aforementioned farmer Eyjólfur, to take to him, to go and oversee the *staðr* and its money, upon himself and his responsibility that the church and the *staðr* might be becomingly maintained, until the aforementioned Magnús Eyjólfsson is thus matured in knowledge, morality, and age that he will be able to, with good likelihood, grant him the guardianship, and we wish then with foresight of our lord to grant the *staðr* to him with [this] letter of transfer.

And for evidence here we have fastened our mark for this letter of commission, written in Selárdal in the weekday of the exaltation of the holy cross, the year of the Lord 1514.

21) 1519 (DI VIII 688-9)

Akiæra biskups Gottshalchs Vppa Sira Eigel Hallsson 1519.

Þat giorum vier ion þorgilsson. petur palsson. gvmundur ionsson. gilsbrickt ionsson. halluardur barnarson og hallur asgrimsson prestar holabiskupsdæmis godvm monnum viturligt med þessu uoru openu brefi at þa er lifit uar fra hingatburd uors herra jhesu christi M d. og xix ár. áá þridiudaginn næstan fyrir barnabe apostolic. aa videuollum j blaunduhlid j skagafirdi. aa almenneligre prestastefnv vorvm vier j dom nefnder af vorum uirdvligum herra og andaligum fodur gottskall med gudz nad biskup a holvm. at dæma vm þa akæru. er biskupinn kærði til sira eigils hallzsonar og j stefnunne stod.

J fyrstu dæmdum vier stefnuna logliga. og sira eigil logliga fyrir kalladan hier j dag. enn fyrir þa sok er j stefnunne stod. at biskupinn hafde ecki feingit þau fiortan hundrut af teite bonda þorleifssyni sem hann hafdi lofat heilagri holakirkiv og biskupinum þa biskupinn tok greindan eigil ungan smadreing heim til hola til lærdoms og aa kirkiunnar kost. lysti biskupinn þui fyrir oss. at hann hefði opt krafit og heimt þess skuld og peninga af bondanum teite og ecki feingit sagði biskupinn ecki annat bondans svar enn presturinn sialfur sira eigill skyldi suara þessum peningum. sagðizt biskupinn þenna giorning uid bondan teit giort hafa og hann hefði þessvm peningum lofat. þuiat eigill uar þa omagi fiars sins. þui at gudz nad tilkalladre. dæmdum uier fyr nefnder presta sira eigill hallzson kuittan og uid skilinn og biskupinn aungua laga sokn mega áá honum eiga um adur greinda peninga. þuiat suo seigia login. at huar sem men kaupazt eda skiptazt uid. þa aa huer uid sinn sala. kom þar fram medkenningarbref bondans teitz. at hann hefði lofat biskupinum x. c. med eikle. þui dæmdum uier bondan teit skyllidugan at leida tuau loglig uitne at hann hafe þessa peninga golldit. Skulu þesse uitne leidd jnnan fiortan natta at heyrðum domenum. enn ef honum fellizt þesse uitne. þa dæmdum uier bondan skyllidugan at giallda biskupinum eda hans umbodzmanne greinda peninga med laga áuexti. skyldi þessir peningar golldner. at næstum fardogvm.

Og til sannenda hier vm settum uier fyr nefnder prestart uor jncigli fyrir þetta domsbref er skrifat uar aa holum j hilltadal. aa manudaginn næstan fyrir jons Messo baptiste aa sama are sem fyr seigir.

Charge of Bishop Gottskálk against master Egill Hallsson, 1519.

We – Jón Þorgilsson, Pétur Pálsson, Guðmundr Jónsson, Gilsbrikt Jónsson, Hallvarðr Bjarnarson and Hallr Ásgrimsson, priests of the Hólar diocese – make it known to good men, with this our open letter, that then when 1519 years were passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the nearest Tuesday before [the feast of] the Apostle Barnabas, at Víðivellir in Blönduhlíð in Skagafjörðr, at the general meeting of priests, we were in the court called by our worthy lord and holy father Gottskálk, bishop of Hólar with the grace of God, to give

judgment concerning that charge which the bishop made against master Egill Hallsson, and stood in the appointed meeting.

Firstly, we judged the meeting legal, and master Egill legally called forth here today, and for that charge for which he stood in the appointed meeting: that the bishop had not been given those 40 hundreds from the farmer Teitr Þorleifsson, which he had promised to the holy church of Hólar and the bishop, when the bishop took the mentioned Egill, a young boy, home to Hólar for education, and at the expense of the church. The bishop made that known to us, that he had often demanded and claimed this debt and money from the farmer Teitr, and not received it. The bishop did not declare the responsibility of the farmer, but that the priest himself, master Egill, should pay this money. The bishop declared [that] this deed had been done with the farmer Teitr, and he had promised this money. Because Egill was then unable to sustain himself with his own money, because of the mercy of God called upon, we, the aforementioned priests, judged master Egill Hallsson acquitted and set apart, and [that] the bishop can press legal prosecution on his property concerning the aforementioned money, because the law says thus, that all men bargain and make exchanges among themselves, thus each deals with his own sale. There comes from the letter of confession of the farmer Teitr, that he had promised 10 hundreds with Egill. We judge the farmer Teitr obliged to produce two legal witnesses that he has paid this money. These witnesses shall be produced within 40 nights of the heard judgment, but if these witnesses fail him, then we judge the farmer obliged to pay the bishop, or his steward, the recorded money with legal interest. These moneys should be paid at the next Removing Days.

And for evidence hereabout, we aforementioned priests set our marks on this judgment-letter, which was written at Hólar in Hjaltadalr, on the nearest Monday before the Mass of John the Baptist, in the same year as before was said.

21b) 1522 (DI IX 90-92) (Not mentioned in Magnús)

Domur Teitz Þorleifssonar M d xx og ij.

Það giorvm wíer jón prestur finbogason officialis heilagrar hola domkirkiv. Nicholas vilhialmsson. Þorbiörn jónsson. jón íonsson. magnus gudmundzson. jón brandzson. gíslé sygurdsson. einar ulfsson. þorleifur jónsson. þorfinnr þósteinsson. halluardur biarnason. og thumas jónsson. prestart holabiskupdæmis godum monnum kunnegt með þessv worv öpnu brefi ath þáá lidit war fra hingatbvrð wors herra jesv christi .M. d. xx. og íj ár. áá flugumyre j skagafirde áá almennneligri prestastefnu. vorum wíer j dom nefnder af heidarligum manne sira jone arasyni er þáá war suaramann og vmbodzmán heilgrar holadomkirkíu. ath dæma vm þær áákæru er nefndur sira jón kærði til teitz þorleifssonar hola domkirkiv wegna og sinna. war þar stefnan suaren. suo og war það svarid oss áá heyrandi. ath sv sama stefna war opinberliga lesin heima j glaumbæ ath logheimele teitz þorleifssonar morgum monnum nærverande og teitur þorleifssonar morgum monnum nærverande og teitur þorleifsson hefði þar heima verid. því dæmdvm vier stefnvna logliga og teit þorleifsson rettiliga fyrir kalladan j greindum stad og deigi.

J fyrstv grein er j stefnunne stod og sira jón kærði til teitz þorleifssonar ath hann hielldi og hefði þáá somv peninga fasta og lausa er dæmder hafa werid domkirkíunne af einari jónssyni fyrir þær sannreyndar saker. eptir því sem sáá domur jnne helldur. sem þar vm er gíor. Nv með því wíer wísum með sannendvm ath allir peningar þeir sem einar jónsson ate voro dæmder fallner vnder domkirkivna ath helminge og einar jónsson var dæmdur rett tekinn vnder scripter af kirkivnnar waldzmonnum því dæmdum vier teit þorleifsson skylldugan at giallda kirkíunnar vmbodzmanne með fvllvm laga áávexte alla þaa peninga sem hann hafði tekid af þeim peningum. sem einar jónsson hafði att.

J annar grein er sira jón kærði til teitz þorleifssonar. ath hann hefði ecki lukt domkirkíunne þáá peninga sira eigils frenda sins. eptir því sem dandi presta domr þar vm fíor vt wísar. Því dæmdum vier teit þorleifsson skylldvgan at giallda þa peninga með laga áávexte. síjdan þeir voro af kirkíunnar vmbodzmanne af honum heimter.

J þridiv grein er sira jón kærði til teitz þorleifssonar. ath hann hefde wí vitande keypt kirkivnnar fastaeign galltarnes j hunawatzþinge. Nv saker þess ath kirkivnnar log suo til wísa. ath hver sem kavper edur helldur kirkivnnar fasta eign mote lögvm fellur j bann af síalvs verke. Því dæmdum wíer teiti þorleifssyni. síettareid. ath hann víse eigi ath þesse jorð

galltarnes væri kirkivnnar eign. fellzt hann áá eidinvm. þáá dæmdum vier hann fallenn j bann. skyllvgan ath taka lavsn og script og gialldi domkirkivnne fvllrette.

J fiordv grein er nefndur sira ion kærði til teitz þorleifssonar ath hann hefði brotíð erchibiskupsins bref j þeim greinvm. ath hann hefði latíð j hell sláá sinn og domkirkivnnar þionustvmann. ath sier nær verandi og a síááandi. Suo og ath hann hefði slegíð sialfur og ofæra giora latíð marga men af kirkivnnar og sinum þionustumonnnum. Nv saker þess ath wier savm og yferlasom opíð bref med jncigle wírdulígz herra og andalígs faudur herra eirekz erckibiskups j þrandheime suo hlíodandi ath hann hafí tekíð fyr nefndan sira ion og hans folk og þienara til sancti Olafs og sinn fríð og bÍjskÍjrmelsíþ Þui dæmdum vier teit þorleifsson skyllvgan ath fara fram fyrir erckibiskupenn jnan næstu xij manada ath heyrðum domenvm og suare rettum lqum í þeim stad og deigi sem sagdur erckibiskupinn will til setia vm greint máálefni.

Og til sannenda hier vm setívm wier fyr skrifader prestar wor jncigle fyrir þetta bref er skrifat war aa holum j hialltadáál jn vigilia ascencione domini. a sama ááre og fyr seiger.

Judgment of Teitr Þorleifsson 1522

We – the priest Jón Finnbógasson, *officialis* of the holy cathedral of Hólar, Nikulás Vilhjálmsson, Þorbjörn Jónsson, Jón Jónsson, Magnús Guðmundsson, Jón Brandsson, Gísli Sigúrðsson, Einar Úlfsson, Þorleifr Jónsson, Þorfinnr Þosteinsson, Hallvarðr Bjarnarson, and Tómas Jónsson, priests of the diocese of Hólar – make it known to good men with this our open letter, that then when 1522 years were passed from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, at Flugumýrr in Skagafjörðr at the general meeting of priests, we were in the judgment called by the honourable man master Jón Árason, who then was respondent and steward over the Hólar cathedral, to judge concerning these charges which the named master Jón made against Teitr Þorleifsson, on behalf of the Hólar cathedral and himself. The appointed meeting was sworn there, thus also we were sworn in hearing, that that same summons was publicly read at home in Glaumbær at the lawful domicile of Teitr Þorleifsson, with many men being nearby and Teitr Þorleifsson was there at home. We judged that summons legal, and Teitr

Þorleifsson rightly called forth in the recorded place and day.

In the first point which stood in the meeting, master Jón complained to Teitr Þorleifsson that he had held and had that same money, fast and loose, which had been judged to the cathedral by Einar Jónsson, because of those things duly proved, according to that which the judgment contained, which is done there. Now with that we know it is true that all the money which Einar Jónsson possessed was judged to fall under the cathedral by half, and Einar Jónsson was judged correctly taken under punishment by the headman of the church. We judge Teitr Þorleifsson obliged to pay the steward of the church, with full legal interest, all the money which he had taken from their property, which Einar Jónsson had possessed.

In the second point which master Jón made against Teitr Þorleifsson, that he had not paid the cathedral was due to it for the schooling and upbringing of master Egill, his kinsman, according to that which the judgment of honourable priests indicated was arbitrated there, we judge Teitr Þorleifsson obliged to pay that money with legal interest, after it is claimed from him by the steward of the church.

In the third point which master Jón made against Teitr Þorleifsson, that he had with certain knowledge kept the real property of the church, Galtarnes in Húnavatnsþing, now because the Church law indicates that whoever keeps or holds the real property of the church against the law falls into interdict through his own deed, we judge Teitr Þorleifsson, under oath, as he did not know that the land of Galtarnes was the property of the church – he was under oath, when we judged him worthy of interdict – obliged to take judgment and punishment and pay the cathedral fully.

In the fourth point, which the named master Jón made against Teitr Þorleifsson, that he had violated the letter of the archbishop in that point, that he himself had had the manservant of the church killed, as being near to him and seeing, thus also that he himself had had many men of the church and their servants killed and maimed. Now because we saw and read over the open letter with the marks of the worthy lord and spiritual father, lord Eirik archbishop in Þrandheim, being reading aloud thus that he had taken the aforementioned master Jón and his people and servants to saint Óláfr and his peace and protection, we judge Teitr Þorleifsson obliged to go forth before the archbishop with the next 12-month, to the heard

judgment and answer, properly legal, in that place and day which the mentioned archbishop wishes to set concerning the recorded affair.

And for evidence here we, the aforementioned priests, set our marks on that document which was written at Hólar in Hjaltadalr in the Vigil of the Ascension of the Lord, in the same year as was said before.

22) 1520 (DI VIII 726-32)⁷⁴⁴

Sueinhvswijk xx^c. vj kugilldi. Landskyld. c. kom fyrer framfæri og kienslu til prestz Sijra Jons Magnussonar.

Sveinhúsavík: 20 hundreds, 6 cow-values, land-rent of one hundred came for the upkeep and education as a priest of master Jón Magnússon.

23) 1524 (DI IX 244-5) (Not mentioned in Magnús)

Kuittunar Bref Bródur Jons a Skriduklaustre 1524

Wier brooder Øgmund med gudz nád biskup i Skalhollte giørum goodum monnum kunnigt med þessu voru opnu breffe saker þess vier høfum fregnadþ at broder Jón Jonsson a Skriduklaustre se nockud nitsamlegur vtan kirkiu og innan. huad vier lofum vel. Sòmuleidis kom hann sialfur firer oss og tiáde saker sinna misferla til forna sier ifergiefest hafa. Þui giefum vier ádurgreindan brodur Jon kuittan ok ákiærulausan fyrir oss og ollum Biskupum j Skalhollte vorum effterkomendum. af þeirre prima prolificatione sem hann openber ath vard med Oddnyu Hallvardsdottur in secunda gradu affinitatis. Enn lausn ok skriffter sieu sem honum hafa settar vered af herra Stephane uorum forverara. eda þeim hann þar til sette.

so oc hans skolabørn Jón og Gudrunu giefum vier kuitt vm þau bernskupør sem þeim

⁷⁴⁴ Magnús Már Lárusson 1967, 127 lists several other examples from this *testamentisbréf*, but none of them are explicit that the payment is coming for education, and he yet appears to miss the Sveinhusavík example.

bar til. hafande hendur a vigdum hlutum edur óvigdum. Hier med aller dugandes samchristner men sem nockut hafa þar til hialpad vm klaustur og kirkiugardenn. skorit edur stungit klaustursens jörd og höggved þess skog af hans raadum. skulu qvitter og ákiærulauser um þær tiltekter. Hier uppá hefur broder Jón lofad oss framveiges at stirkia heilaga kristne oc klaustred vm skollahald. Þui setium vier optgreindan brodur Jón sacristanum ifer kirkiu og klaustur á Skridu. Skall hann sitia og framsyngia öll hatijdleg hölld þeim stundum sem Priorinn er ecke heima eda vid kirkiuna.

Og til sannenda hier vm settum vier vort innsigle fyrer þetta qvittunarbref. skrifad j Skalholti sabbato post festum Michaelis Archangeli anno Domini Millesimo qvingentesimo vigesimo quarto.

Letter of acquittal of brother Jón at Skriðu monastery

We, brother Ögmund, bishop of Skálholt by the Grace of God, make it known to good men with this our open letter, [which] we have made because brother Jón Jónsson at Skriða monastery was somewhat wicked, outside the church and within, what we praise well. Likewise he came himself before us and reported, because of his former misconduct, that he had given himself over. For this, we declared the aforementioned brother Jón acquitted and unimpeached before us and all our future bishops of Skálholt, concerning this *prima proliationae* which he has revealed to have happened with Oddný Hallvarðsdóttur, in the second degree of affinity, and there was absolution and confessions which had been made for him by lord Stephán, our predecessor, or he set there for them.

Thus also to his students, Jón and Guðrún, we give acquittal concerning those childish misbehaviors which they did, having a hand on things consecrated or unconsecrated. Herewith all worthy fellow Christian men who had helped at all there, with the monastery and the church-building, cut or dug the land of the monastery and cut the forest according to his command, shall acquit and unimpeach concerning these doings. Hereupon Brother Jón has promised us for the future to assist holy Christianity and the monastery concerning the

maintaining of the school. For this we set the often-named brother Jón as Sacristan⁷⁴⁵ over the church and monastery at Skríða. He shall sit and officiate all festival observances at that place, when the prior is not present or at the church.

And for evidence here we set our mark on this letter of acquittal, written in Skálholt on the Sabbath after the feast of the archangel, in the year of the Lord 1524.

