

Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre

**Páll Ragnar Pálsson**

**Melodies in the Poetry Book of Father Ólafur from Sandar:  
Religious Songs from Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Iceland**

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# **Melodies in the Poetry Book of Father Ólafur from Sandar: Religious Songs from the Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century Iceland**

## **Abstract**

This is a study of melodies in The Poetry Book of Father Ólafur from Sandar (*Kvæðabók sr. Ólafs á Söndum*), a manuscript of poetry and songs from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Iceland. The source investigated in this study is a copy of the manuscript made in 1693 by Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson.

The aim of the work is to make a contemporary transcription of the music and to describe the structure of melodies that have inspired the author of this study as a composer. In the first chapter the source is introduced and the principles of transcription and methods of analysis discussed: which analytical tools should be proper to approach those very simple notations. The next chapter explains the manuscript's historical context with a brief overview of religion and singing in Iceland. In the third chapter the 21 melodies in the manuscript are analysed from different perspectives. The transcriptions form a part of this study and are presented together with facsimile reproductions of the original notations in the appendix.

I describe the process of transcribing the songs and various questions arising in this work. The songs are mostly syllabic and notated in a very simple way without any measure, a black square notehead corresponding to a syllable. Some rhythmic divisions and elaborations, however, demand discussion. The form of the melodies is rather free, largely based on an intuitive logic that deserves special attention. The interpretation of melodies largely depends on the text, one melodic strophe was repeated with numerous stanzas. To explain the structure of verses I offer tables of rhyme patterns, syllabic division, and patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in order to get an overview of the songs' structure. Tonal structure of the melodies is usually based on the tension of moving between the tonal centre (tonic, its third and/or fifth, sometimes lower or upper fourth) and some opposed complex of tones (usually a second up or down of the tonic group).

Although the music is notated, it is largely derived from music of oral heritage and should be studied as such. The notation is merely a set of directions for performing and I have concentrated on finding the songs' inner logic in order to understand them.

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## 1. Introduction

My first acquaintance with the *Poetry Book by Father Ólafur from Sandar* (*Kvæðabók sr. Ólafs á Söndum*) was during my composition studies at the Iceland Academy of the Arts. I took a course in Icelandic music history with Dr. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, who has also later strongly supported my research. I was intrigued by the lack of scholarly attention that the music in the manuscript had received by that time.

The original manuscript of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century no longer exists. Father Ólafur from Sandar (1550–1627) lived in a remote place in the West-Fjords of Iceland called Dýrafjörður. There are several copies of the manuscript made by different writers. I have focused my research on one of them that was made by Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson (1665–1754) in 1693 at Vatnsfjörður in the West-Fjords. This manuscript is at the National and University Library of Iceland, its catalogue number is *ÍB 70 4to*. The manuscript contains 21 songs that make up my main research material.

### 1.1. Problem

I am interested in the musical structure of the melodies that are similar to the melodies of folk songs and notated in a simple way using mostly the means of square notation, but mixing it with some elements of later mensural notation in seemingly free combinations according to the needs of the song texts. The tonal scope and tonal hierarchies, syllabic and formal structures of the songs will be analyzed in order to understand the logic of musical thinking behind them. This logic is presumably an unconscious one. The melodies are not composed in the same manner as we compose music today, but reflect much more spontaneous musical thinking. So, although written down, in many aspects we can observe the heritage of oral tradition and can interpret the notation according to what we know about oral traditions in general and Nordic religious songs in particular.

As said, the songs are mostly syllabic and the melodies are transcribed unmeasured. In the notations we have the melody contour for the first stanza, i.e. the melody-strophe, sometimes with a few rhythmic divisions and melodically embellished syllables. At the same time, the song texts consist of numerous stanzas,

the melody was repeated and, evidently, adapted to the small changes in new verses in the course of singing. Therefore, before proceeding with analysis, I need to discuss the problems of interpreting the notations, transcription of melodies and analytical tools for describing this kind of music.

This interpretation problem along with my wider interest in national heritage, is what attracted me to study the melodies from the Poetry Book of Father Ólafur Jónsson from Sandar. I considered it a good material to work with, not only because the manuscript itself is attractive, beautiful and in good condition, but it also has important cultural meaning. My aim in this study is to introduce myself to the musical thinking of its time.

In my compositions I like to work with the interior mechanism of building up musical structure. I work with small units, such as a few limited interval relations, which I use to build up larger structure elements. My music does not have much vertical structuring, bar lines function merely as a grid for the performers. The overall integrity of a piece is built from the individual free development of linear voices.

Linear continuity is the main characteristic of both my music and the music I am researching. Its structure and the sense of time and relativity – this is the innocence preserved in Iceland for ages while in Europe music making was intellectualized. This is a phenomenon I want to grasp first hand.

## **1.2. Source**

As stated previously, the manuscript that I have used was made in 1693 by Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson, a priest in Vatnsfjörður. The copyist has written on the title page: “First written and composed by the late Father Ólafur Jónsson [...] but now rewritten. In Vatnsfirði in Ísafirði”.<sup>1</sup> Researchers of early Icelandic literature (Bjarnason, Pétursson, Sigurðarson 2006: 9–11) have observed that there are over 150 manuscripts with the poems and songs of Father Ólafur from Sandar, but none is preserved in his original handwriting. When deciding what manuscript to use as their main source they decided on this one because they believe it is copied from the last version that Father Ólafur did and has survived. Researchers of the oldest versions of the songs have established two source chains or stems: one deriving from the oldest

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<sup>1</sup> “Í fyrstu saman skrifuð og orkt af síra Ólafi sáluga Jónssyni [...] en nú að nýju endurskrifuð. Í Vatnsfirði við Ísafjörð”.

known manuscript *139b 4to*, written in 1665, and the other slightly different. The manuscript by Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson belongs to the second stem. In one of the poems Father Ólafur refers to his age, in older copies he mentions being 59 years old while in later copies he refers to himself as 60 years old. Researchers (Bjarnason, Pétursson, Sigurðarson 2006: 9–11) claim that this suggests that he re-wrote the manuscript with corrections. However, it is not my intention to study the provenance of the manuscript since I am focusing, as stated above, on the musical side of it.

