

Icelandic Scribes: Results of a 2-Year Project

Sheryl McDonald Werronen
The Arnamagnæan Institute

3rd DHN Conference
Helsinki, 7–9 March 2018

KØBENHAVNS UNIVERSITET

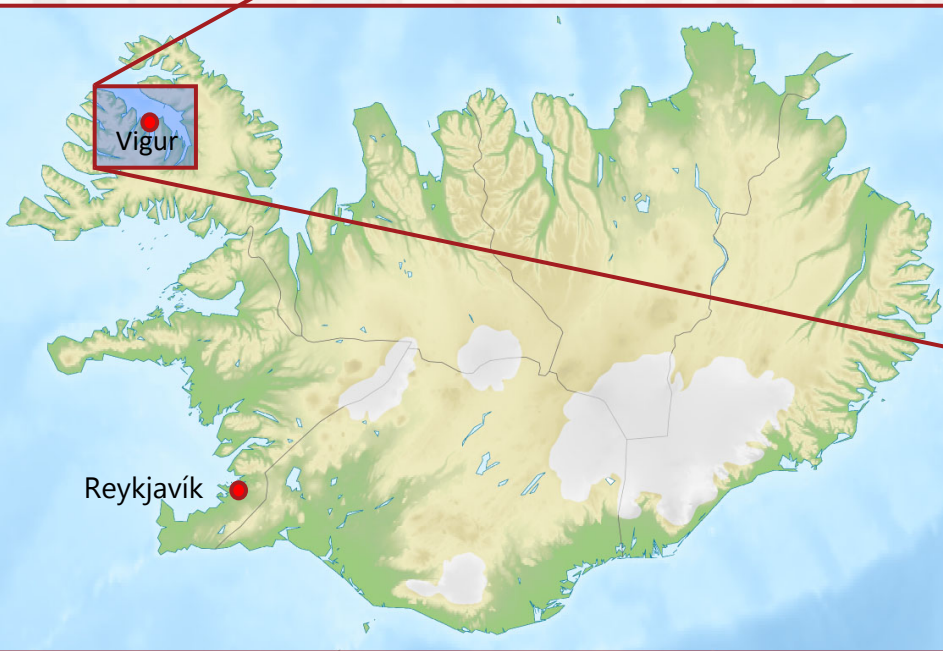


"Icelandic Scribes" project, 2016–2018

- Detailed investigation of the library of Magnús Jónsson í Vigur (1637–1702)
 - Manuscripts
 - Scribes
 - Patron
- Historical focus with digital component
 - Digital catalogue of the manuscript library
 - Detailed information about manuscript contents
 - Linked to existing Old Norse-Icelandic digital resources, when applicable



The island of Vigur



Location of Vigur in the Westfjords

Magnús í Vigur's library

- Hundreds of texts covering a broad range of subjects, preserved in 43 manuscripts
 - many of the manuscripts are impressive luxury objects with aspects modelled on printed books
- Most types of Icelandic literature, as well as foreign texts in translation
 - medieval sagas (prose) and poetry
 - medieval and early modern exempla/short moral tales
 - law texts (mainly medieval)
 - hymns and religious texts (mainly post-Reformation)
 - early modern stories (chapbooks), annals, and chronicles

Digital output: icelandicscribesproject.com

ICELANDIC SCRIBES

Scribal networks in 17th-century Iceland: The patronage of Magnús Jónsson í Vigur

ABOUT PATRON SCRIBES MANUSCRIPTS BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADD. 4857

Manuscript Contents

Sagas in Icelandic

Title page (1r):

Agiætar historiur
Af
Jymsum köngum köngasonumm og
Velbornumm Frægdar mөнnumm
Vtann landz þeirra hreyste ve-
rkumm Og Margföldumm ma-
nndöms Giöringumm sem þe-
ir ä sijnumm Dögum fr-
ømdu, Miög skiemt-
elegar Ad lesa og
Heira, Ei Sydur
Nitsamlegar,
sier Göd Dæ-
me af ad
Draga.
Ad Nyu yfer siednar Og

Copenhagen,
Arnamagnæan Institute

Copenhagen, Royal
Library

London, British Library

Add. 4857

Reykjavík, Árni
Magnússon Institute
for Icelandic Studies

Add. 4859

Add. 4865

Reykjavík, National and
University Library

Add. 4869

Stockholm, National
Library of Sweden

Add. 4867

Add. 4883

Add. 4868

Add. 11,153

Following Icelandic Scribes

NEWS ARCHIVE

January 2018 (1)

RESOURCES

Handrit.org

Stories for all time: The Ice-
landic fornaldarsögur

Tweets by @IcelandScribes



Icelandic Scribes Pro...
@IcelandScribes

Replying to @IcelandScribes

Two of these main scribes were
father and son — Þórður Jónsson
and Jón Þórðarson. Together they
were the most prolific copyists
working for Magnús Jónsson.

- Screenshot from the page for the manuscript London, British Library, Add. 4857, also showing the navigation menu

Existing resources and data duplication

- Large-scale, ongoing multi-institutional digital cataloguing and manuscript digitization project: Handrit.org
 - National and University Library of Iceland
 - Arnamagnæan Manuscript Collection in Reykjavík and Copenhagen
- Small-scale, limited project with digital cataloguing as one of several project priorities: "Stories for all Time"
 - Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen
- Individual, limited projects with digital elements
 - E.g. my "Icelandic Scribes" project and other Uni. Copenhagen postdoc or PhD projects

Benefits of a new, project-specific resource

- Digitally reunites a personal library now housed across institutions in several countries
- Digital catalogue descriptions with special focus on the texts the manuscripts contain
 - Detailed transcriptions of *incipits*, *explicits*, title pages, etc.
- Historical findings on individual manuscripts and scribes
 - Information that puts the individual items into their larger context as parts of a curated early modern library
- Presenting small sets of manuscripts as (historically) cohesive units is not easily possible in existing ON-Icelandic resources with aims simply/primarily to catalogue and/or digitize

Suggestions for future standardization

- Standard identifiers for individual items
 - Texts (different versions ought to be taken into account), genres, authors, scribes, locations, etc.
- Cross-referencing system for various projects/resources
 - To incorporate into existing resources
 - To include in new resources
- Curated website that gathers links to digital projects/resources in Old Norse-Icelandic studies

Conclusions

- Not just an(other) online manuscript catalogue
 - New resource conceptually reuniting the bespoke manuscript library of 17th-century Icelander Magnús Jónsson í Vigur
 - Codicological + historical research results
- Builds on existing data and creates new data for the study of Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts
- Future focus on standardizing and sharing data, as well as some collaboration among digital projects, will strengthen the field