24) 1525 (DI IX 274-5)

Vier augmund med gudz nad biskup j skalholti giorum godum monnum kunnigt med þessu voru opnu brefe at vier haufu giort sodan kaupskap vid asgrim asgrimsson at vier haufum feingit honum hof j auræfum til frials forrædis og fullrar eignar. so og hofum vier lofat at lata læra gunnlaug son hans so hann megi vigiazt prestur med gudz myskunn. so framt sem þat er hans lagnadur og vili þa hann er so til alldurs kominn.

hier j mot hefer hann feingit oss til fullrar eignar allan þann hluta sem hann og hans kuinna mattu fremzt med laugum eiga j stora huole og midhusum epter fodur gudrunar og modur. So og eigi sidur hofum vier feingit asgrime jordina kuisker med ollv þui henni til heyrrer. hier med jordina breidarmork med vj.alna triam og þar fyrir jnnan. Enn stærre haupp. tre edur huali eignazt skalhollzkirkia sem adr hefur verit.

hier j mot hefer hann feingit oss jardernar minna fiord og ruinhola er liggia j stafhollzkirkiu sokn til fullrar eignar og frials forrædis. skal huor ockar fyrir sig suara laga riptingum á þeim jordum er selldi en huor hallda til laga. þeim er keypti.

voru þesser giorningsvottar til kallader sira jon hiedinsson radzmadur. jon hallzson og jon þoruardzson.

Og til saninda hier vm setium vier fyrr greinder men vor innsigle fyrir þetta jardakaupsbref. er skrifat var j skalholhti jn translacione sancti olafi regis et martiris. anno. domino. M. d. xx. v.

We, Ögmund, bishop of Skálholt by the Grace of God, make it known to good men

⁷⁴⁵ The keeper of a church or monastery's books or treasury.

with this our open letter, that we have done such trading with Ásgrímr Ásgrímsson, that we have given him Hof in Öraefi, for free management and full ownership. We have also promised to have his son Gunnlaugr taught so that he will be able to be ordained a priest with the grace of God, so far as that is his expectation⁷⁴⁶ and will, when he has come of age.

Here in turn he has given us full possession of all those things which he and his wife were legally able to possess furthest back in time, in Stórahváll and Miðhús, by the father and mother of Guðrún. And no less have we given Ásgrímr the land of Kvísker with all belongs to it, here with the land of Breiðármörk with six ells of wood also therein. But the church of Skálholt owns Stærri-Höfn, trees or whales as it has been before.

Here in turn he has given us the lands of the Minna-Fjörðr and Svínhólar, which lie in the parish of Stafaholtskirkja, for full possession and free management. Each of us shall answer for ourselves a legal withdrawal of these lands which are sold, and each shall hold to the law, for that bargain they make.

Sir Jón Héðinsson, steward, Jón Hallsson and Jón Þorvarðsson were called forth as witnesses of these deeds.

And as evidence here we aforementioned men set our marks for this land purchase letter, which was written in Skálholt during the Translation of Saint Óláfr, king and Martyr, in the year of the Lord 1525.

25) 1526 (DI IX 340-41) (Not mentioned in Magnús)

Um Fins arf

Vier broder Øgmnnd med gudz nád biskup i Skalhollte giorum godum monnum kunnigt med þessu voru opnu brefe. ad á sunnudagin i páskaviku á Reykium i Ølvese kom fyrer oss fataður mann Gudmundur Þorvardzason. beidde oss ok krafde uppa guds vegan. ad veita sier styrk og hiálp til. so hann og hans bõrn skilgetin mætte ná oc fá þann arf. sem hann

⁷⁴⁶ The translation of *lagaðr* is uncertain, here it is being assumed that it is related to the verb *laga* 'to prepare, make ready'.

og fleire adrer goder men reiknudu bans börnum med lögum fallin vera epter Finn heitin Þorvardsson. gud hans sál fride og náde. Þvi fyrer vors herra skulld. hans audmiukan bænarstad. oc godra manna tillogur. hofum vier giørt soddan giörning vid greindan Gudmund. ad hann hefur reingid oss til fullrar eignar fyrrsagdan arf allan.

Her i mot lofudum vier ad taka til vor einn af hans sonum. og lata kenna hönur suo hann mege vigiast. ef það er hans lagnadur. svo og ad leggja hönur þar til nockra peninga. sem moguligt være. þegar vier hönur feingid og vid tekid ádurkrifudum arfe. ok peningum.

Voru þesser giörningsvottar oc nærverande men. Sera Snorri Hialmsson. Hafliði Þorðarson ok Illugi Ólafsson. hvories ad settu sin jnnsigli med voru inngsigli fyrer þetta giörningsbref. skrifad i sama stad ok dag sem fyrr seger. Ann Domini M. D. xx. vi.

Concerning the inheritance of Finnr

We, Brother Ögmundur, bishop of Skálholt by the grace of God, make it known to good men with this our open letter, that on Sunday in Easter week at Reykir in Ölfusi there came before us a poor man, Guðmundr Þorvarðsson. He begged and called on us, upon God's behalf, to grant him strength and to help so that he and his lawfully begotten children might be able to obtain and possess that inheritance, which he and more other good men reckoned to be legally fallen to his children, after the late Finnr Þorvarðsson, may God restore peace to and protect his soul. Because of the due of our Lord, his humble place of worship, and the counsel of good men, we have made such a deed with the aforementioned Guðmundr, that he has given us full possession of all the previously mentioned inheritance.

Here in turn we promised to take to us one of his sons, and have him taught so that he might be able to be ordained, if that is his expectation, and also to pay him there some money, as is possible. We have immediately obtained and taken the before-written inheritance and money.

There were these witnesses and men present: master Snorri Hjálmsón, Hafliði Þorðarson and Illugi Ólafsson, who set their marks with our mark for this document, written in the same place and day as was said before, the year of the Lord 1526.

26) 1532 (DI IX 611) (Not mentioned in Magnús)

Venerande domine. noverit tua celsitudo non excidisse mihi qvare huc sim missus nempe ut doctor et melior ad vos redeam qvam exspectionem ne uos frustra de me habuisse videamini ego sedulo daturus sum operam pro mea virili. porro quod mihi non parce ministretis ea. quibus ad hanc rem opus est adolescentibus ut mihi gratissimum est ita facit me sollicitum ut qvantum possim. referam gratiam. etiamsi videam nunquam fore. ut par simm tantis beneficijs. quin hoc sciat tua celsitudo me nactum esse bonum hospitem. ut qui præstiterit omnibus quæ pollicitus est. ad hæc nactum fideles præceptores et dignos qvos parentum loco semper observem et venerer. quod ad studium meum attinet. ego possum latinum sermonem utcunque intelligere. perfecte scribere et loqui non dum licet. sed spero me eam operam adhibiturum. ut nunqvam pæniteat vos impensæ. dominus servet nobis tuam celsitudinem diu sanam Amen.

Hamburgi Anno 1532 Martij 15.

tuæ Celsitudinis deditissimus.

Venerable lord, your Highness will have known that it did not escape me here how I was truly sent here in order that I might return to you a doctor and better than expectation, so that you might not seem to have maintained me for nothing. I intend to carefully dedicate labour, according to my manliness, that hereafter for me you might not minister that stingily, which there is need of for that matter for growing up, as it is most pleasing to me, therefore it makes me anxious how much I am able, that I might return thanks, although I seem never to be suitable for such great favour without this. Your Highness knows that I encountered a good host, so that anything you provided to all, which was promised, obtained for faithful and worthy teachers whom in place of a parent I always heed and I venerate, which is important to my study. I am able to understand Latin speech in whatever manner perfectly. It is not yet permitted to write and speak, but I hope that that labour will be extended to me, so that I might never regret your expense. May the Lord watch over us, your health continually,

Highness, Amen.

Hamburg on 15 March in the year 1532.

May we have been devoted to your Highness.

Appendix 2: Glossary of Old Norse Grammatical Terminology

Constructing this list has been expedited by glossaries made by the editors of the grammatical treatises, in Ólsen 1884, Clunies Ross and Wellendorf 2014, Wills 2001, Hreinn Benediktsson 1972 and Raschellà 1982. Work by these scholars has also been a major source for determining the distribution of loan formations, semantic loans, and native terms, though of course many of the etymologies must be acknowledged as uncertain, including what Latin term any given loan formation might be derived from. For the sake of time and simplicity reference has been made to standard editions, though in those treatises which appear in multiple manuscripts there is some variation in the technical terminology, as the apparatuses of Wills and Raschellà make clear. It has been noted where this variation deals with very rare or unique words and thus is significant to the general character of the glossary, but a full accounting of more common terms await a more complete study.

A full glossary of ON grammatical and metalinguistic terminology, with complete discussion of each term, would be a massive task, and would have to involve comparison with early modern and modern Icelandic texts to fully understand the development and significant of each term. This glossary is thus, by necessity, incomplete. As it stands is primarily concerned with the terminology of the four grammatical treatises and the relationship between native terms, semantic loans, loan formulations, and loan words, as well as the variation in different meanings and usages of loan formations and loan words. The names of the metaplasms, schemes, and tropes are not included. Terms which only appear in the *Snorra Edda*, thus, are not included, even as certain rare loan formations which are not strictly metalinguistic are included. Further study on the relationship between the use of native terms and loans in different conceptual areas – poetics, syntax, aspects of sound, letters, words, etc. – would be useful.

The glossary will also indicate the relative rarity of these terms, and for the distribution of each term the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (ONP) has been the sole source,

beyond the editions of the actual treatises. While the ONP does not represent the entire corpus and thus is not ideal, it gives a general sense of the range of each word. Further editing, research, and compilation will be required to better understand the full range of Icelandic metalanguage and Latin influence on Icelandic. Where the number of instances of the terms in the grammatical treatises is not shown, the terms are too frequent for a quick count. From what little the ONP can show, there seems to be a link between the loanwords and loan formations in the *3GT* and *4GT* with the fourteenth-century florid style of hagiography⁷⁴⁷ and Latin learned translations. This seems to suggest that the *3GT* either was highly influential as an individual text or, as has been argued in this study, represents the earliest extant example of a body of terminology that was developing in bilingual learned and educational discourse in Iceland and Norwegian since the twelfth, or even the eleventh, centuries.

Abbreviations

-*P* refers to the prologue of the *Codex Wormianus*, as given in Ólsen, ed., 1884, 152-5.

-*1GT* refers to page and line numbers of the *Codex Wormianus*, as transcribed in Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 206-247.

-*2GT* refers to page and line number of the restored text in Raschellà, ed., 1982, 50-76.

-*MG* refers to chapter and sentence numbering from Wills, ed., 2001, 74-100.

-*MS* refers to chapter and sentence numbering from Ólsen, ed., 1884, 59-119.

-*4GT* refers to chapter and line numbers in Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014,

⁷⁴⁷ Discussion of the Northern Icelandic Benedictine School (NIBS), the social and cultural group most associated with the florid style, has been centred around three monks active in the earlier part of the fourteenth century at the monasteries of Þingeyrar and Munkaþverá: Bergur Sökkason, Arngrímur Brandsson, and Árni Laurentiusson. The sagas attributed to these monks, or more cautiously to their intellectual and cultural milieu, define the NIBS and the florid style. These writings include but are not limited to: *Tveggja postula saga Jóns og jakobs*, *Jóns saga postula* IV, *Tómas saga erkibiskups* II, the D-redaction of *Guðmundar saga*, *Nikulás saga erkibiskups*, and *Mikjál's saga*. See Böðvar Guðmundsson et al., eds., 1993, 249-68; Sigurdson 2016, 37-8; Sverrir Tómasson 2006, 168-71; Kalinke 1996, 38.

2-49.

-5*GT* refers to the fragment of the so-called *Fifth Grammatical Treatise* from Ólsen, ed., 1884, 159.

-*H* refers to the chapter and line numbering used for *Háttatal* in Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 3-39.

-*S* refers to the page and line numbering used for *Skáldskaparmál* in Faulkes, ed., 2007(a).

-The fragment AM 921 III 4to, as edited in Ólsen, ed., 1884, 156-8, will be referred to by its full shelfmark.

I. Native Terms and Semantic Loans

Aðalhending: ‘full rhyme’ (Frequent in *H*, *MG* 5:5, *MS* 15:15).

Álagshátr: a metrical figure ‘extension-form’ (*H* 27:1/9; *MS* 16:55), in *Háttatal* where the second and fourth lines begin with a monosyllable that belongs in sense to the previous sentence, then followed by a five-syllable separate statement. In the *MS* it is said that *parenthesis* is always used in the *hátr* known as *stælt* or *álagshátr*.

Atkvæði: ‘pronunciation’, ‘sound’ (*IGT* 84:18/21, 86:8, 87:19/22/24/26/28/29/31, 88:4-7/10/11, 89:2/27, 90:1/9; *2GT* 52:18, 66:61; *4GT* 20:27). Very common word, largely replaced by *framflutning* and once by *framfæring* in the *3GT*, but interestingly the only reference to pronunciation in the *4GT* uses *atkvæði*. Subtly distinguished from *jartein* and *hljóð* in the *IGT*.⁷⁴⁸

Bókstafr: ‘letter’ (*IGT* 90:19), appears to be completely synonymous with the uncompounded *stafr*. Appears 10 other times in the ONP. Hreinn Benediktsson speculates that the term may have been coined to distinguish from the non-grammatical uses of *stafr*.⁷⁴⁹

Bragarbót: ‘poet’s improvement’ (*5GT*, *H* 31:9), the name of a rarely-used verse-form, and one of the few technical terms used in the extant fragment of the *Fifth*

⁷⁴⁸ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 54-64.

⁷⁴⁹ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 52-3.

Grammatical Treatise.

Bragarmal: ‘poetic speech’ (*MS* 14:5, *H* 8:20) shortening syllables by removing a vowel and making one syllable from two, said in the *MS* to be the name for *syncope* in poetics. This is the only term in *Háttatal* conspicuously similar to the type of word manipulation described among the *3GT*’s barbarisms and metaplasms. It is also notable that the example used in the *3GT*, *þar es* abbreviated to *þars*, is the exact same example used in *Háttatal*.

Dreginn: ‘lengthened’ (*2GT* 66:54). A participle used to describe the length of a vowel which is unique to the *2GT*, while in the other treatises *langr* is preferred, fitting with the distinct and sometimes unusual character of the *2GT*’s lexicon.⁷⁵⁰

Drögur: a metre (*H* 16:1/10; *MS* 15:10), in the *MS* *drögur* is said to be where a *vers* or *vísa* begins with the same word as the previous.

Dumbr: ‘mute’ (*MG* 3:19, 4:9), describing the quality of certain runic consonants representing f, þ, k, t, and b, and so presumably referring to voiceless consonants.

Dunhenda: ‘echoing rhyme’ (*H* 24:1; *4GT* 40:24), a metre in *Háttatal*, and in the *4GT* it is described as a place where *epimone*, the repetition of a word, is used for the sake of ornament, alongside *iðurmælt*, but contrastively with scripture where *epimone* is used to improve understanding.

Eiginligr: ‘proper’, in the sense of a proper noun (*MG* 6.5; *MS* 12:10, 16:28/30/33), and also in the sense of proper rather than improper language (*MS* 16:1/11/31; *4GT* 20:21), clearly used as a semantic loan from Lat. *proprius*, with the more common definition of ‘one’s own’ also used in the grammatical treatises elsewhere. Margaret Clunies Ross has discussed the term and the idea of proper vs. improper language,⁷⁵¹ but the grammatical concept has a complex history and development and more research into its vernacularized form. Cf. *Óeiginligr*, *sameiginligr*.

Einfalldliga: ‘singularly’ (*MS* 15:4), used in phrase *einfalldliga greindir* in the definition of *Prolepsis*, where a plural verb takes a plural subject and then a singular subject

⁷⁵⁰ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 120-21.

⁷⁵¹ Clunies Ross 1987, 29-38.

later in the sense. This definition appears to be much more narrowly focused on the verse example than Donatus', but still fits within the general purvey of Donatus' idea of *prolepsis*. Not a common word in the ONP, primarily in religious texts.

Einfaldligr: 'singular' (*MS* 12:13), a variant of *einfaldr*, used in the *Codex Wormianus*, AM 242 fol version of the passage. Similar range of use to *einfaldliga*, much rarer than either *einfaldr* or *einsligr*.

Einfaldr: 'singular' (*MS* 12:13), used in the AM 748 Ib 4to version of the passage.

Einsligr: 'singular' (*MS* 12:3, 15:4/7).

Einstaka: 'single' (*4GT* 20:3, *H* 8:27) used to describe an *einstaka visa* 'individual stanza' in both the *4GT* and *Háttatal*, which may thus be a set phrase comparable to *lausavísa* 'loose stanza'.

Fall: 'case' (*MG* 6:10/12; *MS* 12:8/14, 13:15/19, 15:20/21/24, 16:53; *4GT* 24:6/12), in the sense of the grammatical case of a noun or adjective. Likely a semantic loan from Lat. *casus*, presumably based on the fact that both terms share other meanings like 'fall', 'circumstance', and 'accident'. While in this sense it is closely related to *tilfelli/atfelli/atferli*, the latter terms seem to more often refer generally to the accidents of speech – thus not only case but also number, gender, tense, etc. – while *fall* is more restricted to case alone. It is uncertain how consistent this distinction was, however, and more work is needed.

Fátalaðr/fástafaðr: either 'having few sounds' or 'having few characters' (*P*). The later term is a conventional emendation, which Males has recently argued against using.⁷⁵² *Fátalaðr* seems preferable, moreover, because it appears 17 other times in the ONP, while *fástafaðr* would be otherwise unattested.

Finngáknat: a 'monster', a fault wherein *nýgjörving* is broken (*MS* 13:6, *4GT* 20:1). Cf. *nykrat*.