Most copies of the book are divided into chapters, the older the copy the more clear division there is. This indicates that the original manuscript probably had a similar division. The manuscript by Father Hjalti has a clear division into seven chapters, each one with a specific theme:

I Hymns and poems on repentance

II Songs and poems of good works, deeds and qualities of men

III Stories from the holy scripture

IV Poems and songs to Jesus Christ

V Spiritual poems on different holy topics

VI Poems for consolation of unfortunate people, poems written for friends, poems written for children as well as other poems on different matters.

VII Poems that were not a part of the original manuscript by Father Ólafur but Father Hjalti has included them since he knew they were written by Ólafur.

A special group of poems in the collection is *Spánverjavísur* (Spanish stanzas) that tell a story about Spanish fishermen, who suffered a shipwreck near the Northernmost part of the West-fjords. They were attacked and killed by a group of Icelanders lead by Ólafur's stepbrother Ari Magnússon. These poems are the only description of these events. The last poem of the manuscript (and in most copies of the manuscript) is *To the reader*, in which Ólafur addresses the reader and explains his intentions while writing the book (Einarsson 1960: 107–108).

The manuscript is written on paper with iii + 112 + v pages (185 mm x 152 mm). Original page numbers are from 1 to 110. Layout is in one column and the text (both, verbal text and music notations) is in a square of 148 mm x 114 mm. The number of verse lines per page ranges between 28 and 36. All the manuscript is written with the same hand: Hjalti Þorsteinsson. The title page is decorated with

fruits, flowers and a bowl in red blue, green and yellow colors. There are many beautiful decorations in the manuscript, e.g. first letters of the poems or the text under the melodies. Notations of melodies are on the pages 3r, 7r–7v, 8r, 11v, 12v, 13r, 18r, 32r, 34v, 38r–38v, 41r, 44v, 48v–49r, 55v, 56v, 59v, 61v, 63r and 73r. The binding is with wooden boards, strapped with brown skin. It is worn out and one of the two buckles is broken. The manuscript has been repaired as possible. Three separate papers are added to the manuscript, where later owners have added some information about it. Inside the manuscript, there are also some references to the owners of the manuscript from different times. In 1857 the manuscript was given to The Icelandic Literary Society and it was kept in Copenhagen until the National and University Library of Iceland purchased it in 1901.

This information accompanies the entire manuscript at the online database of the National and University Library of Iceland: *handrit.is*, searched by the manuscript's shelfmark, ÍB 70 4to (<http://handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/is/IB04-0070> : checked on 22.09.2013). This was of course crucial for me, since I did most of my research living and studying in Estonia. Such an easy access to an important item of national heritage can not be undervalued.

### 1.3. Method

When describing music of a modal and most probably oral vocal tradition from a peripheral place like Iceland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century it is necessary to discuss the terminology and analytical tools. The terms generally used for describing melodies in Western music are not always suitable because of the tonal implications we attach to them and these implications can distract us from understanding the structure of music we are analyzing. In general, the songs belong to the tradition of religious poetry of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the melodies are simple and in many aspects similar to folk songs. We must find a new platform for discussing this music to ensure that the correct meaning is conveyed.

For example, the notations contain different kinds of vertical lines between the phrases. Since most of the melodies don't have any meter, we cannot speak about bar-lines, instead I used the term **vertical lines**. The function of vertical lines is to separate structural segments inside a melody-strophe (lines or smaller units). There are different kinds of vertical lines in the manuscript and so they need to be discussed



separately. Notated melodies correspond to the first **stanza** of the poem and are repeated (probably with small variations) with numerous following stanzas.

Therefore, the melodies we are analyzing are actually **melody-strophes**. The stanza of a poem consists of **verses** (lines) separated with commas and usually a vertical line in the notation coincides with commas in the verbal text under the notated melody. Thus, we call the melodic unit corresponding to one verse a **melody-line**. Mostly, this music is syllabic, i.e. one pitch in the musical notation corresponds to one syllable, some syllables are divided and some more embellished.

We can feel certain ambiguity in performing or transcribing those melodies into modern notation, which is rhythmically much more precise, but in general the key to the rhythm of those songs is in the metrical (prosodic) structure of the corresponding verse. Although in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century the means for rather precise metric/rhythmic notation did exist, the transcriber of those songs evidently did not consider them either necessary or applicable.

Prof. *Urve Lippus* provided me with instructions on how to analyze melodies, based on her theory of linear musical thinking developed in her thesis (Lippus 1995). The aim of this work was to find out “how the melodies could be analyzed to infer tonal, rhythmic, and syntactic structures that define generative processes in this kind of music.” (Lippus 1995: 7). In her work she used many of the concepts of medieval European music, linguistics and quantitative analysis, generalizing them and applying for describing the structure of Baltic–Finnic old melodies. Prof. Lippus found that the Icelandic melodies in my source often seem to follow the same principles she had analyzed and advised me to use similar analytical methods in my research. Before analyzing the melodies, however, I had to transcribe them into modern notation and this process brought about many problems of a different kind.

Keeping all this in mind, I focused on the following:

(1) In **transcribing melodies** I turned attention to the number of lines, clefs, and possible key-signatures. I was then interested in how many and what kind of durational symbols (i.e. the shape and grouping of note-heads and stems) were used and if there was any correlation between the punctuation marks (commas, periods) in the verses and vertical-lines in the musical notation. Also, I wanted to see if there was any correlation between the size of the vertical lines and the level of formal division in the melodic/poetic strophe. The melodies are notated without precise rhythm and that brought up several problems of interpretation, mostly concerning melismatic

movements on one syllable – how fast the movements were sung. Also, there are some melodies that include segments of more differentiated rhythmic notation. In transcribing I tried to find the most appropriate connection between the verse and rhythm.

(2) As for the **structure of song texts** I found it important to analyze the distribution of syllables, stresses and rhymes in the verses and the formal division of the melodic/poetic strophe in order to understand the relations between the verbal text and the melody. In some songs I have analyzed every stanza to see how stable or variable those patterns are.