Grein: 'distinction, explanation' (Frequent in *1GT*; *2GT* 60:32/33, 61:37, 66:53; *4GT* 20:14, 20:27), and also in the more specific sense of 'person' (AM 921 III 4to). In the latter instance, the Latin *et tertiam personam* is glossed with *ok hina þridiu grein*, thus is referring to grammatical person as a type of distinction. This is indicative of the fundamental

⁷⁵² Males 2016, 271, note 30.

importance of this term to ON metalanguage, as can also be seen in how it is used in compounds: *hljóðgrein* ‘distinction of sound’ or ‘accent’, and *málsgrein* ‘distinction of speech’ or ‘sentence’. *Grein* thus describes a wide variety of linguistic distinctions, and as Hreinn Benediktsson argues, it can even be thought of as a synonym of *stafr* in the *IGT*.⁷⁵³

Greiniligr: ‘divisible’ (*MG* 1.9-10), in the sense of sound which is divisible or distinguishable, possibly according to musical or harmonic rules. The adverb *greiniliga* is common, but the adjective only appears in two other ONP entries.

Greppaminni: ‘poet’s reminder’ (*H* 39:12; *4GT* 40:25), said in the *4GT* to be where *epimone*, the repetition of a word, occurs at the beginning of the line. Cf. *dunhenda*, *iðurmæltr*.

Hátttr: ‘metre, mode, form’ (Frequent in *H*, *MG*, *MS*, and *4GT*; *IGT* 87:8). Sometimes used to describe a metre in the strictly modern sense, while instances in the *MS* and *4GT* make it appear synonymous with *figúra*, possibly even more general.

Háttafall: ‘accident/fault of metre’ (*4GT* 40:26; *H* 51:11, 53:12, 58:15), potentially in places suggesting a fault of metrical style, but more often referring specifically to variation or ‘accidents’ – in the sense that *tilfelli/atfelli* is used – of metre made by older poets.

Heiti: ‘name, designation’ (Used throughout *Skáldskaparmál* *H* 2:9, 12:4, 11, 18:13, 27:5; *P*), generally a non-normative or poetic term for something, one of the key categories of diction discussed and listed in *Skáldskaparmál*, alongside the various types of kennings. It is intriguing that designating a rare poetic word, so fundamental to the *Snorra Edda*, is never mentioned in the *MS* and *4GT*, though kennings and *sannkenningar* are both discussed in the *MS*. It is possible that *heitar* were not thought of as non-normative or *óeiginligr* in the same way that kennings and tropes could be, and that was enough of a distinction not to mention that in the *MS*. Widespread use in the ONP, 54 total entries.

Hending: ‘rhyme, assonance’ (*MG* 5:7-10, *MS* 11:13-15/24, 14:12, 15:15; *H* 0:30, 1:37, 2:9, 23:12, 38:10, 44:14, 49:10, 76:11, 77:12, 79:13, 82:10), also in the sense of ‘a combination of letters’ (*2GT* 72:73, 73:77-9). Also used in a few sagas in the sense of ‘close quarters’. While the usage in the *2GT* doesn’t seem completely unrelated to the idea of a

⁷⁵³ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 68-9

rhyme, it is different enough that it may emphasize the idea that the *2GT* was derived from a highly divergent educational and metalinguistic tradition, even though it is transmitted with the other treatises.

Hendinga(r)lauss: ‘without rhyme’ (*H* 69:10, 72:9, 76:9; *MS* 15:19), the alternate spelling *hendingarlauss* is used in the *MS*, though this may just be an accident of transmission.

Hliðmælt: a metrical figure, lit. ‘side-spoken’ (*MS* 12:16). In solecism involving a change of person, *hliðmælt* is said to be when the verse switches into the third person. Hapax. Cf. *viðmælt*.

Hljóð: ‘sound’ (*1GT* 84:9/26/29, 86:32, 87:18; *MS* 16:46; *P*; frequent throughout *2GT* and *MG*), Hreinn Benediktsson has discussed how, in the *1GT*, *hljóð* is closely related to *jartein* and *atkvæði*, but is the most general term of the three and is the closest translation of Lat. *sonus*.⁷⁵⁴ As *atkvæði* is largely replaced by *framflutning/framfæring* in the *3GT* in the sense of ‘pronunciation’, it appears that a similar relationship between these loan formations and *hljóð* holds there, though further research is needed.

Hljóða: ‘to sound, be sounded, be pronounced’ (*MG* 3:4/7-10/13, 4:10/12/17; *MS* 11:9/16; *4GT* 20:30; *P*), alternates with *framflytja/framfæra* in the *3GT* and *4GT*. Raschellà’s argument that the *3GT* is completely dependent on these loan formations for the idea of ‘to pronounce’ thus appears to ignore the frequency of *hljóða* in the *MG* in particular.⁷⁵⁵ There may be some distinction between *hljóða* and *framflytja/framfæra* comparable to the distinction between ‘to sound’ and ‘to pronounce’, but more work is needed.

Hljóðfegrð: ‘euphony/harmony’ (*MG* 4.16). Hapax.

Hljóðgrein: ‘accent’ (*MG* 3.3), a variant for *hljóðsgrein* that appear in AM 748 Ib 4to version of this passage. Appears to be the only instance of this variant of the term in the corpus.

Hljóðsgrein: In the sense of ‘accent’ (*MG* 2:6-9, 3:2-3, 5:1-2/24-9; *MS* 11:7/9/17/18, 15:18; *P*), in the sense of a ‘type/distinction of sound’ (*H* 0:26/29; *2GT* 50:1/2, 52:9/15; *MG*

⁷⁵⁴ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 61-4.

⁷⁵⁵ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 119-20.

1:3, 3:2/5, 4:15). This is an unusual term, in the sense that it appears to be native, or at least not based on any particular Latin compound, in the sense of ‘accent’, but it is clearly a loan formation based on *soni differentia* when used in in the *MG* in the sense of ‘distinction of sound’. In this latter sense it is also a rare link between the *2GT*, the *Snorra Edda*, and the loan-based terminology of the translated treatises. This form of the term is rare, only appearing elsewhere in a sixteenth century medical text, but the variant *hljóðagrein* appears in *Jóns saga helga*, *Stjórn*, *Dínuss saga drambláta*, and *Dúnstanuss saga*, in the sense of ‘accent’ primarily as it pertains to liturgical singing.

Hljóman: ‘sound’ (*MG* 5:24), used in the *MG* to define *hljóðsgrein* ‘accent’, as the *rækilig hljóman raddarinnar* ‘precise sound of the vowel’. Seems to be a hapax, and may be a weak feminine variant of *hljómr*, which appears among the *heiti* for ‘sound’ in *Skáldskaparmál*, and as a non-speech type of sound in the *2GT* (*2GT* 50:5), but also in more musical, vocal senses among some 25 appearances in the ONP.

Hljóðstafr: ‘vowel’ (*1GT* 84:20/24; *2GT* 60:32/35, 62:40-1/45, 66:53/56, 68:65, 72:71, 72:73, 74:78/80/82/86; *H* 1:20-2/31-2/35, 8:20; 32:10; *MG* 3.6; *MS* 13:3). Also appears once in the D version of *Guðmundar saga góði*. *Raddarstafr* is a more common term for ‘vowel’ in the *1GT* and *3GT*, and the *1GT* also uses the shortened *rödd*. Raschellà has argued that the *rödd/hljóð* variation parallels the Latin *vox/sonus* alternation, but that while *raddarstafr* is likely in part based on Latin, is more likely *hljóðstafr* part of the pre-Christian runic lexicon.⁷⁵⁶

Höfuðstafr: ‘first/head letter’ (*1GT* 84:32, 87:32, 88:4/9/21/23, 88:22/25, 89:5, 89:32, 90:2/3/6/8-10; *MG* 5:23; *MS* 15:17), used to describe alliteration.

Iðurmæltr: ‘repeatedly said’ (*H* 44:16 *4GT* 40:24), a metre.

Játan: ‘affirmation’ (*4GT* 4:8), in the sense of a term of affirmation, a positive as opposed to a negative clause. Only four other appearances in the ONP, mostly documentary, seems to be a late semantic loan based on the common verb *játa*.

Karlmannligr: ‘masculine’ (*MS* 12:12), in the sense of grammatical gender. A very common word in a non-grammatical sense, but this appears to be a sole instance of the term

⁷⁵⁶ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 115-16.

used to refer to grammatical gender.

Kenna: ‘attribute, communicate through a kenning’ (Frequent in *Skáldskaparmál*; *H* 1:53/55, 2:9, 6:9, 8:38, 65:8; *MS* 16:14, 16:16; *AGT* 18:29; *P*). Commonly also used in the sense of ‘to teach’. The use of this term in its poetic, metalinguistic sense in the *MS* is particularly significant, as it appears to distinguish the types of *metaphora* used in Latin and Old Norse. *Metaphora* in Old Norse poetics is usually used, *MS* states, when things are *kenndir* ‘made into kennings’, but it states that non-kenning *metaphora* is used as well, as when a king is called after famous ancient kings. The essence of a kenning is thus presented as the use of a genitive determinant, which fits with *Háttatal*. Latin poetry, in contrast, that metaphorical things are communicated *ókenndir*, and the example used clearly shows that this refers to the lack of a determinant.

Kenning: In the sense of a ‘circumlocution, determinant, periphrastic description’ (Widespread in *Skáldskaparmál*; *H* 2:10/11/12, 6:19, 8:29, 17:21, *MS* 13:11, 13:12, 16:14, 16:21; *P*), but also in the sense of a ‘teaching’ (*AGT* 12:2, 22:18, 40:8/14; *P*). *Háttatal* describes kennings largely in the sense of their structure, distinguishing between those which have a base word and single genitive modifier or determinant, those which are *tvíkent* ‘having two determiners’, and those which are *rekit*, or have three or more. Extension between five determinants is said to be not acceptable except in ancient poets. The term is also used to refer just to the determinant, not the whole description. For the most part the *MS* discusses *sannkenningar*, but it does note that all kennings are made using the trope of *metaphora*, thus exploring the idea in a more semantic sense than *Háttatal* seems to. It is an important and neglected aspect of this passage in the *MS* that the treatise is not strictly equating *metaphora* and *kenning*, but rather that all the kennings in ON are composed using *metaphora*. The two treatises thus do not really contradict each other in the sense of what a kenning was. Kenning shows every indication of being an older term deliberately adapted for vernacular *grammatica* and poetics. The use of kenning to mean ‘teaching’ seems certainly to be older. Clunies Ross has speculated that the poetic meaning of ‘circumlocution’ came about through the combination of the sense of ‘things perceived’ and ‘teaching’ with the idea of a *kenningarnafn* as a nickname or byname based on attributes, *accidentia*, or things perceived

about a person.⁷⁵⁷ The closely related term *viðkenning*, used in *Skáldskaparmál*, likewise is extant in other texts referring to a sort of acknowledgment or recognition of things, and presumably it is this idea of recognizing features or qualities of something that brought about the poetic sense of a circumlocution describing features or qualities of a thing.⁷⁵⁸

Klauf: a metrical figure lit. ‘cleft’ (*MS* 15:28), only used in the *MS*, said to be when two *sannkenningar* are used together without a conjunction between them, identified as a type of *dialyton*. Cf. *svipa*.

Kveða: ‘pronounce’ (Frequent in *IGT*), but more commonly in the general sense of ‘speak, sing, compose’ (Frequent in *H*, *MS*, *4GT*). This a common work which can referring to speaking, most often to the recitation of poetry, and is widely used when verse are quoted in prose texts, including the poetic treatises. The full compound *kveða at* is the standard verb in the *IGT* for ‘to pronounce’, paralleling its use of the noun *atkvæði*. This use, however, does not seem to be used anywhere else – even the *2GT* has its own use of the verb *leiða* – and it is possible that this more technical sense of *kveða* ceased after the twelfth century.

Kveðandi: ‘metrical form, metre’ (*IGT* 87:7/8 Frequent in *H*; *MS* 11:11/12/19/20, 14:6/7/11/16, 15:17/19; *4GT* 24:23), usually used to refer to the maintenance of correct metrical form, and thus can refer specifically to alliteration, rhyme, syllable count, etc. Appears in some sagas, still used in a poetic sense, but as a present participle referring simply to the recitation or composition of poetry.

Kvenmannligr: ‘feminine’ from Lat. *femininus* (*MS* 12:12). Like *karlmannligr* this is a fairly common term, but unclear whether it is used anywhere else in a grammatical sense.

Kvæði: ‘poem, serious of stanzas’ (Frequent through *H*; *MS* 13:9, 16:56; *4GT* 16:3/11, 24:2), tends to refer to a whole poem, in contrast to *skáldskapr* ‘poetics, art of poetry’ and the use of *visa* to refer to an individual stanza. A common term, seems to be used strictly in this sense.

Kyn: in the sense of ‘grammatical gender’ (*MG* 6:10; *MS* 12:8/12, 13:19), a semantic

⁷⁵⁷ Clunies Ross 1987, 50-61. She gives an example in the early ms. AM 674a 4to of the *Elucidarius* discussion of naming angels, where *agnomina ab accidenti* “secondary names from circumstance” is translated as *kenningarnöfn af atburð*. (Clunies Ross 1987, 56).

⁷⁵⁸ Clunies Ross 1987, 67-9.

loan cognate with Lat. *genus*, but also used in the sense of ‘kind, type’ (*MS* 15:8, 16:67/69/71). The latter usage is widespread, but does not appear in the *4GT*, where *species* is used several times, and the compound *kynvísl*.

Kynkvísl: ‘type, branch, variation’ (*4GT* 20:22), used to describe the greater number of variations of *efflexegetis* which appears in Latin, compared to ON.

Leiða: ‘to pronounce’ (*SGT* 66:54/56), a usage which is restricted to the *SGT* among the grammatical treatises, but does appear elsewhere. The ONP gives two examples of the phrase *leiða atkvæðum* ‘to declare’, from relatively early manuscripts: the *Icelandic Homily Book* c.1200 and *Niðrstigningar saga* c.1225-50. It is possible that the use of the word being used on its own in the sense of ‘to pronounce’ derives from this or a similar phrase, perhaps *leiða orðum*, considering the use of *orðaleiðingar* in the *2GT* for ‘pronunciation. The ONP also gives a single instance in *Víga-Glúms* where the word on its own refers to speaking.

Lausaklofi: ‘diphthong, vowel digraph’ (*2GT* 62:38/46), unique to the *2GT*, used to the types diphthongs where are written with two separate vowels. The term means literally ‘loose-cleft’, which may be a reference to the writing of separate vowels.

Límingar: ‘diphthong, vowel ligature’ (*2GT* 60:34/36), unique to the *2GT*, refers to the types of diphthongs which are written with ligatures. Almost certainly an abbreviation of the full *límingarstafr*.

Límingarstafr: ‘rune-diphthong, diphthong’ (*MG* 4:14, *4GT* 20:29). The use of the term in the *MG* is followed by a list of rune-diphthongs/digraphs and thus seems to refer specifically to them. However, the use in the *4GT* is a reference to a passage in the *MG*, describing the use of diphthongs to create euphony, and while the *4GT* uses *límingarstafr* that passage of the *MG* uses *diptongus*. Raschellà argues that *límingarstafr* comes from the old pre-Christian runic metalanguage.⁷⁵⁹ Though possible, if it is such an old term, it seems surprising that no term for diphthong is used among all the phonetic discussion in the *1GT*. If there is a runic connection, it might support the idea that the term *límingar* may be related to the noun *lími*, which refers to a broom, i.e. a bound bundle of twigs attached to a staff.

Langloka: ‘late closure/ending’ (*H* 14:1; *4GT* 24:24), alongside *stál* it is said in the

⁷⁵⁹ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 118-19.

4GT to be a place where *antitheton* occurs, where the last words agree with the first.

Mál: ‘language, sentence, speech, matter’ (Frequent in *H*, 2GT, *MS*, 4GT; *MG* 3:5/6/14), possibly the most versatile word in the ON metalinguistic lexicon, it can essentially refer to anything spoken or written, including an entire language. Raschellà often translates it as ‘discourse’ in the 2GT when it is used in its most general sense as a chunk of language of unclear size. It’s significance in compounds like *málrunar*, *málsorð*, *málsgrein*, *málsnild*, and *málstafr* is generally unclear, ambiguous, and even variable.

Málsgrein: ‘sentence’ (*MG* 2:1, 6:3-5/11 *MS* 11:3, 12:1, 13:2, 15:11/25, 16:50/54; 4GT 38:2), also used in a way more synonymous with *mál* in the sense of ‘speech’ (*IGT* 87:5; *MS* 11:1), and in the *Snorra Edda* it is used in various other ways, as a ‘distinction of meaning/content’ (*H* 0:26/27, 1:43, 67:12). The use of the term in the grammatical treatises may follow the sense of *mál* more, while the use in the *Snorra Edda* may follow *grein* more. At the same time, the term may be understood as a translation of *sentential*, and thus follow the semantic variations of that term, cf. *sen*.

Málsnild: ‘eloquence’ (*MS* 16.64; 2GT 52:19), in the 2GT it is written as *snild* *málsins*. Appears 33 times in the ONP, in a wide diversity of texts. It is worth noting that the uncompounded *snilld* also refers to eloquence.

Málsnildarlist: ‘the skill of eloquence, rhetoric’ (*MS* 15:17), appears to be a term adapted particularly to gloss *rhetorica* more exactly than *málsnild*, though it cannot be said to be a true loan formation. Appears in four other places, often directly glossing *rhetorica*. The term *málsnildaríþrótt* is used three times, always to gloss *rhetorica*.

Málstafr: ‘letter, consonant’ (*IGT* 86:16, frequent in 2GT). The 2GT uses only *málstafr* to mean ‘consonant, rather than the loan formation *samhljóðandi*. The one use in the *IGT* appears to be as a synonym of *stafr* and *bókstafr*, both of which the *IGT* uses, with no clear distinction between them.⁷⁶⁰ It is not clear why the prefix *mál* would indicate a consonant, and there is no way to be certain whether the usage in the *IGT* or 2GT is older.

Mátttr: ‘value, pronunciation, signification’ (*MG* 3:1, 4:2/4; *MS* 12:8). In a general sense this is a common word referring to ‘force’ or ‘strength’, but as a grammatical term,

⁷⁶⁰ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 52-3.

presumably used as a semantic loan of *potestas*, its meaning is a little more complex. In the *MG* it is most clearly a translation of *potestas*, as it is describe the three key characteristics of letters. In the *MS* it is one of the 12 accidents of the parts of speech, and seems likely to indicate the pronunciation of a word, rather than a letter, though the passage is unclear. Even with the *MG*, however, the related term *veldi* is also used to translate *potestas* in the sense of the signification of a letter. In the *IGT*, however, Hreinn Benediktsson has concluded that *jartein* is the direct vernacular equivalent to *potestas* there, while *atkvæði* and *hljóð* could have related meanings, in relation to pronunciation and sound.⁷⁶¹ The variation between *mátt*, *veldi*, and *jartein* may be primarily an issue of individual translators, but it may also ultimately reflect the use of different synonymous terms to clarify the meaning of *potestas* in classroom practice.

Margfaldliga: ‘plurally’ (*MS* 15:4, AM 921 III 4to), in reference to the use of a plural verb. Common word, 35 entries in the ONP.

Margfaldligr: ‘plural’ (*MS* 12:3/13, 15:4/7). Common word, 35 entries in the ONP.

Margfaldr: ‘plural’ (*4GT* 22:27, 24:16). It is interesting that the *MS* and *4GT* use slightly different term for ‘plural’. *Margfaldr* is the more common term, with 71 entries in the ONP.

Margfalda: ‘to pluralize’ (*4GT* 24:3), with a common usage of to multiply, with 43 entries in the ONP.

Merkiligr: ‘significant’ (*MG* 1:17/19-21, 5:24), also used in the sense of ‘perceptible’ (*MG* 3:16). Significant sound is described as sound which has meaning. The alternative use of the term is in the description of semi-vowels have a more ‘perceptible’ sound than other consonants, thus making them more similar to vowels.

Merking: ‘meaning’ (*MG* 1:18; *MS* 12:8, 13:7/8/11/12/17/18, 16:1/7/11/42/48/63), also used in the sense of *potestas* in the sense of the ‘value’ or ‘signification’ of a letter (3:18, 4:2/5), and once used parallel to *nóti* to describe an actual ‘mark’ (*MG* 5:21). The variation in the use of *marking* is indication of the nebulous territory between the significant of a letter, which is in essence pronunciation, and the signification of a word, which is semantic

⁷⁶¹ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 54-64.

meaning. *Merking* also provides a further complexity to *mátrr*, *veldi*, and *jartein* and the translation of *potestas*.

Merkja: ‘to mean, mark, signify, denote’ (*MG* 1:21 5:26/27/29/30 6:7/8/10; *MS* 15:14, 16:42-44/56/58/71/74; *4GT* 2:10/20, 4:2, 7:27, 12:1/2, 14:5, 18:4/29, 20:16, 22:27, 38:29). Can be used both in the sense of physical, graphic marking and in the sense of semantic signification, for words as well as letters. Considering this potentially wide metalinguistic meaning, it is surprising that *merkja* is not used in the *IGT* or *2GT*.

Mynd: ‘form, shape’ (*MG* 4:1, 6:8; *MG* 12:8), also in the sense of ‘kind, type’ (*MS* 14:1, 16:5). Can describe letters and words, and thus overlaps with the *vöxtr* of the *IGT*. It is worth noting the episode in *Færeyinga saga* where a once-heathen Bráendr teaches his foster-son a *Credo*, but incorrectly, and the boy’s mother rebukes him, saying the *Credo* lacks correct *mynd*.⁷⁶² There, then, *mynd* is used in a metalinguistic sense, but describing the form of a complete body of text.

Nafn: ‘noun, noun’ (*MG* 2:8-9/11/13-14, 3:4-5, 4:17, 5:3, 6:3-12; *MS* 12:3/6/10/11, 13:18, 14:3/6/15, 15:4/5/7/24/26/27, 16:14/24/28/31/33/40/61; *4GT* 20:30, 24:16) also used in the sense of the ‘name’ of letters (Frequent in *IGT*, *MG* 3:1-2/18, 4:3, 5:12), and sometimes it is clearly used in the general sense of a name (*MS* 11:2, 12:2, 13:12; *4GT* 12:5, 23:19, 34:10, 36:28). Clunies Ross has argued that the *Snorra Edda* uses both *heiti* and *nafn* to render the idea of a noun, with a general preference for *heiti*.⁷⁶³ *Heiti*, however, is not used at all in any of the four grammatical treatises in this sense. In a similar category, *Málfylling* is used once in the *Edda* and in no other treatise to reference to refer to a particle or unstressed word in a verse.

Nálægr: ‘present’ (*AM* 921 III 4to), the verbal tense, a semantic loan from Lat. *praesens*. 15 other appearances in the ONP.

Neiting: ‘negation’ (*4GT* 4:8), in the sense of a word of negation, used opposite *játan*. Nine other references in the ONP.

Njarðarvöttr: ‘Njörðr’s glove’ (*MS* 16:32), refers to several types of *antonomasia*,

⁷⁶² Quinn 2000, 41

⁷⁶³ Clunies Ross 1987, 45-9.

the replacement of a proper noun with a common noun or adjective, and the *MS* notes that the term is not used permissibly. *Njarðarvötr* appear two other times in the ONP, meaning a ‘sponge’ or ‘fungus’, in some religious translations. It is odd that a term that incorporates the name of a pagan deity should only appear in translated texts, and it seems like it must be assumed that the term is older than the textual references.

Norrönuskáldskapr: ‘Norse poetry’ (*MG* 5:8/10; *4GT* 20:24), used in contrast to *látínuskáldskapr* in the *MG*, and in contrast to *látína* in general in the *4GT*. The specified compound does not always seem to be necessary, as in places in the *MS skáldskapr* and *vers* appear to be used to refer to ON poetics and Latin poetics, respectively.

Nýgjörving: the semantic idea of a kenning extended to multiple kennings, sometimes translated as an ‘allegory, novelty, innovation’ (*H* 1:54, 5:12, 6:9/12/13/20; *S* 41:16, 74:6, 108:14/16/37; *MS* 13:6). Refers in the *Snorra Edda* – and the same meaning is implied in the *MS* – to when the metaphor of a kenning is maintained through a stanza, as a sword is called a worm and then the scabbard is called the worm’s path, etc.

Nykrat: a ‘monster’, a fault of speech wherein a *nýgjörving* is broken (*H* 6:16; *MS* 13:6), synonymous with *finngáalknat*. Clunies Ross has emphasized that both Snorri and Óláfr in rejecting *nykrat* are rejecting what was fairly common practice in skaldic poetry, and presumably part of a desired aesthetic.⁷⁶⁴ This, however, certainly fits with the idea of both the *Snorra Edda* and *MS* as a systematizer of poetics, and potentially influence by Latin grammatical ideas of normativity.

Óeiginligr: ‘improper’ (*MS* 13:2, 15:1, 16:7/12/25/27/29-31/40/45-48/56/58/62/64/66/69), semantic loan from Lat. *improprius*, in the sense of improper or non-normative sense or meaning, used in the discussion of tropes and their manipulation of meaning in the *MS*.⁷⁶⁵

Ofljóss: a poetic figure, lit. ‘excessively clear’ (*H* 17:26, 20:9, *S* 109:16/19; *MS* 11:17, 14:10). Presented only as an adjective, and not defined, but its essential dynamic of replacing a word with a pun/homonym, particularly when that word is used within a kenning.

⁷⁶⁴ Clunies Ross 1987, 76-7.

⁷⁶⁵ Clunies Ross has discussed the full translated meaning of both terms, and the extent to which the Old Norse terms seem to fully reflect the meaning of *propius* and *improprius* (Clunies Ross 1987, 34-8).

Ókenndr: ‘without kenning/genitive determinant’ (*S* 83:13/14, 99:21, 107:29, 108:9; *MS* 16:17). In the *MS* this is used to describe creating *metaphor* without a genitive determinant, as is said to be usual in Latin poetics, cf. *kenna*.

Orð: ‘word’ (*MG* 5:13, 6:1; Frequent in *IGT*, *H*, *S*, *2GT*, *MS*, *4GT*) also used in the more specific sense of ‘verb’ (*MG* 6.3-4, 6.8-10; *MS* 13:17, 14:13, 15:4-6/9/16; *4GT* 24:16). The specific sense of ‘verb’ contrasts with modern Icelandic, where *sögn* is used for ‘verb’.

Orðadrátt: ‘talk, speech’ (*MS* 12:2), used with *váendr* to refer to ‘poor/bad speech’. Appears in only one other text, and the term appears to have inherently negative connotations, based on the adjectives it appears with in both these instances.

Orðaleiðingar: ‘pronunciation’ (*2GT* 66:56), hapax, related to the use of *leiða* to mean ‘to pronounce’ in the *2GT*.

Orðaskipan: ‘order of words’ (*MS* 16:53), also appears in *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Tristrams saga*.

Orðkolf: a ‘club-word’ (*MS* 12:4, 14:8). The term appears twice, both times following the same verse example repeated, first for the solecism of a change of case, wherein an accusative is used for a dative, and second for *apocope*, where a letter or syllable is removed at the end of a word.⁷⁶⁶ *Orðkolf* thus seems to refer to abbreviation of words for multiple potential reasons, including the changing of cases. Probably the only example of a term which has no clear Latin parallel which is used in the *MS* but not *Háttatal*, and doesn’t seem to appear in any other texts.

Orðskrípi: ‘objectionable language’ (*P*), with the variant form *orðskræpi* appears in the ONP only here and in *Heimskringla*.

Orðskviðr: ‘Saying, proverb’ (*MS* 16:53), 46 entries in the ONP, primarily in religious texts and translations. The compound *orðskviðuhátt* is also used as a name for a metre in *Háttatal*.

Orðtak/Orðtæki: ‘words, phrase, arrangement of words’ (*H* 8:50, 17:26, 13:12, 34:10, 16:12, 72:10; *MG* 4:5, *MS* 11:8, 16:2/47/64), 87 entries total for both forms of the word in the ONP. *Háttatal* also uses the synonymous compound *máltak*.

⁷⁶⁶ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 77, 88. The example is *mey metri* ‘worthy woman’ instead of *meyju metri*.

Raddartól: ‘organ of speech’ (*MG* 4:15), hapax.

Raust: ‘voice’ (*MG* 3:13), a semantic loan for *vox*, used once instead of the normal translation *rödd*. The reasoning for the variation, if any, is not certain, but it is possible that in this passage of the *MG* *raust* is used to refer literally to a ‘voice’ rather than *vox* in the more general sense of ‘sound’.

Riðhendr: a poetic metre, lit. ‘rocking-rhymed’ (*H* 55:10, 56:10; *MS* 15:22), with rhyming syllables close together at the end of the line. Compared to the figure *omolemiton* in the *MS*.

Rún: ‘rune, letter’ (*IGT* 85:4/5, 86:16; *MG* 4:12/14). While in the *MG* this term, and the variant *rúnastafr*, are clearly referring to runes, it is conventional to translate their use in the *IGT* as referring generally to ‘letters’. Males, however, has recently argued against this use, and against the idea that *rún* should ever be translated generally as ‘letter’.⁷⁶⁷

Rúnamál: ‘runic alphabet’ (*MG* 3:16), also appear in *MG* 4:7 in the *Codex Wormianus* version. One other ONP entry, for *Dínus saga drambláta*.

Rúnameistari: ‘rune-master’ (*P*), hapax.

Rúnastafr: ‘runic character’ (*MG* 4:9/21/22), appears in two other ONP entries, the encyclopedic collection AM 194 8vo and *Sigurgarðs saga frækna*.

Runhenda: ‘end-rhyme’ (*H* 79:11, 80:12, 81:11, 86:11, 88:9, 89:10, 90:9, 91:9, 92:9; *MG* 5:8), appears nowhere else in the ONP. *Háttatal* also uses the noun *runhending*, and the adjective *runhendr*.

Rýnni: ‘writing, runic writing’ (*IGT* 87:5), hapax. Hreinn Benediktsson has discussed this term, suggests it is derived from *rún* but influence bed the adjective *rýnninn* ‘versed in runes’.⁷⁶⁸

Rödd: ‘voice, speech’ (Frequent in *MG*, *IGT* 84:31, 85:28, 86:20; *2GT* 52:10/12/13; *MS* 15:14/22), probably the most standard semantic loan for *vox*.

Samstafa: ‘syllable’ (*IGT* 87:8/12, 88:29, 90:8; *2GT* 62:42, 68:66/68; *MG* 2:1/6-8/10-14, 4:13, 5.1-7/9-20/22/24-28; *MS* 11:7/9-16/27/29-31, 13:3, 14:3-13, 16:4). One of the

⁷⁶⁷ Males 2016, 266, note 13.

⁷⁶⁸ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 224-5.

most universal terms, does not seem to have any other term which it varies with. Appears three times outside the grammatical treatises, in the encyclopedic texts AM 624 4to and AM 727 I 4to.

Samstafligr: ‘syllabic’ (*MG* 5:29-30), in both instances describing the idea of syllabic voice, *samstaflig rödd*. Appears nowhere else in the ONP.

Sameiginligr: ‘common’ (*MG* 6.5; *MS* 12:10, 16:28) in the sense of a common noun, i.e. not a proper noun. Fairly frequent word, 36 entries in the ONP. though appears primarily in religious and translated words, so may be a semantic loan.

Sannkenning: ‘true kenning, literal description’ (*H* 3:9, 4:9/11/12/18/21, 5:9-11, 6:2; *S* 107:13/26; *MS* 15:28-9, 16:41), appears in no other texts in the ONP. In *Skáldskaparmál*, a *sannkenning* is a description of a person in terms of their qualities, essentially replacing their name with a noun or epithet that describes them, and is presented as more or less synonymous with *viðkenning* and *fornafn*. In *Háttatal* the emphasis is on adjectives or adverbs that affirm or intensive an idea, and it presents further categories when multiple such terms are used together. The definition of *epitheton* in *MS*, the use of another word rather than a proper name/noun, is said to be called *sannkenning*,⁷⁶⁹ and this fits fairly well with the definitions in *Háttatal* and *Skáldskaparmál*.⁷⁷⁰ The *MS* also defines *sannkenning* as a type of *metaphora*, however, using the example of calling a man by the name of a god, and the verse example has a genitive modifier, so it is possible that the distinction between *sannkenning* and *kenning* is being obscured in this passage. Ólsen has attempted to distinguish between the older and younger usages of *sannkenning*, but this is highly speculative.⁷⁷¹ The verb

⁷⁶⁹ Clunies Ross points out that it is unclear whether only *epitheton* or both *epitheton* and *antonomasia* are being referenced in the other major mention of *sannkenning* in the *3GT* (Clunies Ross 1987, 78), but the context of the reference, and the phrase *í öllum þeim hætti* used instead is simply *með þeim hætti*, seems to suggest that more than just *epitheton* is being spoken of.

⁷⁷⁰ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 108. The *MS*'s definition translates Donatus' definition word-for-word: “Epitheton est praeposita dictio proprio nomini.” (Keil, ed., 1855-80, vol. IV, 400), and fits quite neatly with *Háttatal*, except that Snorri does not require a *sannkenning* to apply to a proper noun there: “Þar er sannkenning at styðja svá orðit með sǫnnu efni, svá at kall stinn sárin” (Faulkes, ed., 2007(c), 6) (*It is a true description to support thus the word with true matter, such as to call a wound heavy*). *Skáldskaparmál* does, however, implicitly suggest proper nouns (Faulkes, ed., 2007(a), 107), and even though the *MS* defines *epitheton* as involving a proper noun, his examples do not all involve proper nouns. The term thus seems potentially variable on both the *3GT* and *Snorra Edda*, with each acknowledging that variability, while suggesting that it is perhaps preferable when it refers to a proper noun.

⁷⁷¹ Ólsen, ed. 1884, 320-21.

sannkenna also appears once in *Háttatal* and in *Alexanders saga*.

Skáldskapar: ‘poetry, poetics’ (Frequent in *MS*, *S*; *H* 0:4, *MG* 5:5, *4GT* 8:13). While the *MG* usually uses this with the prefix *norrænu*, and once with *látínu*, in the *MS* it is often used to describe Norse poetics on its own, in contrast with *vers* being used to represent Latin poetics.

Skáldskapargrein: ‘distinction of poetics’ (*MS* 11:17), hapax, used to describe *ofljóst*. Ólsen defines this as a term for a poetic figure, and it may be an attempt at referring to those aspects of Norse terminology which are not understood as a *hátttr* ‘metre’, or perhaps a gloss of *figúra*.

Skáldskaparhátttr: ‘metre of poetry, method of composing’ (*4GT* 40:26), also used once in a late manuscript of *Piðreks saga af Bern*.

Skiptingr: ‘variable’ (*2GT* 62:41) used in a singular sense in the *2GT* to describe the noun/vowel variation between i/j, possibly coined by *SGT* author. Common term in other senses.

Skothending: ‘Half-rhyme’ (Frequent in *H*; *MG* 5:6; *MS* 14:13), *Háttatal* also uses the variant form *skothenda*.

Spakmæli: ‘wise sayings, wisdom’ (*3GT* 16:75), also appears once in *Magús saga jarls*.

Stafasetning: ‘position/arrangement of letters’ (*H* 0:28, 1:9; 1:25, 1:27; *2GT* 72:70, 74:80; *MG* 5:1). The compound *stafasetningarregla* also appears as a gloss on Lat. *orthographia* in the *Prologue*. No other appearances in the ONP.

Stafatala: ‘number of letters’ (*MG* 5:2), one of the four characteristics of the syllable described in the *MG*. Hapax.