(3) Further, **formal structure of the melody** is described: Can it be divided into different groups of lines (based on repetition, variation or some other musical feature) or seen as one continuous sequence of different melody-lines? If the melody-lines form some patterns, it is interesting to see whether these correspond to the inner structure of the stanza (e.g. the pattern of rhymed verses).

(4) In the analysis of **tonal structure of the melodies** I have observed intervals, scales, and the role of different scale steps in melodic movement – which tones are used in the beginning and end of the lines and the whole melody (i.e. cadences) and which are prominent high or turning points. Observing the use of the scale steps in a melody, I tried to define the tonal centre and find out whether the centre stayed the same in the whole melody or changed. It was interesting to see how tonal structures support the formal structure of a melodic strophe.

#### **1.4. Literature**

In a collection of articles *Spiritual Folk Singing, Nordic and Baltic Protestant Traditions* (Sass Bak, Nielsen 2006), Nordic and Baltic scholars describe their different national heritage in traditions of religious folk singing. The book gives a good insight into the topic and is accompanied by two CDs with recordings from each of the countries. In his article about traditional hymn singing in Iceland, a Danish folklorist Svend Nielsen gives an excellent introduction to the tradition of hymn singing in Iceland as reflected in the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century folklore collections and later sound recordings. He describes how the hymns have been collected for more than 150 years and how spiritual folk singing is a natural part of Icelandic culture. He also

describes briefly the musical characteristics of folk hymn singing (tempo, rhythm, embellishment, tonality; Nielsen 2006: 254–263).

In the same book Smári Ólason, an Icelandic organist and musicologist whose main research area is old Icelandic music, has published an historical survey of the development of Icelandic music from the Reformation (Ólason 2006) to the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the first publications, musical life in churches, important hymnals and repertoire through the centuries, folk song publications and sound recording in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This article allowed me to delve deeper into the historical background of my research material.

An important book introducing different manuscripts in Iceland is (Sigurðsson, Ólason 2004). This book's articles describe the medieval origin of the manuscripts, their content, and what influence they have had on the developing self-image of the nation. This publication followed an exhibition of the manuscripts at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in 2002. I've used several of the articles from this publication to give the historical background of my study. There are two earlier articles that brought me much closer to my source – Sigurjón Einarsson's survey of the life and poetry of Father Ólafur á Söndum (Einarsson 1960) and Dr. Róbert Abraham Ottósson's study of one song that is represented also in my source *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (Hear Thou us in Heaven) (Ottósson 1969). These are the most important among numerous articles I've read during my research and they have helped me to shape my own work and to think about it in its cultural context.

## **1.5. Current research**

One of the key figures in the present-day Icelandic musicology is Dr. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, whose thesis at Harvard University was on the subject of *tvísöngur* – two-part religious and secular singing. This is a tradition that has both written and oral sources in Iceland (Ingólfsson 2003). He has researched and lectured on Icelandic musical heritage for years and has also performed this music as a conductor.

Concerning earlier research on my current topic I did not rely only on published investigations, but also interviewed him directly, asking questions about the source of my study and about Icelandic manuscript research in general. He instructed me to consider always the relativity of notes in a manuscript notation. These were intended for singers merely for them to take as instructions on how to perform some

particular song, but the song and singing tradition itself was inherited through oral vocal tradition. Also, he encouraged me sometimes to rely on my own musical instinct to solve problematic passages in old manuscript notation.

Another interview was conducted with Sigurður Halldórsson, a researcher of Icelandic and European music as well as a performer of old music with a group of singers Voces Thules. Since 1992, Voces Thules have specialized in performing music of the middle ages as well as new compositions. His opinion of my source material was that most of the notations are unmeasured like the notation of Gregorian chant, but in some melodies both versions of notation (note-shapes of measured system) are used. He explained that this can be related to the origin of a melody: sometimes a melody in some Icelandic source has been traced back to a polyphonic composition in which the melody was only one voice-part out of two or more voices. Again, I have to stop here and limit my research task with the melodies notated in my source without delving into the origin of them.

In order to better understand the poems in the manuscript, an interview was also conducted with Kristján Eiríksson, a researcher and lector at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. He gave me a very informative survey of the poetry of Father Ólafur's time and its verse structures, which I used to draft my analyses of the verses. In transcribing the melodies, I needed to analyze the formal structure of the poems, the verses forming the text of the songs. Sometimes this became a problem, because in the manuscript the text and the distribution of syllables is often ambiguous.

Kári Bjarnason, a researcher of Icelandic literature, sent me a document file (<http://brandur.eyjar.is/skaltholt/>; checked on 4.10.2013) with all the texts of the manuscript transcribed. He had previously transcribed them while performing his own research of the poems. I have used this document to proofread the texts I had transcribed from the manuscript.

Finally, I was also assisted by Tui Hirv, a singer and musicologist knowledgeable about Gregorian music. She has close contacts with poetry through her family and was of great help in researching the songs and their poetic structure. For example, when trying to define the tone centre of a song, she helped me by singing through and giving her suggestions. As for the syllabic structure of different stanzas, their patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables, her experience with working with text came in handy. The task of adjusting different texts of numerous

stanzas of a long song to the given number of notes in the notation of the first melodic/poetic strophe benefited from her knowledge of singing Gregorian chant.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all of these people dearly for their contribution to my work.

## **2. Historical background**

In order to understand the historical and cultural context of the subject of this research, it is appropriate to start with a brief overview of the history of Christianity and general living conditions in Iceland before directing our attention to this particular manuscript and the persons behind it.

### **2.1. Iceland in Catholic times**

Iceland's adoption of Christianity is traditionally ascribed to the year 1000 (although some historians would place it in the year 999). The settlers of Iceland worshipped the Norse gods, among them Óðinn, Þór, Freyr and Freyja. By the 10th century political pressure from Europe to convert to Christianity strengthened and many prominent Icelanders accepted the new faith. In the year 1000, as a civil war between the religious groups seemed likely, the Alþingi (the Icelandic Parliament) appointed one of the chieftains, Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði, to decide the issue of religion. He decided that the country should convert to Christianity, but that pagans would be allowed to worship privately.