Stafr: ‘letter, character’ (Frequent in *IGT*, *2GT*, *MG*, *MS*, *H*; *4GT* 20:2, 34:11), standard term for a letter or character, also capable of referring to the sound of a letter. Cf. *létr*, *málstafr*, *bókstafr*, *rúnastafr*.

Stafróf: ‘alphabet, runic alphabet’ (Frequent in *IGT*; *MG* 3.6/17-19, 5:21; *P*), 15 total appearances in the ONP. Cf. *Látínustafróf*.

Stál: a metrical figure, an ‘inlaid, parenthetical statement’ (*H* 12:12; *MS* 15:17). In the

MS in the section on *moytacismus*, or words connecting into each other through the overuse of ‘m’, the treatise notes when this occurs between rhyming syllables, it is called *dregit á stál*. *Stál* normally refers to an intercalary phrases inserted into another sentence within a verse, and it is unclear what the sense is here. Cf. *stæltr*, *stæla*.

Stef: ‘refrain’ (*H* 70:12/15, 81:5; *4GT* 16:3/4/23, *5GT*).

Stórkvæði: ‘grand poem’ (*4GT* 20:3), hapax.

Stuðill: ‘support, alliterating letter’, used in the odd lines of verse (*H* 1:14/15/21, 28:11, 31:10, 97:10-12; *MG* 5:23 *MS* 14:3, 15:17). In the *MS* The basic terms for alliterating letters in *dróttkvætt*, *stuðill* and *höfuðstafr*, are said to be created or used by *prosthesis*, the addition of a letter or syllable at the beginning of a word, is said to be used to make sure the *stuðlar* are correct in *dróttkvætt*, and thus the Latin term becomes a method for maintaining normal metre. There is a similar relationship with *parhomoeon*, the Latin *figúra* referring to alliteration.⁷⁷²

Stund: ‘tense, quantity, length of time’ (*MG* 2:13-15, 5:11-17, 6:10; *MS* 11:15/16). Cf. *tíð*, *tími*.

Stytttr: ‘short’ (*2GT* 66:53), a participle used to refer to a shortened vowel which is unique to the *SGT*, as elsewhere the adjective *skammr* is used.⁷⁷³

Stæltr: ‘inlaid, intercalated’ (*H* 11:10, 12:1; *MS* 16:55). Cf. *stál*.

Stæla: ‘to include an intercalary phrase’ (*4GT* 24:24, 26:26). Cf. *stál*.

Svipa: a metrical figure, lit. ‘whip’ (*MS* 15:29), when multiple *sannkenningar* are used together without conjunctions, included as a subcategory of *dialyton*, where nouns are joined without conjunction. Cf. *Klauf*.

Talnaskifti: ‘change of number’ (*MS* 12:13 *4GT* 24:13).

Tíð: ‘tense, quantity, length’ (*MG* 5:2/11/30; *MS* 12:8/15; *P*). In the *MG* the term is

⁷⁷² Þæssi figvra ær miðk hofð i malsnilldarlist, ær rethorica hæitir, oc ær hon vphaf til kvæðanndi þeirrar, ær saman helldr norænm skaldskap, sva sæm naglar hallda skipi saman, ær smiðr gerir, ok ferr svndrlavst ælla borð fra borði. sva hællr ok þæssi figvra saman kveðandi iskalldskap með stöfvm þeim ær stvðlar hæita ok hofvðstafir (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 96-7) (*This figure is greatly used in the skill of eloquence, which is called rhetoric, and it is the foundation of that rhythm, which holds together Norse poetics, just as nails which the smith makes hold together a ship, and otherwise board goes from board loosely, thus this figure also holds together the rhythm in poetics with those letters which are called stuðlar and höfuðstafir*).

⁷⁷³ See Raschellà, ed., 1982, 120, for further discussion.

strictly used to refer to the quantity or length of a syllable, while the *Prologue* seems to refer to the length of sound of individual letters. In the *MS*, as accidents of parts of speech are being discussed, *tíð* seems to be referring to verbal tense.

Tími: ‘tense, quantity, length’ (In the former sense in 3GT, latter in 4GT) (*MG* 2:1/4/15; *4GT* 24:6, AM 921 III 4to). In the *MG* *tími* overlaps with *tíð* in the sense of the length of a syllable or speech, once in the specific sense of a unit of time, presumably in the sense of Lat. *mora*, and also in the sense of the length of letters. It appears to be used in the same way in the *Prologue*. In the *4GT* and AM 921 III 4to, on the other hand, *tími* is referring to verbal tense.

Tímaskift: ‘change of tense’ (*4GT* 24:18), the *MS* uses the phrase *tíða skipti* for the same idea, though the phrase *stafa skipti ok tíma* also appears.

Tvífaldan: ‘doubling/repetition’ (*MS* 15:10/13), probably derived from the common adjective *tvífaldr* rather than on any particular Latin word, but still a rare term. Used to define *Anadiplosis*, the doubling of a word. Outside the *MS* only appears in in ONP once, in the fourteenth century *Algorismus* in AM 544 4to.

Undirstafr: ‘sub-letter’ (*2GT* 68:64), a hapax used once in the *2GT* to refer to a sub-category of letters – ð, z, x, and c – which are only to be used after a vowel at the end of a syllable. As with other words unique to the *2GT*, Raschellà suggests that the term may have been invented by the author,⁷⁷⁴ but there is no particular evidence for that. It may just as easily have had wider and older pedagogical usage.

Upphafsstafr: ‘Beginning-letter’ (*H* 1:31/36, 41:12; *MS* 15:16). Used to define *Paronomeon* or alliteration in the *3GT*, used in the same way in *Háttatal*. Only appears in one other place in the ONP, in the sixteenth century encyclopedic text in AM 727 I 4to.

Veldi: ‘power’ (*MG* 3:1), presented as synonymous with *mátt* in describing the power/value of a letter, one of its three core characteristics: *nomen*, *figura*, and *potestas*. This meaning is filled by the term *jartein* in the *1GT*, closely related to its usage of both *atkvæði* and *hljóð*, but with subtle distinctions.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷⁴ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 119.

⁷⁷⁵ Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., 1972, 54-64.

Viðmælt: a metrical figure, lit. ‘spoken-towards’ (*MS* 12:16). Included under solecism involve a change of person, *viðmælt* is said to be when the verse switches into the second person. Hapax. Cf. *hliðmælt*.

Vindandi: ‘use of *venð*’, the runic character for ‘v’ (*MS* 14:4), used in the phrase *vindandin forna* to describe the ancient use of ‘v’ before certain words, which is said to be still prevalent in Danish and German. Ólsen suggests that the noun assumes a verb ‘vinda’ of similar meaning, formed by rune name ‘venð’. Included in the discussion of *apheresis* and *prothesis*, the loss or addition of a letter or syllable from the beginning of a word. Hapax.

Vísa: ‘stanza, strophe’ (Frequent in *H*, *4GT*; *MS* 12:16, 14:13, 15:10/12/25, 16:23; *5GT*), standard word for a single stanza of verse.

Víshelmingr: ‘half-stanza’ (*H* 8:25/27/33, 15:9/11, 39:10, 48:9; *4GT* 26:12/13, 32:11, 38:23). Two other entries in the ONP.

Vísuorð: ‘line of a verse’ (*H* 0:20/22, 1:11-13/28, 17:35, 43:11, 59:10; *MS* 11:9-12, 13:14, 15:4; *4GT* 28:7/8/24, 48:16). Three other entries in the ONP.

Vöxtr: ‘shape’ (*IGT* 84:28, 87:32, 88:21/23/24, 89:1; *MG* 4:1). Very common in non-grammatical use, standard term for the shape or *figura* of a letter in the *IGT*. Used alongside *mynd* in the *MG* as a gloss for *figura* as ‘shape’ or ‘form’.

Þresköldr: a metrical fault, lit. ‘threshold’ (*MS* 13:4), said to be a mistake when the last letter of a word is the same as the first letter of the next word, included as a subcategory of *cacemphaton*.

II. Loan Formulations/Calques

Áblasning: ‘aspiration’ from Lat. *aspiratio* (*3GT* 3:2-4, 5:21/23/29, 11.7/19/20).

Áblásningarnóti: ‘aspiration mark’ from Lat. *nota aspirationis* (*MG* 5:20/22).

Afdrátt: ‘omission/removal’ from Lat. *detractio* (*MS* 11:16). 21 entries in the ONP, mostly in documentary sources, so probably not in the metalinguistic sense. Cf. *Aftekning*.

Afganga: ‘digression’ from Lat. *evagatio* (*4GT* 14:17), 8 entries in the ONP, primarily late religious works. Used in the definition of *Ebasis*, described as a departure from

the subject matter.

Aftekning: ‘omission/removal’ *detractio* (*MS* 11:6/9/10/17//20), the preferred term in the *MS* over *afdrátttr*, but no other entries in the ONP.

Aptrbeiðiligr: ‘reciprocal’ from Lat. *reciprocus* (*MS* 16:22/23), describing a characteristic that *metaphora* can sometimes have. No other instances in the ONP.

Atfelli: ‘accident’ from Lat. *accidens* (*MS* 12:8), only 4 other instances in the ONP, but in its wider meanings of circumstance, procedure, or event, it is synonymous with the much more widely used *atferli*. Both grammatical and wider meanings are synonymous with the even more widely used *tilfelli*.

Boðligr: ‘imperative’ from Lat. *imperativus* (AM 921 III 4to), describing the verbal mood. Only one other entry in the ONP, in the non-grammatical sense of imperative.

Efanleikr: ‘ambiguity’ from Lat. *ambiguitas* (*MS* 13:15). Hapax.

Efanligr: ‘ambiguous’ from Lat. *ambiguus* (*MS* 13:15), 21 entries in the ONP, primarily in late religious texts.

Fornafn: ‘pronoun’ from Lat. *pronomem* (*H* 1:23 *MG* 4:17, 6:4/7), also used in *Skáldskaparmál* as an idea related to *viðkenning/sannkenning* (*S* 5:18; 107:13/28), no other instances in the ONP. Clunies Ross has suggested that the two types of *fornafn* here are connected in that they are used to refer to people, i.e. a thing referred to by proper nouns, and that this is related to the definition of *pronomem* in Priscian and many other grammarians, who present *pronomem* as only being used to replace proper nouns. Thus, Snorri’s distinction between *fornafn*, *kenning*, and normal *heiti* may be influenced by Latin distinctions of proper and common nouns.⁷⁷⁶ This is also key evidence for the existence and dissemination of metalinguistic loan formations well before the composition of the *3GT*.

Framflutning: ‘pronunciation’ from Lat. *pronuntiatio* (*MG* 2:10/15, 4:2, 5:19) (*MS* 11:5). *Framflutning* has 13 other ONP entries, 8 of those instances in Kings’ sagas, in the closely related sense of an utterance or preaching, but also as the maintenance or upkeep of a person or group. The term also appears as a masculine noun, *framflutningr*, in 7 similar contexts and usages.

⁷⁷⁶ Clunies Ross 1987, 64-77.

Framflytja: ‘to pronounce’ from Lat. *pronuntio* (MG 2:14, 5:20; 4GT 40:13/22). Appears once in *Kristinn rétr Árna byksups* in a related sense of ‘to utter’. In the latter use in the 4GT it is shortened to *flytja*, and it is possible the further research could show this to be more widely used in the metalinguistic sense of ‘to pronounce’.

Framføera: to pronounce, from Lat. *proferre* (MG 2:7/11, 5:1). One ONP entry, for *Pamfiluss saga*.

Framfœring: ‘pronunciation’, from Lat. *pronuntiatio* (MG 5:24), but more often used in the sense of ‘transfer’, based on Lat. *translatio*, in the discussion changes of meaning in tropes (MS 16.1/6-8/11/25/46/50/58/62/64/69). No other ONP entries, but the similar term *framfœri* appears 12 times in 15th century diplomas, always with *æfinligr* in the sense ‘everlasting furtherance’, which appears to be a late development of the term unrelated to its Latin roots.

Framskapan: ‘transformation’ from Lat. *transformatio* (MS 14:1), used in the definition of *metaplasms* as the transformation of normal speech into another form, for the sake of necessity or ornament. Hapax.

Fullokinn: used in the phrase *liðinn tími framarr en fullokinn tími* ‘past pluperfect tense’, from Latin *tempus plusquamperfectum*. (AM 921 III 4to).

Fyrirsetning: ‘preposition’ from Lat. *praepositio* (MG 6:4/12; MS 12:7, 16:53; 4GT 2:9). Appear in two later manuscripts of *Stjorn* and *Æfintýri*, and once in the masculine form *Fyrirsetningr* in *Nikuláss saga af Tólentínó*. The usage in *Stjorn* appears to be based rather on *propositio*, in the set phrase *propositionis pane*, ‘shew-bread’. The other two usages are synonymous with the normal usage of *setningr*.

Gæfiligr: ‘dative’ from Lat. *Dativus* (MS 12:14).

Hálfraddarstafr: ‘semi-vowel’ from Lat. *semivocalis* (MG 3:16, 4:11/18). Hapax.

Hluttekning: ‘participle’ from Lat. *participium* or *participatio* (MG 6:4/10), with a wider usage in intellectual and educational topics that appears to be based on Latin words related to *participium*: two uses in *Algorismus* (AM 544 4to c. 1302-1310) in the sense of ‘proportion’; one use in the fourteenth century part of GKS 1812 4to, in the same mathematical sense. Three uses appear in theological and hagiographic texts in the more

general sense of ‘partaking’, and another in a fifteenth century diploma in the same sense, related and juxtaposed to the widely used term *hlutakeri* ‘partaker’.

Hvárginligr: ‘neuter’ from Lat. *neuter* (*MS* 12:12).

Hvílgleikr: ‘quality’, from Lat. *qualitas* (*MG* 6:5; *MS* 12:8/10) an idea related to the distinction between proper and common nouns.⁷⁷⁷ Its distribution appears quite similar to *hluttekning*: it appears twice in *Algorismus* (*AM* 544 4to c. 1302-1310), in the sense of the ‘quality’ of elements, and three times in theological texts in the general sense of the English ‘quality’.

Höfuðskepna: ‘element’ from Lat. *elementum* (*MG* 1:6, 2:4/5). In the first two appearances in the *MG* the term is used in the commonly understood idea of an element, referring to the elements of wind, water, and fire. In the third reference in *MG* 2:5, however, it is used alongside *stafr* to directly gloss *elementum* in its grammatical sense, the philosophical definition of a letter. The term is widely used in learned and theological works, with 43 references in the ONP going back to the earliest manuscripts like the *Icelandic Homily Book* and *Elucidarius*. While Wills does not appear to treat *höfuðskepna* as a loan formation,⁷⁷⁸ its literal definition of “chief/cardinal form” communicates the wider idea of *elementum* as a rudimentary thing, an original principle, and it does not seem to be used in any sense except as a translation of *elementum*. If it is in fact a loan formation, it would be one of the most widespread of the highly technical, specialized loan formations in the corpus.

Liðinn: ‘past, preterite’ from Lat. *praeteritus* (*4GT* 20:23, *AM* 921 III 4to). It is ambiguous whether the use in the *4GT* should be thought of in a metalinguistic sense.

Lokinn: ‘perfect’ from Lat. *perfectus* (*AM* 921 III 4to), in the sense of the verbal tense.

Máslöstr: ‘fault of speech’ from Lat. *vitium orationis* (*MS* 11:2, 12:2). Hapax.

Málspartr: ‘part of speech’ from Lat. *pars orationis* (*MS* 12:6/8). Hapax.

Meðalsettr: ‘intercalate’ from Lat. *interponere* (*MS* 16:54). Hapax. The use of a loan formation here is interesting, considering that the idea of an intercalated phrase has the

⁷⁷⁷ Law 1996, 291.

⁷⁷⁸ Wills, ed., 2001, 102.

participle *stælt* and the noun *stál* to describe it. Presumably the term functions both to more precisely translate the Latin and to avoid, in the general definition of the figure of *parenthesis*, the specifically metrical idea of *stælt*.

Meðalorpning: ‘interjection’ from Lat. *interiectio* (*MG* 6:4/13), described as one of the eight parts of speech. No other appearances in the ONP.

Neiting: ‘negation’ from Lat. *negatio* (*4GT* 4:8), used in the sense of a negative or negating phrase. At least nine other instances, only in homiletic or translated hagiographic contexts, so seems much more likely to be a loan formation than semantic loan, though it cannot be certain.

Nefniligr: ‘nominative’, from Lat. *nominativus* (*4GT* 24:12). The same adjective is used in one sixteenth century diploma, possibly in the sense of ‘named’. The adverb *nefniliga* appears twelve times in the ONP in religious works, translated sagas, bishops’ sagas, and documents, in the sense of ‘by name’ or ‘namely’.

Neitiligr: ‘negative’ from Lat. *negativus* (*MS* 13:17). Hapax.

Óhræriligr: ‘immovable’ from Lat. *immobilis* (*MG* 1:5/7-8) referring to immovable things in the discussion of the way different objects create sound

Ólokinn: ‘imperfect’ from Lat. *imperfectus* (*AM* 921 III 4to), in the sense of the imperfect tense.

Óritanligr: ‘illiterate, unwritable’ from Lat. *illiteratus* (*MG* 1:15-16). Wills labels this as a normal translation or semantic loan,⁷⁷⁹ but considering it parallels the structure of Lat. *illiteratus*, and the ONP gives it as a hapax, it seems more likely to be a loan formation.

Óskiptligr: ‘indivisible’ from Lat. *individuus* (*MG* 2:1-2/4, *4GT* 12:28, 14:5, 46:7), 27 total entries in the ONP, entirely religious texts, but going back to late twelfth-century *Elucidarius*.