The Church ushered in a completely new social force and new jurisdiction over the nation's spiritual affairs. However, secular and religious matters had interacted also in pre-Christian Icelandic society, so it was quite natural that the Church became a decisive force in secular matters as its properties and intellectual influence grew. Vésteinn Ólason (Ólason 2004: 26) explains that the power of the Church established itself more and more firmly when descendants of Icelandic influential families acquired the education necessary for holding leading posts in the Church.

In the first decades after the adoption of Christianity itinerant bishops from Britain and Saxony visited Iceland. The Icelandic Church was initially under the authority of the Archbishop of Bremen, and at least some of the missionary bishops were sent under his mandate. Gissur Hvíti (White), an Icelandic chieftain who had been active proponent of the adoption of Christianity, sent his son Ísleifur (1006–1081) to study at the nunnery of Herford, Saxony, south of Bremen. Ísleifur became a priest, returned to Iceland and settled in Skálholt, becoming a bishop in 1056. Until

1785 Skálholt was one of Iceland's two episcopal cathedrals, the other was Hólar. By becoming a part of the Roman Catholic Church, Iceland was integrated to its educational system, the network of cloisters and cathedrals. Smári Ólason (2006: 227) notes that thanks to the acquisition of all-European literacy, the old Norse cultural knowledge that Icelanders had preserved in oral tradition through centuries reached to manuscripts in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, while at the same time it was sinking into oblivion in continental Europe.

Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2004: 13) has stressed that because Christian faith is built upon the written word, the education of priests was important as well as access to a reliable text of the Bible. Old Norse had its own system of writing using runic signs, but the Latin alphabet and the Christian culture centering around reading and writing helped to spread these skills into all spheres of life and integrate with European culture. In 1153 Iceland became a part of the archbishopric of Nidaros (today's Trondheim) in Norway. The Augustinian order exerted significant influence there, since two of the first archbishops had connections with the religious community of Saint Victor in Paris, one of the main Augustinian centres in northern Europe. The monastery of Þingeyrar in northwest Iceland was the first to be founded in 1133. In the course of time their number increased and monasteries acquired quite impressive libraries.

## **2.2 Reformation and new hymns in Iceland**

As in other Nordic countries, the tradition of hymn singing as we know it today has its roots in the age of the Reformation. In Iceland it took place somewhat later than in other Nordic countries. Through communication between Germany and Iceland Lutheran ideas reached Icelanders already in the 1530s. At that time Iceland was under Danish domination, but despite strong pressure from the Danish government, Icelanders held on to the Catholic faith. Resistance to the new teaching was broken only in 1550 when the envoy of the Danish king imprisoned and sentenced to death the leader of the Catholic opposition bishop Jón Arason of Hólar and his two sons.

With Reformation the language of the church changed to Icelandic. Guðbrandur Þorláksson (1541/42–1627), the bishop of Hólar and one of the most prominent figures of his time, started printing books in Iceland in 1575. His most

significant achievement was the publication of the Bible in Icelandic, both the Old and the New Testament in 1584. However, parts of the Bible had been translated already in Catholic times and the oldest extant Bible translations in Icelandic have been dated into the 13th century.

The Reformation brought about a radical change of religious song tradition. As Svend Nielsen writes about Icelandic religious folk song tradition, numerous ballads about the saints, the Virgin Mary and miracles were based on primarily Catholic stories and new teaching demanded new songs (Nielsen 2006: 247). From the early days of the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, singing had been one of the most important means in promoting new ideas and in a few years an impressive number of new tunes and lyrics were created. Many of the German Protestant hymns were translated into Icelandic as quickly as possible.

The first Icelandic hymnals with song texts were printed in the 1550s, but in 1589 a hymnal with musical notation was published, the *Hólabók*. According to Smári Ólason (2006: 228) it was largely based on a Danish hymnal of 1569, but some of the songs were original compositions. Notation of music in the first edition of the hymnal is scanty – the first line of music is printed only as a hint to the melody. The second edition of the hymnal was published in 1619 and with more complete musical notation. Later, however, the hymnal was published only as a textbook.

In 1594 bishop Guðbrandur published the *Graduale* in Icelandic, or *Grallari*, as the book was called. This church missal (and hymnal) was also modeled after a contemporary Danish *Graduale*, published in 1573, and its musical notation is considerably better. Smári Ólason calls the publication of *Grallari* “a watershed and one of the cornerstones of the Reformation in Iceland.” The poetry of the hymns in *Grallari*, however, is rather rigid and seems to prefer direct translation and proper religious terminology to the use of the poetic and prosodic means of Icelandic language (Ólason 2006: 228–229).

One of the most popular collections of religious poetry in Iceland is the *Hymns of the Passion* by Hallgrímur Pétursson, written in 1656–1659. Those songs are highly appreciated up to the present day. For singing these fifty hymns Hallgrímur refers to 34 tunes from *Hólabók* and *Grallari*, also to three other songs well-known in his time, thus several songs were meant to use one and the same melody. Thus, a large corpus of poetic hymns was built up and used in households in the 17th century.



Hymns that were not printed (and also printed sources) were copied by hand and accessible in manuscripts (Ólason 2006: 233–234).

### 2.3. Singing customs

*Grallari* became the most popular songbook in Iceland, both in the church and at home. At the Latin Schools in Skálholt and Hólar singing accompanied morning and evening prayers, and so the graduates of those schools had quite good training. The quality of singing at other churches depended greatly on the musical skills and enthusiasm of the leaders of the congregation. It can be assumed that pastors, having graduated from the Latin Schools, had some basic knowledge in music and were able to sing the hymns and chants prescribed for each service in *Grallari*. Melodies and the way of singing were influenced by Icelandic traditional music. The outlines of tunes were sung more or less according to their written form, but the modes and rhythms changed. Embellishments were added, although that was individual and could vary even within the same household. Songs were sung in unison, or they were at least supposed to be according to *Grallari*, except when *tvísöngur* or two-part songs were performed, but according to Smári Ólason this was rare in church (Ólason 2006: 231–232).

Svend Nielsen speculates about the origin of melodies in *Grallari* and in later collections of Icelandic melodies: did the melodies come straight to Iceland from Central Europe, or through Denmark? And were they intentionally given an Icelandic character? Another question is whether the music printed in *Grallari* represents the tunes as they sounded in the 1590s or if the notation was intended from the beginning merely as a frame to be filled out in practice (Nielsen 2006: 264). The hymns were used in everyday life, for example, before going out to sea, on fishing grounds. The most important event for singing hymns at home was at family prayers (Nielsen 2006: 248).

When used in such conditions over centuries the music is subjected to changes while the identity of texts is more supported by printed hymnals. Similar traditions of folk hymn singing are well-known in all Nordic countries as the collection of articles (Sass Bak, Nielsen 2006) and several other works demonstrate.

#### 2.4. Ólafur Jónsson from Sandar (1560–1627)

One of the most concise descriptions I have found about my research topic was by Sigurjón Einarsson, published in 1960. This article gave me an introduction to the poetry of Father Ólafur Jónsson, and moreover, shed some light onto his character and life views. Ólafur Jónsson was a priest of the first generation of Lutheran Icelanders. He lived and served in Sandar, in the West-fjords of Iceland. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century he was considered one of the main poets of the nation, but today he is almost forgotten.

Ólafur came from a well-known family, yet it is believed that he was born in poverty. He lost his father at a young age and was brought up by Magnús Prúði (Magnús “the Polite”) and his wife Ragnheiður Eggertsdóttir at their home, the farm of Ögur. Magnús was an educated man, had studied in Germany and wrote poetry. However, it is not known whether Ólafur studied in Germany or not.

Thinking about how informed people at such a remote place like the West-fjords could be of the Reformation and Lutheran teaching we have to survey connections between Iceland and North Germany. In the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century surprisingly many merchants from Germany sailed there for trading, there was a regular boat connection with Hamburg. It would not have been impossible or even unusual for Ólafur to spend some time in Germany, but there is no evidence of that.

The descendants of Magnús and Ragnheiður were well-educated people and they were concerned about their national heritage. Therefore, we can assume that Ólafur got some education from his stepfather. For some time he served as a priest in his father’s land in Bær and in 1596 was ordained a priest in Sandar, where he worked until his death in 1627. It is said that he was married twice and had eight children (Einarsson 1960: 74–82). He was a peaceful man, honouring modest life, and his faith was “sincere, his compassion more than with most servants of church in this time.” (Einarsson 1960: 91).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Icelandic poetry mostly dealt with repentance and the suffering of Jesus Christ. God is described as strict and punishing and the more humbleness and modesty the poets showed in their poetry, the better. This was Iceland’s most oppressive time under the Danish kingdom and that paved the way for this kind of poetry, pursued by bishop Guðbrandur. In this context Ólafur’s poetry is

unique. It rather portrays a child-like sincerity unheard of in these times. (Einarsson 1960: 120–122).

Father Ólafur's poems are written in a simple, honest manner. I believe Ólafur wanted his poems to be understood by the general people and to have an educational, and at the same time, spiritual value. His views of Lutheranism are actually more in accordance with the modern understanding of the religion than of his time.

## **2.5. Hjalti Þorsteinsson (1665–1754)**

Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson, who copied the songs of Ólafur into the manuscript we are going to study, was one of the greatest pastors of his time in Iceland. As a youth he won recognition as a painter, today he is mostly remembered for his paintings and woodcarvings, which can still be found in churches around Iceland.

In her article about Father Hjalti, Helga Ingólfssdóttir (1995) tells that in early age Hjalti was sent to study with his uncle, Father Jón Hjaltason, where he learned to read and write as well as the basics of music. Father Jón used to draw and this spurred Hjalti's interest in the visual arts. Later, at the age of 14, he went to study at the Latin school in Hólar and five years later he continued his studies in Skálholt, at the time when Þórður Þorláksson was the bishop there. Along with his studies, he continued to practice drawing and painting. In 1688 Þórður sent him to the Copenhagen University and paid for his studies, two years later he graduated from the Faculty of Theology.

Meanwhile, Þórður had acquired a Regal, a small portable organ in Skálholt. He encouraged Hjalti to take lessons in organ playing while studying in Copenhagen. After his studies, Hjalti went back to Skálholt where he took care of maintaining the church instruments. In 1690, Hjalti was ordained a priest in Skálholt and he stayed there for two more years until moving to Vatnsfjörður where he served for the next fifty years (Ingólfssdóttir 1995: 16–17).

### 3. Analysis

As described in Chapter 1, in analyzing the notations of melodies in the manuscript, I've divided the task into stages and in each stage concentrated on a different aspect of the song structure: first, philological details of the notations will be described and the problems of transcribing them in the modern system will be discussed; we will then concentrate on the structure of the verbal text, verses and stanzas, for in similar song traditions the rhythmic and formal structures of melodies are strongly dependent on the text; the next stage of analysis is describing the formal structure of melodies, repetitions, variations and tonal coordination of melody-lines; finally, the tonal structure melodies will be characterised by studying their scales and tonal centres.

The manuscript contains 21 notations of melodies, transcribed with their first stanza of the text. Following is the list of the songs in the order of their presentation in the manuscript, using the text of the first melody line as a reference. Further in my discussion I'll refer to them with the first verse only in Icelandic adding the number in the brackets, sometimes only with the number:

1. *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (Lord of Truth Himself)
2. *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (Oh, I the Weak Man)
3. *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (One more time I Wish to)
4. *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt* (My Duty is to Mention)
5. *Hress upp þinn hug* (Cheer up Your Mind)
6. *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (Set Your Only true Faith to God)
7. *Upp littu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (Look up my Soul and Treat Yourself Well)
8. *Ó Jesú elsku hreinn* (O, Jesus, Dear and Pure)
9. *Dýr fæðing drottins vors* (Glorious Birth of our Lord)
10. *Minn Guð, minn guð* (My God, my God)
11. *Þig bið ég þrátt* (To You I Pray for Strength)
12. *Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð* (Listen, Christians, and Remain Silent)
13. *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (Hear Thou us in Heaven)
14. *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (When the World is Playing in the Palm of Your Hand)
15. *Framorðið er og meir en mál* (It is Dusk and More than Time to)

16. *Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta* (Unworthy Though I Should Revere)
17. *Göfgum góðfúslega* (Gladly let us praise)
18. *Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr* (O Dear God of mine, my Health is Weak)
19. *Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri* (Sing, my Soul, with Joy)
20. *Heyr mig mín sál* (Hear me, my Soul)
21. *Sterkur himnanna stýrir* (Heaven's Strong Commander)

### 3.1. Transcription

When looking at the transcription of the melodies, I always started with counting the **lines in each stave**. Most of the songs are written on a four-line stave like the traditional notation of Gregorian chant and only a few contain five lines. I was interested in whether there was any correlation between the number of lines in a stave and the ambitus of the melody (or the corresponding melody-line transcribed using a five-line stave).