Óvorðinn: ‘future’ from Lat. *futurus* (*AM* 921 III 4to), 50 entries in the ONP under the spelling *óvorðinn*, unusually frequent use among early religious translations. Lacking a native future tense, *óvorðinn* is a negative of the past participle of *verða* ‘to happen’ and means literally ‘unhappened. Modern Icelandic describes the future tense using the noun

⁷⁷⁹ Wills, ed., 2001, 103

framtið.

Raddarstafr: ‘vowel’ from Lat. *vocalis littera* (Frequent in *IGT*, *MG*; *MS* 11:25-28, 14:13/14; *P*; *5GT*), no other entries in the ONP. The *IGT* also uses shortened form *rödd*. Cf. *hljóðstafr*, which Raschellà argues comes from the pre-Christian runic metalanguage.⁷⁸⁰

Ritanligr: ‘literate, writeable’ from Lat. *litteratus* (*MG* 1:15/17). One other entry in the ONP, in *Jóns saga Baptista*. Cf. *stafligr*.

Røgiligr: ‘accusative’ from Lat. *accusativus* (*MS* 12:14, 13:15; *4GT* 24:12). No other entries in the ONP.

Samanhlaðinn: ‘connected’ from Lat. *constructus* (*MG* 6:1, *MS* 15:20), appears perfectly synonymous with the vastly more common *samansettr*, and in the *MG* *samanhlaðinn* is only used in the *W* version. No entries in the ONP.

Samanhlaðning: ‘piling together’, from Lat. *constructio* (*MS* 13:15), a hapax referring to a gathering together of words. No other entries in the ONP.

Samanlíming: ‘coglutination’ from Lat. *conjunctio* (*MG* 4:13/15). No other entries in the ONP.

Samanlostning: ‘collision’ from Lat. *collisio* (*MS* 11:24), in the context of letters being placed alongside each other. Hapax.

Samansafnanligr: ‘collective’ from Lat. *collectivus* (*MS* 15:7) in the sense of a collective noun. However, it is also said to be a type of *syllipsis*, when multiple clauses use a single verb, and the *3GT* further notes that it is rare in Norse poetics.⁷⁸¹ The term appears to be unique, but the related loan formation *samansafning*, presumably based on *collectio*, also appears once in the sixteenth century Icelandic version of the Psalter, so there may make a connection to wider glossing language.

Samansetning: ‘ordering, sequence’ from Lat. *compositio* (*MG* 4:16; *MS* 11:22, 13:14) referring potentially to either letters or words. No other entries in the ONP.

Samhljóðun: ‘consonance, harmony’ from Lat. *consonantia* (*MG* 1.9), used in a philosophical context. Also appears once in *Jóns saga Helga* and once in *Stjórn* in a more

⁷⁸⁰ Raschellà, ed., 1982, 115-17.

⁷⁸¹ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 92-3.

basic musical sense. The verb *samhljóða* also has 11 ONP entries in late religious texts.

Samhljóðandi: ‘consonant’ from Lat. *consonans* (*IGT* 84:18/20/23, 86:22/32, 87:16/19/25/26/32, 88:2/6, 89:9/10/19/29, 90:7/8; *MG* 3.5/15-18, 4.19/22, 5.3-4/6-7/12/15-6/27; *MS* 11.30; *H* 1:15, 32:11). Contrast with the *2GT*’s use of *málstafr*. One of the very few loan formations used in *Háttatal*. No other entries in the ONP.

Samjafnanligr: ‘comparative’ from Lat. *comparativus* (*MS* 12:11). Unique term in the ONP, but the verb *samjafna* does have eight instances listed, primarily in hagiography and glosses, with one instance in a document and one in *Sverris saga*.

Samjöfnun: ‘comparison’ from Lat. *comparatio*, in a general sense (*MS* 16:7/66/67/73) and in a specifically grammatical one (*MS* 12:8/11), in the sense of comparison as one of the accidents of the parts of speech. Five other entries in the ONP.

Samokan: ‘conjugation’ from Lat. *conjugatio* (*MS* 12:8) referring to the conjugation of a verb. Hapax.

Samtengiligr: ‘conjunctive’ from Lat. *conjunctivus* (*AM* 921 III 4to), referring to *conjunctivus modus*, another term for the subjunctive mood. Hapax, but the verb *samtengja* is quite common, with over 100 ONP entries, but almost entirely in religious texts.

Samtenging: ‘conjunction’ from Lat. *conjunctio* (*MG* 6:4/11; *MS* 11:24, 15:26/27), referring most often to the type of word, but once in *MS* 11:24 in the more general sense of ‘connection’, in which sense it appears in a handful of other translated and religious texts. Cf. *samtengiligr*.

Settligr: ‘positive’ from Lat. *positivus* (*MS* 12:11), referring to positive nouns, in contrast to comparative nouns, in the medieval sense where adjectives are considered a form of noun. Also appears in *Alexanders saga* in a non-grammatical sense.

Snúning: ‘transposition’ from Lat. *transmutatio* (*MS* 11:14), used in the section on barbarism to describe the transposition of letters. Only 13 examples in the ONP, in religious texts, but it is possible that it is a semantic loan rather than a loan formation.

Stafligr: ‘literate, writeable’ from Lat. *litteratus* (*MG* 2:1/5), no other ONP entries. Cf. *ritanligr*.

Sögn: ‘word, noun’ from Lat. *dictio* (Frequent in *MG* and *MS*), possible more a

semantic loan than a loan formation, but notable in that it only appears in the grammatical sense of ‘word’ or ‘noun’ in the *3GT*, in stark contrast to modern Icelandic where it can mean ‘verb’. Its wider usage, indicated something which has been said, also fits with the meaning of *dictio*.

Tilfelli: ‘accident’ from Lat. *accidens* (Frequent in *MG*, *MS*, and *4GT*), describing a noun, an essential grammatical idea which can refer to the characteristics, actions, or circumstances of something. A very common term, and unclear whether it should be treated as semantic loan or loan formation, though the fact that it only appears in the translated treatises, and appears to closely match the semantic range of the Lat. *accidens*, makes loan formation seem likely. Cf. *atfelli/atferli*.

Tvihiljóðr: diphthong from Lat. *diphthongus* (*MG* 4:12). Hapax.

Umbeygiligr: ‘circumflex’ from Lat. *circumflexus* (*MG* 2:6/9, 3:3, 5:25/28; *MS* 11:9/17; *P*). No other entries in the ONP.

Umsnúinn: ‘turned about, transposed’, from Lat. *transverto/transmuto* (*3GT* 16:53), 12 entries in the ONP for the verb *umsnúa*.

Umdrátt: ‘assumption, use’ from Lat. *usurpatio* (*3GT* 16:24), where *Catachresis*, the misuse of an inappropriate noun, is glossed as *umdrátt annarlígs nafns*. While not technically a metalinguistic term, this is the only place *umdrátt* is used, and it unclear whether it should be treated as a semantic loan or loan formation.

Umkringingarmál: ‘circumlocution’ from Lat. *circumlocutio* (*MS* 16:47), and the Latin term itself is given as a direct translation of the figure *periphrasis*. Hapax.

Umsnúning: ‘transposition’ from Lat. *transmutatio* (*MS* 11:6, 12:4), concerning types of barbarism and then types of solecism. Two other entries, in *Pétrs saga postula* and *Magnúss saga Eyjajarls*.

Undirstaðligr:⁷⁸² ‘substantive’ from Lat. *substantivus* (*MG* 6:9, *MS* 9:7, 16:40), or from *substantialis* (*4GT* 18:3). In the former sense, describes a substantive, i.e. a noun or adjective. In the latter sense, it is used in contrast to *hræriligr* ‘changeable’ in the *4GT*.

⁷⁸² As Ólsen’s glossary shows, there is signification variation the stem vowel of this term: *undirstaðlingr*, *undirstæðligr*, *undirstøðligr*, but also *undirstøðuligr*. There is no indication that these represent different terms or ideas.

Appears once in the *substantialis* sense in AM 672 4to, in a fifteenth century theological text.

Viðleggjanligr: ‘adjectival’ from Lat. *adjectivus* (MG 6:9; MS 16:40). No other entries in the ONP.

Viðrorð: ‘adverb’ from Lat. *adverbium* (MG 6:4/9; MS 12:6, 13:17, 14:13). No other entries in the ONP.

Uppnumning: ‘taking up’ from Lat. *praesumptio* (3GT 15:4), used to describe the figure of *prolepsis* as the ‘taking up’ of plural things by singular verbs. 21 total ONP entries, but primarily in the religious sense of ‘assumption’. Not a metalinguistic term, but potentially interesting if it represents a variance of meaning between religious writing and other uses.

Yfiringanga: ‘exceeding’ from Lat. *excessio*, (3GT 16:48), used in the definition of *hyperbole* as the exceeding of the truth beyond what is credible. Only two other ONP entries, for the *Icelandic Homily Book* and the translation of Alcuin’s *De virtutibus and vitiis*.

Yfirstigning: ‘conversion, transformation’ from Lat. *transscensio* (MS 16:49). *Yfirstigning orðanna/transscensio verborum* is the basic definition of the figure *hyperbaton*. Ólsen argues that Óláfr Þorðarson seems to have not really understood the Latin word,⁷⁸³ but there is nothing about it which does not appear like a normal calque. Appears in only one other place, in the *Icelandic Hómily Book*, which, notably, is earlier than the 3GT, so the word cannot be original to the 3GT.

Æskiligr: ‘optative’ from Lat. *optativus* (AM 921 III 4to). Literally ‘wishfully’, referring to the verbal mood used to express a wish.

Polandi: ‘passive’ from Lat. *patiens* (4GT 6:21/22), as in the passive mood. No other ONP entries.

III. Loanwords

Consonancia: ‘consonance’ from Lat. *consonantia* (MG 5:9), described in the MG as a form of rhyme wherein the vowel of the final syllable of the words is the same. It is

⁷⁸³ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 327.

contrasted with the several forms of ON *hendingar*. It is interesting that the Latin term is preserved, un glossed, when *samhljóðun* is used elsewhere in the treatise to translate *consonantia*, though in a different sense.

Dikta: ‘to speak, dictate recite poetry’ from Lat. *dictare* (*MG* 5:7). Appears in the *MG* only in the *Codex Wormianus* AM 242 fol version. Widely used, over a hundred instances in the ONP, but primarily in hagiography.

Diphthongus: ‘diphthong’ from Lat. *diphthongus* (*MG* 4:12-14/16-17), glossed once by *tvihljóðr*, but elsewhere functions on its own as a loanword. This seems to create a contrast within the *MG* of *diphthongus* referring to a diphthong or ligature in the Latin alphabet, while the native term *límingarstafr* refers to runic diphthongs. No term appears in the *IGT*, *límingarstafr* is used in the *4GT*, and the *2GT* with its usual distinctiveness uses the shorted *límingar* and the hapax *lausaklofi*.

Elementa: ‘element’ from Lat. (*MG* 2:5). Cf. *höfuðskepna*.

Fígúra: ‘figure’ from Lat. *figura*, in the sense of a ‘figure of speech’ or ‘trope’ (frequent throughout *MS* and *4GT*), but also in the sense of a ‘shape’ or ‘form’ of a letter (*MG* 3:1, 4:1/3). In the sense of a figure of speech, *figúra* has a high complex and broad range.⁷⁸⁴ poetic devices like metaplasms, schema, tropes, other linguistic faults and virtues, even arguable overlapping with *hátr* and capable of referring to metres. In the context of theology and hagiography, *figúra* often refers to a symbol or a typological or allegorical sign, potentially referring both to the abstract symbol itself as well as the obfuscating language used to communicate it. In this way the theological and hagiographic usage is connected to some of the grammatical and rhetorical usages, in that both can refer to obscure or somehow veiled significations. It can also refer to drawn figures used in, such as those in computistical or magical texts, to numerals, and in its most general sense to the shape or form of anything. The version of the term in the *MG* matches this numerical usage, and it overlaps with the usage of the terms *líkneski* and *vöxtr* in the *IGT*, which suggests that it may be a late twelfth or early thirteenth century loan. There are 57 entries for *figúra* in the ONP, plus a single

⁷⁸⁴ While in the original text of the *Barbarismus* the Latin term *figura* is not used in this way, by the time of the writing of the *3GT* it had taken on a much broader and more encompassing meaning, more in line with the usage of the ON loanword (Clunies Ross 1987, 37)

verbal use. The majority of uses in computistical texts and in translated hagiography.

Glósa: ‘gloss, explanation’ from Lat. *glos(s)a* (4GT 20:14, 38:23), also stated to be a synonym of *efflexegetis*.⁷⁸⁵ Notable in that while it does not appear in the 3GT, it has a relatively wide distribution otherwise, with 34 entries in the ONP. Its strict metalinguistic sense, an actual textual gloss, does actually appear in some of these other texts, particularly in authorial comments within late hagiography, alongside the more general idea of an explanation. Alternate form *glósan* has three appearances in the same texts, while related adjective *glósulauss* appears once in *Jóns saga postula*. Form the most part *glósa* appears to be used in the context of the fourteenth century florid style of hagiography, but its appearance in the *Konungs skuggsjá* suggest it was adapted in the thirteenth century, at least in Norway.

Glósa: ‘to gloss, explain’ from Lat. *glosa* (4GT 20:15, 38:23). The verb *glósa* has a wide distribution similar to the noun form, with 25 entries in the ONP, but also does not appear in any other grammatical treatise. The more metalinguistic sense of the word, to write or compose a gloss, like the noun *glósa* appears in religious works. Also appears twice in the alternate form *glosera*.

Klausu: ‘clause, phrase, sentence, line’ from Lat. *clausula* (MG 2:1, MS 15:6/11/20/21/24; 4GT 46:11). 33 appearances given in the ONP, primarily in translated hagiography, but also other religious texts, bishops sagas, as well as a few instances in laws and statutes. Like *glósa* and *figúra*, it is notable that a loanword is used for a metalinguistic concept with a wide distribution outside *grammatica*. In the MG, *klausu* appears to be referring to paragraphs or sections of texts into which a chapter of a work can be divided. *Klausu* appears five times the schema chapter in the MS, wherein seems to refer to specific lines of verse. In the 4GT its use matches that of the MG, referring to a prose section of text equivalent to a poetic *vers*, though there it seems to indicate a category of Latin rather than ON writing. These uses contrast to the 1GT, which only uses *vers* to refer to a section of text.

⁷⁸⁵ In the text of the 4GT, the two terms are distinguished by saying that *efflexegetis* glosses or explains a *sanna frásögn* ‘true account’, implying that *efflexegetis* is a more specific form of *glósa*. The editors take the passage at face value and assume that the text is corrupt here, and is failing to distinguish the two terms (Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 91). The example of *efflexegetis* that follows, however, is of Solomon symbolizing the Lord, and his temple symbolizing Christianity, it seems clear that *efflexegetis* is being said here to refer to specifically typological, or at least biblical, interpretations.

No term for clause or sentence appears in the *SGT* except *mál*, which probably refers to a larger and more general unit of speech. In the *MS* the native term *vísuorð* is used frequently to refer to a section of verse, in every instance it is describing the stanza just quoted, and *klausa* may have been used intentionally for its wider semantic range.

Kapituli: ‘chapter’ from Lat. *capitulum* (*MG* 2:1, *4GT* 26:11). 47 references in the ONP, but many of these refer to a cathedral chapter, rather than a body of text, and a large portion seem to be Norwegian.

Látínuskáldskapr ‘Latin poetics’ *MG* 5:9). Hapax.

Látínustafr: ‘Latin letter’ (*IGT* 84:5/7/10/16, 85:1 *MG* 4:7/9). 3 other appearances in the ONP, in the *Icelandic Homily Book*, *Mírmants saga*, and *Kirjalax saga*.

Látínustafróf: ‘Latin alphabet’ (*IGT* 84:18/25, 89:13; *MG* 4:8/12). 3 other appearances in the ONP, in *Breta sögur*, *Veraldar saga*, and the *Flateyjarbók* annals.

Letr: ‘letter’, from Lat. *littera* (*MS* 11:5), not consistent distinction from *stafr*, but further study may indicate some. It is surprising that there is only one appearance in the grammatical treatises, as there are 72 references to the term in the ONP, though also used in the sense of a ‘document’ or ‘piece of writing’. Considering the widespread use of loans in the *3GT*, this may indicate that *letr* was a late borrowing, in the one instance in the *MS* was among its earlier uses.

Letrlist: ‘art/skill of writing’ (*P*). Hapax.

Letrshátr: ‘way/method of writing’ (*P*), also appears once in *Mariú saga*

Nóti: ‘character, mark’ from Lat. *nota* (*MG* 5:21). While *stafr* and *letr* are the common words for letter, *nóti* is used once, in the phrase *nóti áblásningar*, as a variation of the full compound *áblásningarnóti* ‘aspiration-mark’, i.e. ‘h’. Has 6 entries in the ONP in this sense, but 8 in the sense of ‘equal’ or ‘match’.

Nótera: ‘written, represented’ from Lat. *nota* (*MG* 5:27/28), presumably adapted from the loanword *nóti* rather than through any Latin verb, though the variable form *nótai* does appear once in an Icelandic document.

Ordograffia: ‘orthography’ from Lat. *orthographia* (*P*). This is glossed in the *Prologue* by *regla stafasetningar*, but the synonymous term *bókstafasetning* appears once in

the encyclopedic collection AM 764 4to.

Persóna: ‘person’ from Lat. *persona*, used in the technical sense of grammatical person (*MG* 6:7; *MS* 12:8/16, 15:9; *4GT* 8:15, 22:27, 24:3, 36:7) but also in the general sense of person (*MS* 16:66). Very widely used loanword in the latter sense, but largely limited to translated works, hagiography, documents, and learned treatises. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the grammatical understanding of person is always filled by the loanword *persóna*, rather than a term like *maðr*, as there does not appear to be an equally general, neutral native term.

Prepositio: ‘preposition’ from lat. *prepositio* (*4GT* 2:1). Hapax.

Punkta: ‘punctuate’ from Lat. *punctare*, in the sense of divide by punctuation (*3GT* 11:17), but also in the sense of to provide a character with point or dot (*MG* 3:9). Two other ONP references, both documentary. The related term *punktera* appear twice in late hagiography texts.

Punktr: ‘point/dot’ from Lat. *punctum* (*1GT* 85:20), in the sense of a dot set above a character to indicate nasality. Nearly 100 entries in the ONP, primarily late hagiography and encyclopedic texts.

Sen: from Lat. *sententia*⁷⁸⁶ in the sense of ‘thought/consciousness’ (*MG* 1:12), or ‘meaning’ (*MG* 6.1; *MS* 11:17, 13:13), but also in the sense of ‘sentence’ (*MS* 13:9, 16:6/54/60). *Sen* thus represents the three major senses of *sententia*: thought/consciousness, meaning, and sentence. All of these have precise and commonly used Norse equivalents. The *MG* uses it once in the sense of consciousness which distinguishes living things, then again in sense of the meaning which a word has, distinguished from the lack of meaning in a syllable or a letter. In the *MS* it sometimes it refers strictly to a sentence, and is thus essential a synonym for *málsgrein*, sometimes clearly as the meaning of a text, and in one instance it could be interpreted either way, thus suggesting the overlap between the meanings of the term.⁷⁸⁷ Another indication for a distinctive meaning for the word is in the definition for

⁷⁸⁶ Wills identifies the use of the term in the sense of ‘meaning’ as derived from *sensus* (Wills, ed., 2001, but *sententia* can mean both ‘meaning’ and ‘sentence’, and it would make sense for the term to have only been adapted from a single term, rather than

⁷⁸⁷ In that *enigma* could conceivably be an obscured ‘sentence’ or obscured ‘meaning’ (Ólsen, ed., 1884, 114). ‘Sentence’ appears more likely in the context, but this example does show the overlap between these two meanings of *sen* and *sententia*, and thus a potentially useful dimension of the term.

parenthesis, where it is said that a *málsgrein* is set within a divided *seni*,⁷⁸⁸ suggesting some contrast between the two meanings of the words, though the nature of that contrast is unclear. The only use of *sen* outside the 3GT in the ONP is *Árna saga biskups*.

Regla: ‘rule’ from Lat. *regula* (*MS* 12:1, *4GT* 24:22, 26:10, 46:5; *P*). This term is notable in that the idea of a grammatical rule is very general, and overlaps with other key concepts like *figúra* and *hátrr* which describe a pattern or rule governing poetry and composition. At the same time, it contrasts with them, as *hátrr* and *figúra* often describe a deviation from the norm which *regla* describes.

Species: ‘species, kind, type’ from Lat. *species* (*4GT* 26:12/23, 28:10, 38:1). This is one of the strangest terminological aspects of the *4GT*. There are examples like *orthographia* of Latin terms which are treated more like foreign words than loans, but these tend to be used only once and are highly specialized terms. Comparable examples of Latin terms which are not widespread loans, but are used several times in a treatise, are *sen* and *diphthongus*, but *species* is such a general, common idea that there seems even less reason than with *sen* to use a Latin rather than Norse term.

Theologia: ‘theology, Bible, Scripture’ from Lat. *theologia* (*4GT* 36:27, 40:23), another unusual use of a Latin term in the *4GT*, rather than existing loans and native words used to describe scriptural writing.

Tropus/trópi/trópr: ‘trope’ (*3GT* 16:1/2/6-7/56), one of the categories of *figúra* which has particular significance in the *MS* as a *figúra* which creates *óeiginligr* meaning.

Vers: ‘(Latin) poetry, poetics, verse’ from Lat. *versus* (*MG* 2:1, 5:7/0 *MS* 14:10/14, 15:10/12; *4GT* 46:11). Used primarily to indicate Latin poetics as distinct from Norse poetics, represented by *skáldskapr*, but there is the exceptional compound *látínuskáldskapr*. Also seems to be sometimes used contrastively with *visa* to refer to an individual Latin stanza or strophe. 76 entries in the ONP, with an additional 12 of the variant *versi*, but primarily in religious texts, so it seems likely that the implicit reference to Latin poetics is consistent, though it would be worth studying how consistent.

Versagjörð: ‘(Latin) versification’ from Lat. *versificatio* (*MG* 5:17). Three other

⁷⁸⁸ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 112.

entries in the ONP under *versagerð*, in *Jóns saga helga*, *Lárentius saga*, and *Páls saga biskups*.

Appendix 3: Excerpts of Old Norse Commentary on Language Use

I. Merlinusspá

Merl II 94. Þau eru önnur ljóð upp frá þessum;
abbisk eigi auðs berdraugar
bið ek þjóðir þess við þenna brag,
þó at ek mynt hafa mál at hætti
þeim, er spár fyrir spjollum rakði
malmþings hvøtuðr i morgungum stað.

There are other verses after these; let the bearing-rods of riches not be incensed –I ask the people this– against this poem, though I have shaped speech in that manner, which the prophetic instigator of the metal-thing unfolded words in many places.

Merl II 95. Viti bragnar þat, þeir er bók lesa,
hvé at spjollum sé spámanns farit,
ok kynni þat kaldýrs viðum,
hverr fyrða sé framsýnna háttir
mál at rekja, þau er menn vitut.

Men know, those who read this book, how the tales of the prophet have happened, and they teach it to sword-trees, which metre of foreseeing men is to unfold matters, those which men do not know.

Merl II 96. Lesi sálma spjöll; lesi spámanna;
lesi bjartar þeir bækur ok rǫðla
ok finni þat, at inn fróði halr
hefir horskliga hagat spásögu
sem fyri honum fyrðar helgir.

Read the sayings of the psalms; read of the prophets; read those illustrious books and scrolls and discover it, that the learned man has wisely arranged prophecies as holy men before him.

Merl II 98. Segir Daniel drauma sína
margháttaða, merkjum studda;
kvezk hann drjúglic sjá dýr á jörðu,
þau er táknuðu tiggja ríki,
þau er á hauðri hófusk síðan.

Daniel speaks of his multifarious dreams, supported by symbols; he says that he sees many beasts on the earth, those which signify the domains of kings, those who arose later on the earth

Merl II 99. Rekr inn dýri David konungr
margfalda spá, ok mælir svá:
“Fjöll munu fagna ok inn fríði skógr
en skæðar ár skella lófum,
ok dalir ymna drottni sýngja.”

*The worthy king David makes manifold prophecies, and speaks thus:
“Mountains will rejoice and the fair forest and wild rivers clap their hands,
and the dales sing hymns to the Lord.”⁷⁸⁹*

⁷⁸⁹See Psalms 98:8, most notably, and Psalms 96:11-12.

Merl II 100. Hirtisk hólðar at hæða bœkr,
nemi skynsemi ok skili gǫrla
hvat táknat mun i tǫlu þessi;
erat enn liðin ǫll spásaga,
þó eru mǫrgum myrk mál própheta.

*Let men refrain from mocking books; use reason and fully understand what
will be signified in these words; not every prophecy yet comes to pass, words
of prophets are still very murky.*

II. Lilja

97. Veri kátar nú, virða sveitir;
vætti þess, í kvæðis hætti,
varkunni, að verka þenna
vanda eg minnr, en þætti standa.
Varðar mest, að allra orða
undirstaðan sie riettlig fundin,
eigi glögg þó að eddu regla
undan hljóti að víkja stundum.

*Hosts of men, be glad now; I expect this, that they will excuse, that I
execute this poem less well in poetic form than it would seem to merit. It is of
great importance that the right meaning of all words be found, even though
the obscuring rule of the Edda must at times give way.*

98. Sá, er óðinn skal vandan velja,
velr svá mörg í kvæði að selja

hulin fornyrðin; trautt má telja;
tel eg þenna svá skilning dvelja.
Vel því að hier má skýr orð skilja,
skili þjóðir minn ljósan vilja;
tal óbreytiligt veitt að vilja;
vil eg, að kvæðið heiti Lilja.

He who must execute the elaborate poem chooses to put into the verse so many obscure archaisms one can hardly count them; I say that he thus impedes understanding. Because one here can understand clear words well, let people understand my transparent intent, this ordinary speech given freely; I desire that the poem be called 'Lilja'.⁷⁹⁰

III. Guðmundardrápa

77. Líttu mildr á ljóða háttu
ljósa, þá er ek hefí glósat,
drottins vin, þó at dul sé þetta
djarflig mín, af heiðri þínum;
mildur vartu fyrr á foldu,
furðu mætr í lítillæti,
vel þiggjandi sæmd at seggjum,
svá mun enn um verka þenna.⁷⁹¹

Look mildly on the plain verse, friend of the Lord, which I have explained, on account of your honour, though my self-conceit might be bold;

⁷⁹⁰ Clunies Ross, ed., 2007, 672-5.

⁷⁹¹ Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1912-15(b), 460.

*you were mild before on earth, wonderfully excellent in condescension,
accepting honor fully from men, thus let it also be with this work.*

78. Yfirmeisturum mun Eddu listar
allstirður sjá hróður virðaz
þeim er vilja svá grafa ok geyma
grein klókasta fræðibóka;
lofi heilagra líz mér hæfa
ljós ritninga sætra vitni,
en kenningar auka mönnum
engan styrk en fagnað myrkva.⁷⁹²

*This encomium will seem very stiff to the masters of the art of the
Edda, to those who wish to seek out and heed the understanding of the most
clever books of knowledge; plain, fit praise of holy writings is to me sweeter
witness, and kennings add no help for men, but darken joy.*

IV. Guðmundarkvæði

2. Rædda ek lítt við reglur Eddu
ráðin mín, ok kvað ek sem bráðast
vísur þær, er vil ek ei hrósa,
verkin erat sjá mjúkr í kverkum;
stirða hefir ek ár til orða,
ekki má af slíku þekkjaz,
arnar leir hefig yðr at færa,

⁷⁹² Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1912-15(b), 461.

emka ek fróðr hjá skáldum góðum.⁷⁹³

I spoke my wisdom little with the rules of the Edda, and I spoke these verses as soon as possible, which I do not wish to praise, the work is not so supple in the throat; I have a stiff oar for words, [one] may not be pleased by such, eagle's mud⁷⁹⁴ I have brought to you, I am not learned compared to good skalds.

V. Verses and Commentary from the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*

Frá líflausum hlut verðr prosopophia til líflauss hlutar sem segir í Barruk, að sjór og skógr bjugguz í grend, og vildi hvárr annan upp taka. Af því hljóp sandr í sjóinn og eyddi svá hans yfirgang, en logi brendi upp allan skóginn. Hier er svá um kveðið

4GT 16. Grænn kvað viðr á víði

– varð skjúpr í því – djúpan:

“Út man eg rýma [. . .]

ríkis míns af þínu;

betr samir bolr með skrauti

blóms en unnir tómar;

skóg man eg upp yfir ægi

angrlestan rótfesta.”

4GT 17. Vátr kvað marr á móti:

“Man eg vald yfir þier halda;

skal hrís um lög ljósan

⁷⁹³ Finnur Jónsson, ed., 1912-15(b), 372.

⁷⁹⁴ *Arnar leir* refers to bad poetry, based on the myth of the mead of poetry.

– lamið rót er þá – fljóta.’
Sandr luktaði sundum,
sjór fekk af stað ekki,
en sterkr um bol bjarkar
bani hvesse viðar gandi.

Skógr merkir júða, en sjór chaldeos. Þjóðir þær sem eyddu ríki chaldeorum merkja sand, en guðspjallig kienning eldinn, sú er í stað kom lögmáls júða.

Proposopopoeia occurs when something lifeless speaks to another lifeless thing, as it says in Baruch, that the sea and the forest lived close by one another and each wanted to take over the other. For that reason sand rushed into the sea and thus put an end to its transgression, while fire burnt up all the forest. Here this is referred to thus:

The green wood said to the deep sea – in that it was weak – : “I want to expand the . . . of my kingdom from yours; a tree-trunk with ornament of blossom looks better than empty waves. I will fasten a forest upon the sorrow-damaged sea.”

The wet sea spoke in reply: “I will keep power over you, brushwood will float upon the shining sea; the root will then be smashed.” Sand blocked channels, the sea got nothing of the land, but the strong killer of every tree gaped around the birch tree’s trunk.

The forest signifies the Jews, and the sea the Chaldeans. The peoples who destroyed the kingdom of the Chaldeans signify the sand while the evangelical teaching, which supplanted the law of the Jews, signifies the fire.⁷⁹⁵

Emphasis glósar myrkan hlut með öðrum jafnmyrkum hlut eða myrkara, sem hier:

⁷⁹⁵ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 10-13.

4GT 22. Sæll er sienn í milli
siðvendis kvikvenda
mána ranns af mönnum
mildingr, þá er barz hingað,
eða þá er djúpi dorgtúns niða borgar
um hljóðraufar hávar
hátt samþykkið vátta.

Hier eru orð Abbacuch spámanns þau er hann segir Guð dróttin sienn milli siðvendis kvikvenda og í þenna heim komanda, sett í inn fyrra víshelming, en glósa yfir sett sú er Dávið segir undirdjúp vatnanna kalla á annað undirdjúp um þær himinborur sem cataracte kallaz og opnuðuz er Nóaflóð drekti öllum heimi útan þeim mönnum sem í örkinni váru.

Homophesis glosses something obscure by something equally or more obscure, as here:

That blessed prince of the mouse of the moon was seen by men between animals of uprightness, when he was born into this world, or when the deep of the trolling line-field loudly bore witness of concord to the deep across the high sound-crevices of the stronghold of the phases of the moon.

Here are those words of the prophet Habakkuk in which he says that the Lord God coming into this world is seen between beings of good conduct, placed in the first half-stanza, and the explanation is added where David says that the abyss of the waters calls to the other abyss through those openings in the sky which are called cataracts and which were opened when Noah's flood drowned the whole world except those people who were in the ark.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁶ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 38-9.

Birtiz þá fullkomið samþykki lögmálanna, það er þau hafa sín á milli, ef fram eru bornar spásögur heilagra feðra um gietnað og hingaðburð, predikan, pínsl og dauða, upprisu, uppstigning Várs Herra og ástgjöf Heilags Anda og inn efsta dóm og eilíft líf, er í móti beraz vitni af nýju lögmáli, að nær öll þessi stórmerki eru fram komin, en þau sem óorðin eru munu án efa fram koma.

The complete agreement of the laws, that which is between them, is revealed if the prophesies of the holy fathers about the conception and birth, preaching, torture and death, Resurrection, Ascension of Our Lord and the gift of grace of the Holy Spirit and the Last Judgment and eternal life are presented and the testimonies of the new law are held up against them, [then one will see] that almost all these great wonders have occurred while those that have not yet occurred will occur without doubt.⁷⁹⁷

VI. Letter of Grímur on the writing of *Jóns saga Baptista*

Bref Grims prests

Virðuligum herra Runolfi abbota i ueri sender Grímr prestr Quediú. Guðs ok sina sann vinattu.

þes truit ek yðr minniga uera. at þer baðut mik saman lesa or likama heilagra guðspialla lif hins sæla iohannis baptiste. ok setia þar yfer tilheyriligar glosur. lesnar af undirdiupi omeljarum hins mikla Gregorij. augustini. ambrosij ok anara kenni feðra. Nu því at huarki mælti fur mer gnott klerkliga luta. eðr natturu giqf hiartaligra uitzmuna. ne lofligr uitnisburðr fur faranda lifs. ok aðrer voro stormarger miklu betr til þessa starfs fallnir. sá ek ógnva sqk til þers er þer bundut þat mer a hendi. aðra enn þa at þer vnnut mer þers oðrum frammar. sem þer sáð mik oðrum frammar þurfanda. enn þat er aflausn andmarka. ef almattigum Guði ok hans haleita fur Rennara iohanni þætti nockut þess vert fur þenna saman burð. hefer

⁷⁹⁷ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf, eds., 2014, 40-41.

ok nu gert. at brottkastaðum ollum kINROða. vm þenna lut. yðuarn bokskap.

þo at ek vissa a minu uerki mvndu finnazt morg ok stor gørdar lyti. Truir ek at nockurum monnum syniz i morgungum stoðum morg orð yfer sett. þar sem fa standa fur. Gorða ek þvi svo. at þat var yðuart atkuæði at ek birta orð hans með glosum. i anan stað truða ek ef obóckfroðir menn heyrðu hans hin fõgru blom ok hinar myrku figurur. at þeim mvndu þær a þa leið onytsamar. sem gimsteinar ero suinum. ok at betra væri. at lysa hans spasogur. ok skynsemder morgum manni til trubotar. helldr enn at sINA heimskra manna þocka. þeirra sem allt þicker þat langt. er fra cristz kõppum er sagt ok skemtaz framaz með skrõksõgur. J þriðia stað stað syndiz mer sa orskurðr her til heyra at miklum soma miklir luter. af þvi lét ek frammi allt þat er mer þotti af þess dyra manz lofi her til heyriligt. ok þat sem ek truða vitrum monnum mvndu sogu bót i.⁷⁹⁸

þickia vil ek nu biðandi vera. at þer takit þenna saman lestr til skoðanar ok nmbotar. æigi fur anat en þat er þer buðut mer þetta at gera. ok mer syndiz sem þer seeð saker astar ok goðuilia ok visdoms a manligar bóklister ok guðligar Roksemder. til þessa starfs oruger. ok vti muni vera byrgð ǝll skynsamlig aleitni. oss samlendra manna. af þvi avllu sem þer vilit með yðrum skynsemdum ueria. Sua vil ek ok einkannliga biðia at þer æstit þers almattigan Guð fõður. at æigi taka ek fyrer þetta verk pinu saker ofdirfðar. helldr aflausn andmarka fur yfir setu. ok eptirlæti með yðr. ok þott æigi uinniz til þess gipta at ek verða i valdra manna tǝlu vars herra. mega ek þo fur arnaðar orð sæls johannis með domi bersyndugra manna. forðaz bruna heluitis fur makliga ok uiðrkuemiliga iðranar áuõxtu. ok biða sællar vanar. j hinni siðari sealfs drottins tilkuámu. quod ipse peto.