In the very first song of the manuscript, *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1), the writer has used five lines for the whole melody, although the melody only needs four lines. In the song *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2) the writer also starts with five lines, but in the second stave he reduces the number of lines to four (the change is in the middle of the second verse/ melody-line). It is as if he realized that no more lines would be necessary. From there on he only uses four lines with the exception of *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13). This is the only two-part song in the collection and in the first system the upper stave has five lines with the C clef placed on the fifth line. The first verse/ melody-line of this voice-part has an unusually wide ambitus for only one phrase – that of the octave. Therefore, there seems to be a logical correlation between the number of lines in a stave and the ambitus of the melody.

There are two different **clefs** used in the notations: the *F* clef, that marks the *f* note, and the *C* clef, that marks the *c*' note. The *F* clef is usually on the second line, counting from the lowest line. The *C* clef is located on the fourth line (also in the first two melodies using five-line staves). In only one instance (the case of the abovementioned No 13) the writer uses five lines and moves the *C* clef to the fifth line. There are thirteen notations in which the writer uses both clefs without moving either of them throughout the melody. Probably, he does this to put the interval of the perfect fifth clearly in place. There are five notations in which the writer uses only

the *C* clef throughout the whole melody, but it is difficult to see anything that might cause dropping the *F* clef. Good examples of this are the songs *Hress upp þinn hug* (5) and *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (7), where there is only the *C* clef even though the melody begins and ends on the *f* note and is clearly in *F* mode.

Then, there are three melodies where the clefs change. *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt* (4) starts with only the *C* clef and stays that way until in the last verse when it changes to the *F* clef that has now been raised to the third line. Clearly, the reason of raising the *F* clef is that the melody moves into the lower part of the range and ends with *d* (although that pitch is often used without moving the clef). *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (6) starts with both the *F* and *C* clefs, but in the fourth verse/melody-line the *F* clef is moved to the third line for only two notes and the *C* clef dropped, then (in the last stave) the writer returns to the original placement of the *F* and *C* clefs.

*Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð* (12) starts with only the *C* clef, but in the last stave the writer adds the *F* clef (on the second line) and, in the very end of the verse, changes only to the *F* clef raised to the third line in order to notate the *c* note that would have otherwise been located below the lowest line. When the writer moves the *C* clef downwards to the third line, he can notate the upper scale steps in the centre of the stave. Likewise, when the writer moves the *F* clef up to the third line, he is making space for the lower scale steps in a melody-line. In so doing, he can fit in the stave-lines without interfering with the text-line written very close under the stave-lines. In only one instance, the *C* clef is moved up to the fifth line (the beginning of the two-part song No 13), but we've already discussed the reason for the move in this case.

Therefore, these clef changes are done for practical reasons to notate the melody-line within the stave. There is no measure or time signature after the clef and only in the notation of one song, *Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr* (18), a key-signature (b-flat) is used.

The **notes** in the manuscript are mostly black and square-shaped, resembling the breve of earlier black mensural notation. I decided to transcribe them as quarter notes, which I find to be an appropriate measure. The last note of each melody is graphically longer, evidently, to indicate longer duration. They are transcribed as half notes. Most of these longer notes are filled with black (15 notations), but occasionally they are empty (6 notations). Graphically longer note-shapes never have stems like

the longas of mensural notation.<sup>2</sup> An interesting example is *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1), in which the last note before the double vertical line (after the first two repeated melody-lines) is of similar length to the last note of the song, but without the fermata-like sign decorating the end of each melody.

Another interesting example is *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (7), in which the last note of the first verse/ melody-line is empty without being graphically much longer. This irregularity may be a mistake of the writer, because in the two-part song *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13) the last note of the first upper melody-line is also empty while the corresponding note in the lower part is full. He might have intended to have both of them empty, but then incidentally filled the lower one – in this case the empty note in the first verse/ melody-line of No 7 can also mean a longer duration. However, as there seems to be no difference between black and white long final notes in the melodies we cannot ascribe too much importance to those two unfilled breve-like notes.

Then, there are four notations (No 4, 6, 14 and 16) that contain the note-shapes of white semibreve (a diamond) and minima (a diamond with a stem) and in one case (No 6) even a black minima (semiminima?) is used. I will discuss transcribing or, rather, interpreting those notations later in this chapter.

The **vertical lines** make an interesting factor in the manuscript since there are so many different versions of them. As there is no meter in these songs, vertical lines are used for separating verses and melody–lines and always coincide with punctuation marks (commas and periods) in the text. Thus, they can be interpreted as caesuras (and in some cases even short pauses, as in the traditional notation of Gregorian chant). We can find everything from lines crossing the whole stave, as we are used to in modern notation, to very short lines that cross only one stave-line. I found this interesting and wanted to see if there was any correlation between the length of the vertical lines and the structure of the melody, and if not, then to try and deduce some other logical reasoning for such a usage of vertical lines. In medieval mensural notation, the length of vertical lines corresponded to the proportions of rests, but we do not have any measures in those notations and the proportions of note-shapes as well as rests are vague.

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<sup>2</sup> Ian D Bent, et al. “Notation” Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 3. Jun, 2013.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscribe/article/grove/music/20114pg6>.

If we look at an example, then the notation of *Dýr fæðing drottins vors* (9) has rather many different versions of vertical lines. The first two melody-lines are equal by length, but the first one moves between *g* and *d'*, thus using the upper part of the stave while the second descends to *d* using mostly the lower part of the stave. Correspondingly, the first vertical line crosses three upper lines, the second three lower lines. The next two vertical lines in this melody are even more interesting, because they are extremely short and there are only two syllable-notes between them, separated in the verse by commas. The third vertical-line crosses only the two middle lines of the stave and the fourth only the two lower lines. What I find interesting is how the placement of the short vertical line correlates just with the preceding note and not with the space used by the whole preceding or following melody-line. The fifth and the last vertical line cross the whole stave as the ambitus widens, although the ambitus never widens as far as the vertical lines go.

So there is some correlation of the short vertical lines with the placement of the preceding note, but that is not very regular. It seems as if the writer does this somehow intuitively, still with some logic in his mind. It is also interesting that in the later half of the manuscript short vertical lines are less used. It may indicate that, over the process of writing the melodies, the writer did not find this a suitable way and relied rather on vertical-lines that cross the whole stave. *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1) is the only song that has a double vertical line after the first two melody-lines. This is clearly a repeat-sign for those melody-lines have two pairs of verses for the same melody. The double vertical line has points between every stave-line. However, in the end of the song there is another similar double line with points, although there is only one verse of text under each melody-line. This is the only occasion of using a repeat (two texts under one melody) in this collection.

Although the songs are mostly syllabic and with notes of equal length, only four of them do not contain any melodic embellishments – syllables divided between two or more pitches or **melismas**. Graphically, the notes of a melisma are written closer to each other than other notes: see e.g. *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (3) and *Ó herra Guð mín heilsa er rýr* (18). One possibility of interpreting would be to assume that they were sung faster. The question would then arise which rhythmic durations would suit best for transcribing them. Another way of interpretation would be to sing the pitches of a melisma in the same tempo as the syllable-notes of the song and embellishing will prolong the melody-line.



Based on conversations with both Dr. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson and Prof. Urve Lippus, I chose to transcribe all the melismatic movements in quarter notes as prolongations with a slur grouping them together. The main reason for this choice is the lack of knowledge about the original way of singing. Surely, we can assume that melismas were sung somewhat faster than the syllabic segments of a melody-line, but it seems unnatural to sing them double or even more faster. We should not forget that this music is without fixed measure and we have to consider a considerable amount of flexibility regarding rhythm with singing varying from song to song and from performer to performer.

Some songs contain segments of **rhythmical notation** (the abovementioned semibreve- and minima-like notes), though without any time signature. What is most striking is how the writer has mixed together non-measured breve-like notes and note-shapes that refer to defined rhythmic proportions. In transcribing these songs, however, I've decided to use not three or more, but only two rhythmic durations (plus the half-note for the prolonged final tone): quarters for the semibreve-line diamond-shaped notes and eighths for minima-like diamond-shaped notes with a stem. Also, I have not differentiated a white diamond-shaped note with a stem from the following filled one in *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (6) for it occurs only once and follows the inconsistencies of filling discussed above.

There are two songs containing considerable segments of rhythmic notation (black breve-like notes mixed with white semibreve- and minima-like notes): *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á* (4) and *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14). Of course, my decision to use only two rhythmic differentiations (quarter- and eight-notes) in transcribing those songs is open to argument, but I could not see any other musical solution; it seemed awkward to use half-notes for all black breve-like notes, or sixteenths for white minima-like notes.

I consulted Dr. Árni Heimir Ingólfsson about rhythm in old Icelandic music in general. He told me that, although very little is known about the subject, it was sure that, in my case, notes with a stem (minimas) were to be sung faster than the ones without a stem (semibreves). The usage of note-shapes in *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14) seems like a matter of expression: the indefinite black breve-like notes are always used in either the beginning or the end of a verse-/ melody line, so we can imagine that the singer takes some extra time or liberty there, while white semibreves and minimas are used inside a melody-line. This suggests a more

expressive interpretation, or a rhythmically more defined performance than simple black syllabic notation. In *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á* (4), the sequences of rhythmically indefinite black breves are longer and more mixed with rhythmically proportioned white notes.

When I interviewed Sigurður Halldórsson about performance issues in old Icelandic music, he told me that one possible source of inconsistent notation can be quite odd – some Icelandic songs originate in some more complex polyphonic song, only a single voice-part of which has made its way to Iceland and surrendered there to the local tradition. Although I find this an interesting fact and worthy to keep in mind while analyzing these songs, it is impossible to say whether it is applicable in this case.

Finally, I would like to mention once more the ornate fermata-like sign that is above the last note of each song, its tail is extended over the stave replacing often the final vertical line(s). I interpret it as a fermata sign (while at the same time it is a beautiful visual ornament). However, I decided not to put contemporary fermata signs above each final note in my transcriptions, I wanted to keep them as simple as possible and a half note in the end marks anyways a prolonged final cadence note.

In 2006, the Skálholt Research Centre of Religious and Music Heritage released a book called *Í höndum þínum herra Guð hefur þú skapað mig. Brot úr sálmum sr. Ólafs Jónssonar á Söndum* (In Your Hands Dear God You Have Drawn Me. Selection of Psalms by Father Ólafur Jónsson from Sandar in Dýrafjörður; Bjarnason, Pétursson, Sigurðarson 2006), in which Kári Bjarnason, a researcher of Icelandic literature, in cooperation with Pétur Pétursson, a professor of theology at the University of Iceland, and Sigurður Sigurðarson, Bishop of Skálholt, assembled a collection of poems from the manuscript. Kári kindly sent me a document with all the full song texts in the manuscript that I've used as a model for my own transcriptions.

The poems are transcribed in modern spelling, but word forms remain the same. Latin words, such as Christus, are changed to fit the Icelandic alphabet and rules of spelling. Some words that should be written differently according to the modern grammar, are written in their archaic form: words such as “hvör” and “hvörki” (today written: *hver/hvar* and *hvorki*) are not changed. Words like “svo” (then) are sometimes written as “so” in the manuscript. They remain unedited. (Bjarnason, Pétursson, Sigurðarson 2006: 11).

### 3.2. The Structure of song texts

When analyzing the structure of the first stanzas of texts written under the musical notation, I have concentrated on the number of verses, the number of syllables in the verses, and the pattern of rhymes in the stanza. These parameters are definitive for the structure of melodies in the style that uses one melodic strophe for singing numerous stanzas. Later, I used this information to analyse the formal structure of the melody (chapter 3.3). In addition to this, I have analyzed all the stanzas in a selected number of songs in order to see the stability and variability of these parameters. This is directly related to the need to adapt the melody when singing songs with numerous stanzas.