Letter of the priest Grímr

To the worthy lord abbot Runólfur in Veri, the priest Grímr sends the greeting of God and his true friendship.

I believe that you are mindful of this, that you asked me to gather up from the body of the Holy Gospels the life of blessed John the Baptist, and set thereover suitable glosses read

⁷⁹⁸ *DI II*, 1676-7

from the abyss⁷⁹⁹ of the homilies of Gregory the Great, Augustine, Ambrosius, and other learned fathers. Now, because there is prescribed to me neither an abundance of scholarly things, nor the natural gift of hearty sagacity, nor praiseworthy witness-bearing for the passing of life, and there were very many others much better suited for this labour, I press that charge to this, that you commanded it in hand to me, rather than them, because you loved me more than others, as you saw me in need more than others. Yet that is an absolution of flaws, if this seems to almighty God and his lofty forerunner⁸⁰⁰ John at all worthy for this compilation. Your command has also now put all dejection to shame in that respect.

Although I knew many would be pleased with my work and great-minded toward faults, I believe that to many men it might seem many words set over in many places, there where few stand forth.⁸⁰¹ I made this thus, because it was your command that I illuminate His words with glosses. In the second place, I believed if unlettered men heard the fair flower of Him and those murky figures, that those would [be] useless to them thus, just as jewels are to swine, and that it would be better to illuminate his prophecies and reasonings to many men, for reformation in the faith, rather than to heed the opinion of foolish men, those who think all that lengthy, which is spoken about the champions of Christ⁸⁰² and amuse themselves more with fables. In the third place, that opinion seems to me proper,⁸⁰³ that great things are greatly befitting; because of this, I have let forth all that which seemed to me proper praise concerning this noble man here, and that which I believed would seem to wise men bettering in the saga.

I will now be praying that you take this compilation for examination and improvement, not for otherwise than that which you asked me to do, and which, it seems to me, you sowed for the sake of love and goodwill and wisdom in human book-lore and divine reason, to be relied upon for this work, and all reasonable censure of [our country-men] to us will be shut out, from all that which you wish to defend with your own reasoning. Thus will

⁷⁹⁹ *Undirdiupi* seems to be an oddly negative term, perhaps referring to the mess of working through multiple large, difficult commentaries?

⁸⁰⁰ *Fur rennara*, calque on Vulgate Latin term used for John, *praecursor*.

⁸⁰¹ The sense seems to be that it might seem like too much glossing for too little actual text.

⁸⁰² *kristsköppum*, only 1 instance in the ONP, and not this one.

⁸⁰³ Taking *tilheyra* as *tilheyrliga*.

I also ask especially that you ask this of almighty God the father, that for this work I am not tormented because of foolhardiness, rather an absolution of flaws for the glossing, and your indulgence, and although it does not suffice for this gift, that I am in the selected muster of Our Lord, yet because of the intercession of blessed John with men guilty of open sin, I can escape the fire of Hell, because of proper and becoming growth of repentance, and wait for fortunate prospects in the latter coming of the Lord Himself, quod ipse peto.

VII. Epilogue of *Jóns saga Baptista*

Enn hversu megu ver at makligleikum lofa sęlan Johannem, þar sem hinn heilagi Jeronimus hinn hæsti kennari talar sva af einni sottþindri ekkiu, er Paula her, oc fyrir ekkiudom atti sextugfalldan avost: “Þo at allir limir mins likama skiptiz i tungur, ok allir liðir hliodaði með maligri rōdd, mætta ek eigi segia þat, sem makligt væri kroptum Paule ekkia”, hversu megu ver þa tala af kroptum Johannis, þess er skinn með þrennum aureolis, skirlifis oc predicanar oc pislarvættis, þeim er hverr berr hundraðfalldan avost, þar sem ver erum ufroðir oc iðrottalausir oc at rettu mallausir hia þvilikum philosopho, sem var sæll Jeronimus, utan komaz sva at orði: Allir lutir eru meiri oc agætari, hæri oc dyrðarfullari at segia af enum helga Johanne, en þat megi mannlig tunga tina; því at hans goðir lutir hinir smæstu eru margra heilagra manna hinir stærstu oc hinir hæstu.

Hin fegrstu blom hans blezaðrar tungu eru full af skynsemi oc himneskum rōksemðum, oc ma kalla i hans sogu sva morg orðin sem stormerkin, þau er sem hinn feitasti seimr eru, því sætari sem þau eru smæra mulit. Hafa þau sva margfalldan skilning, ef froðir menn lita a þau, at æ oc æ finnz i þeim hulit annat agæti, þa er annat er upp grafit, oc því bið ek alla skynsama menn, at mer varkynni, þo at ek hafa meirr enn einfalliga talat um suma luti; er þar su sok til, at ek truða, ef hans enar myrku figurur eða agætar spasogur væri glosulausar oc neykðar fram bornar, mundi eigi synaz vitrum monnum, sem fyrir ofroðri alðyðu væri brotið brauð vizkunnar, helldr at agætum gimsteinum væri kastað fyrir uskynsaum svin.

Trui ek ok þess lengð munu þeim oskafellda, sem giarnari vilia heyra verallegar

vikinga sǫgur enn agæt verk valdra vigmanna oc kappu hins krossfesta Kristz, en hinum ollum skapfellda, sem með ser kenna nokkun part vandlætis retrrar truar oc astar mannkosta, þeira er hveir ma finna i lifssogu sæls Johannis.⁸⁰⁴

Yet how may we deservedly praise the blessed John, when the holy Jerome, the highest teacher, spoke thus about a sickness-tortured widow, who was called Paula, and for widowhood possessed sixty-fold fruits: "Although all the limbs of my body divide themselves into tongues, and all my joints sound with human voice, I cannot say what might be becoming to the virtue of the widow Paula," how may we speak about the might/virtue of John, who shines with three halos – chastity and preaching and martyrdom – those which each bear a hundred-fold fruits, when we are unlearned and unskilled and rightly speechless in that sort of philosophy, which Jerome was wise [in], yet he expressed himself thus: All parts are greater and more excellent, higher and fuller of glory, to speak of the holy John, than a human tongue can recount, because the smallest of his good parts are the greatest and the highest of many saints.

The fairest flowers of his blessed tongue are full of reason and heavenly authority, and one may thus name many words in his saga as great wonders, those which are like the fattest honey-comb, the sweeter when they are the smaller measure. Those have such manifold meanings, if learned men consider them, that there is always and forever found in them some hidden excellence, when another is discovered, and therefore I ask all reasoning men, that they might excuse me, though I have spoken more than simply about some things. There is that reason for it, that I believe if his obscure figures or renowned prophecies are without explanation⁸⁰⁵ and set forth naked, it would not appear to wise men as if the bread of wisdom was broken before unlearned common people, but rather that excellent gemstones were cast before unreasoning swine.

I also believe these lengths will be unpleasant to those who more eagerly wish to hear wordly sagas of vikings and the famous deeds of the chosen warriors and champions of the

⁸⁰⁴ Unger, ed., 1874, 928-9.

⁸⁰⁵ Perhaps also implicitly in the more textual, grammatical sense of 'without glossing', as in without an inserted textual interpretation.

crucified Christ, but pleasant to all those, who know in themselves some part of the zeal of true belief and love of virtues, those which everyone may find in the life-saga of the blessed John.

VIII. Tveggja Postola saga Jóns og Jacobs

Þessi Apozalipsis reiknaz millum spámanna boka, þott hun hafi gerz i nyiu testamento, þviat hun spaar storliga langt meðr skygnum anda i uvorðna tima, rennandi fyrir ukomnum lutum til afls ok stykingar sannleikinum. Þessi bok er æðri ollum spamanna setningum, sakir þess at hun talar af holldagaðum guðs syni ok hans heilagri kristni ok þar með þeim stormerkium, sem fylld ero ok framkomin i marga staði, hvat er fyrri spaamen sögðu allt i skugga, at verða mundi. Ok sva sem .iiii. guðspioll bera afli aull lögimalsins boðorð ok fyrri setningar, sva gnæfir þessi bok Johannis yfir spamanna ritningar.

Þann hátt ok setning valdi guð verki fyrir munn Johannis, at Apocalipsis hefir i stauðum þungar figurur luktar ok læstar aan nõckurri skyring, en sumstaþar standa þær sva sem glosaðar ok skilianliga skyrþar, hvat er eigi þarnaz haleita forseo sialfrar spekinnar. Til þess ero nõckurar upploknar, at þær gefi lesanda manni val skilia, at allar luktar figurur krefia hann rannsaks ok retrrar skyringar.

En fyrir þa sauk villdi drottinn sin stormerki undir myrkum figurum leynaz láta sva sem ilmanda kiarna, at goðr kristinn maðr helldi þau þij framarr i minni, sem hann fengi þeira skilning með heitari iðn ok meira erfiði, ok af annarri halfu leyndiz þau því sterkligarr fyrir illum manni, sem þau færi lægra ok væri lengra brott born fra alþýðligu orðtaki.⁸⁰⁶

This Apocalypse is counted among the Books of Prophets, although it occurs in the New Testament, because it fortells greatly [and] long with wide open eyes of spirit into times not yet come to pass, steering future things to virtue and supporting the truth. This book is different from all the compositions of the Prophets, because it speaks about the son of God taking flesh, and his holy Christianity, and therewith those great wonders which are fulfilled

⁸⁰⁶ Unger, ed., 1874, 612-13.

and come forth in many places, whatever prophets before said, entirely in shadow, would come to pass. And thus as the four Gospels bring all the Commandments of the Law and earlier rule to virtue, so this book of John rises up over the ancient books of Prophets.

God chose that manner and composition [for] this work, for the mouth of John, that the Apocalypse have in places weighty signs, closed and locked without any explanation, but in some places they stand just as glossed and distinctly explained, what is not lacking the sublime foresight of the sage himself. There are some unlockings for this, that they might allow a man reading to understand well that all locked figures demand of him investigation and correct elucidation.

And for that reason the Lord wished his great wonders to be concealed under obscure figures, like sweet-smelling kernels: that a good Christian man might hold them more in memory, that he might grasp their meaning with more ardent work and more labour, and on the other side they are concealed strongly against an evil man, who might be humbled and be brought further away from common speech.

IX. Prologue of the Codex Wormianus

1. Nv vm hrið hefer sagt verit, huersv kenna skal þa lvti. sem frammi standa i bok þessarí. megv þær kenníngar a margan vegh bræytaz epter þi. sem nv finna ny skaalld ok taka til ok setia reglvr epter ymisligvm bokvm. skal þo æigi at helldr laata þat vnytt vera. sem fornskaalldin hafa fvndit, er efní ok grvndvöllr er allz skaalldzskapar. en æigi skvlyv menn þessum fra sōgnm trva framar en skynsamlígt er. epter þi sem seger i fyrsta lvt bokarennar. með hveriv villvrnar fiqlguðuz, ok af þi hefer hvert skalld set ser reglv. þat sem æigi truði rettlegha. af þi at þeir hvgðv oðin gvð verit hafa. ok alla þa með guð magní, sem hanvm þionvðv, sem hæyra hefer maat imorgvm frasōgnvm þessar bokar.

Enn nv skal lysa hversv nv skaalld ok fræði menn, ok æinkannlega klerkarner, vilia lofaz lááta, hversv kveða skal, ok onyta æigi at helldr þa. sem forner menn hafa framit, vtan þat sem klerklegar bækr banna, þviat þat er nattvrvlígt at menn se nv smasmvklarí sem fræði bækrnar dreifaz nv viðara.

2. laata froðer klerkar hveriar bækr, sem þeir finna. at snara til þeirrar þioðar tvngv. sem i þi landi talaz, sem þa erv þeir – æigi at æins hversv tala skal. helldr ok jamvel hversv hverr stafr hlioðar með lǫngv hlioði eðr skǫmmv. hǫrðv eðr tima eðr þeim sem fyrir hanvm stendr ok epter, sem yðr mvn synt verða i þeim greinvm. sem siðar erv skrifaðar eðter þeirra manna vpp tekinni stafasetningar reglv. sem ver hyggivm vel hafa kvnnat ordograffiam. ok þo at sína figvrv hafi hverr þeirra til sinnar sagnar. þa syniz monnvm aller þeir fagrliga skipat hafa.

hefer hverr sett stafina epter þeirri tvngv sem þeir hafa talað, ok þo at þeirra verk se saman borín, þa bregðr ekki þeirra annars reglv. skal yðr syna hinn fyrsta letrs haatt sva ritinn epter sextan stafa stafrofi i danskri tvngv, epter því sem þoroddr rvna meistari ok ari prestur hinn froði hafa sett i motí latinvm manna stafrófi, er meistari priscianus hefer sett. hafa þeir þi fleiri hlioðs greinner með hverivm raddar staf sem þessi er tnvgan fatalaðri, sva at þat ma vnderstanda með hlioði vmbæygiligv, hvossv ok slíofv, sva at einnar tíðar fall væri i hvarv tveggia stafrofi (3)⁸⁰⁷ til þess at skaldín mætti þa mivkara kveða epter ny fvndinni letr list, enn hafa æigi hvert orðzskríðti, þat sem forskalldin nyttv, en haalfv siðr avka i enn verrvm orðvm en aðr hafa fvndín verit. þviat vandara var þeim að tala, sem ekki hofðv fyrer ser, enn þeim, sem nv hafa ymisligar fręði bękr.

enn vel ma nyta at hafa epter þeim heití ok kenningar æigi lengra reknar enn snori lofar. leiti epter sem vandligaz þeir. sem nv vilía fara at nyivm hattvm skaldskapar. hversv segrst er talat. enn æigi hversv skiott er ort. þviat at því verðr spvrt. hverr kvað. þa er fra liðr. enn æigi hversv lengi var at verit. ok þeir sem nv vilía með nyiv kveða. hafi smasmvgvl ok hvos ok skygn hvgsvnar avgvn. avð sia. hvað yðr er nv synt i þessvm frasǫgnvm.⁸⁰⁸

1. Now it has been said for awhile, how one should learn that thing, which stands forth in this book. Those teachings can vary in many ways according to that which new skálds find and do, and rules they set according to various books. Yet that shall not any the more be made useless, what ancient skálds have found, what material is also the foundation

⁸⁰⁷ Ólsen includes this third chapter division, though he notes it is not included in the manuscripts.

⁸⁰⁸ Ólsen, ed., 1884, 152-5. Ólsen's orthography has been largely followed, but for ease of reading tall-s has been written as 's'.

of all. But men should not believe these accounts more than is rational, according to that which it says in the first part of the book, with which delusion increased in number, and because each skáld who believed correctly has set his own rule, because they thought that Odin had been a God, and all those with divine power who served him, which one is able to hear in many accounts of this book.

But now it shall be illuminated how new skálds and learned men, and particularly clerics, wish to let it be permitted, how one should compose, and not any the more make useless that which ancient men have practised, except that which learned books ban, because it is natural that men now be subtler, as the learned books are now spread out more widely.

2. Wise/learned clerics let each book which they find be translated to the language of their people, which is spoken in that land where they are then. Not only how they should speak, but rather also how one pronounces each written letter with long sound or short, hard or soft, what case or tense each one of them has of itself, or that which stands before and after, as will be shown to you in those distinctions, which are later written, according to the rule of arrangement of letters taken up from those men, who we think have taught orthography well. And although each has their own figures for their own speech, all those still appear to men to have been arranged fairly. Each has set the written letter according to their language which they have spoken, and although their works might be brought together, still none breaks the rule of another of them.

You shall be shown the manner of the first letters, written thus according to the sixteen-letter alphabet in the Danish language, according to that which Þóroddr Runemaster and the priest Ari the wise have compared to the alphabet of Latin men, which master Priscian has established. They have therefore more sound-distinctions with each vowel, as this language is fewer-spoken, so that it can be understood with circumflex, acute, and grave sound, so that there might be a case of a single quantity in each of the two alphabets,⁸⁰⁹ (3)

⁸⁰⁹ I am following Males here in rejecting Ólsen's emendation of *fátalaðri* to *fástafaðri*, but in contrast to Males' argument (Males 2016, 271, note 30), I am suggesting here that it refers to the fact that the sixteenth-character *fupark* has fewer written vowels – four written vowels, in contrast to the five in the Latin alphabet – and thus the runes have more sound-distinctions with each written vowel, i.e. each vowel character can represent a wider number of spoken vowels. As Males notes, the phrase *einari tíðar fall* is unclear, and his complex interpretation regarding the passage using several source texts is possible. I am included to think that it refers to vowel quantity, and is emphasizing that both alphabets are capable of expressing the same vowels with the same

so that the skálds might then be able to compose more easily, according to the newly found art of writing, but do not have any objectionable language, that which ancient skálds made use of, and far less increase in words still worse than before had been found, because it was more difficult for them to compose, because they did not have in front of them, and for them, various learned books, as now they have.

Yet they can well make use of holding those poetic words and kennings, not stretched out longer than Snorri permits. They seek out as carefully as possible, who now wish to deal with the new metres of poetics, how it is composed most beautifully, but not how quickly it is made, because that becomes asked about, who composed, then when time passes, but not how one was busy at it, and those who now wish to compose newly, have subtle and keen and sharp-sighted mental vision, to see what is now shown to you in these narratives/account.

quantity, and the next line may even suggest that the Latin alphabet gives greater capacity for writing skaldic poetry, though such an interpretation is speculative.

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