Table 3.1 Verse structures of the first stanzas of song.

Songs	Rhyme pattern of the stanza	Number of syllables in each verse
1. Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans	ababccc	8.6.7.6.8.8.9
2. Ó ég manneskjan auma	abbba	7.6.6.7.11
3. Enn vil ég einu sinni	ababab	7.6.7.6.6.5
4. Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt	aaabba	10.11.10.10.12.14
5. Hress upp þinn hug	abab	9.8.9.8
6. Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú	aabb	9.8.9.10
7. Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel	aaabb	10.6.5.5.9
8. Ó Jesú elsku hreinn	aaaa	6.6.6.6
9. Dýr fæðingin drottins vors	aabbbb	11.13.6.2.8.5
10. Minn Guð, minn guð	ababc	9.8.9.8.7
11. Þig bið ég þrátt	aaaabbbb	4.6.4.7.6.7.5.5
12. Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð	ababcdde	10.8.9.7.8.8.8.5.9
13. Heyr þú oss himnum á	aaaaa	6.7.6.7.8
14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns	ababaaab	10.7.9.8.10.10.8.7
15. Framorðið er og meir en mál	aabb	8.9.8.8
16. Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta	ababccd (or: abab1cca1)	10.8.8.8.8.8.7
17. Göfgum góðfúslega	aaaa	5.6.6.8
18. Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr	aabbcc	9.8.8.10.9.9
19. Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri	aabbccc	8.7.4.4.4.5.9
20. Heyr mig mín sál	aabab	8.8.7.9.7
21. Sterkur himnanna stýrir	ababccc1ddee	7.6.7.6.3.3.6.7.7.6.6

As you can see in the table above, the **rhyme patterns** are quite regular while the **number of syllables** varies and often does not contain a clear pattern. Sometimes

rhyiming verses have the same number of syllables (No 1, 5, 8, 10), but that is not a rule. Most of the poems have two different rhymes, but three short poems have only one: in *Ó Jesú elsku hreinn* (8), *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13) and *Göfgum góðfúslega* (17). However, only in No 8 do all the four verses also have the same number of syllables. One remarkably long stanza, No 21, even has five pairs of rhyming verses. I wrote No 16 in two different versions since it is easy to see the rhyme words in verses 4 and 7 as half rhymes.

When looking the patterns of rhymes, we can notice that several of them refer to the grouping of verses into two blocks that is common in many popular songs: abab/ccc (1), aaa/bba (4), aaaa/bbbb (11), abab/cddc (12). It would be normal to expect the reflection of the same pattern in the formal structure of the corresponding melody-strophes. Large differences in the number of syllables in rhymed verses make it difficult to find regularities in the metric structure of the verse – the division of syllables into stress-groups – and this feature of the text is well reflected in the notations without any regular measure (time-signature).

I interviewed Kristján Eiríksson, a research lector at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies about the poems in the manuscript. He told me that most old Icelandic poetry is trochaic and that there are countless different verse forms. These poems are all, except one, in verse forms that came to Iceland after reformation, most likely from Germany, either directly or through Denmark. Only one poem stands out in that respect, *Sterkur himnanna stýrir* (21), which seems to be an older verse form originating from the Catholic times. This affirms that Father Ólafur was in direct contact with the German intellectual sphere.

When I asked Kristján about how consistent the stanzas of a song in the poetry of this time are (considering the structure of verses from stanza to stanza), he told me that they tend to vary. He assumed that song melodies tended to vary as well to adapt to the text, although he stressed that he was not an expert of the musical side of this kind of research.

With this in mind, I directed my attention to three songs, randomly chosen, in which I analyzed all the stanzas in the same way as I analyzed the first stanzas of the songs presented in table 3.1 in order to see the range of stability/ variability. These are: *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2) that consists of 17 stanzas, *Dýr fæðingin drottins vors* (9) 5 stanzas, and *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14) 3 stanzas. The results were that, in general, corresponding verses tend to have one syllable more or less

from stanza to stanza. In order to find out whether differences in the syllabic structure of the stanzas affected the melodies, I read and sang the songs through with Tui Hirv, a professional singer and musicologist with experience in singing old music and with long term contact with poetry. By doing so, we could see that although the syllabic structure of the verses varied, there was still a rather clear pattern of stresses that stayed the same throughout the stanzas.

In fact, all three songs have a similar structure of stressed and unstressed syllables, though this pattern is often treated freely from stanza to stanza. Usually, the verses start with a dactyl, followed with a trochee. Some verses start with an unstressed syllable like an upbeat, and in some cases even two such syllables. The following table (3.2) offers an analysis of the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2). Icelandic language is flexible when it comes to stresses of words in a text, so these analyses are based on my modern understanding of my native language. The numbers above each verse refer to the amount of syllables. The syllables in bold are stressed syllables. In the right column there is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables: + means a stressed syllable and – an unstressed syllable. Rhymes are written in italic.

**Table 3.2 Complete text (17 stanzas) of *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2) with stress patterns of the verses.**

1 Stanza	Stress pattern	10 Stanza	Stress pattern
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ó, eg <b>mann</b> -esk-jan <i>aum-a</i> ,	+ - + - - + -	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Meir</b> en <b>Man</b> -ass-es <i>raun-ar</i>	+ - + - - + -
1 2 3 4 5 6 erf-itt mér <b>gang</b> -a <i>vill</i> ,	+ - - + - +	1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>mis</b> -gjört eg hef við <i>þig</i> .	+ - - + - +
1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>mátt</b> -ur er minn <i>lít-ill</i>	+ - + - + -	1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>hætt</b> -u-legt <b>hel</b> -jar- <i>stíg</i>	+ - - + - +
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 að <b>má</b> af mín <b>ósk</b> -öþ <i>ill</i> ,	+ - - + - +	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 heim <b>trú</b> -i eg <b>sæk</b> -i <i>mig</i>	- + - - + - +
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 þó <b>líð</b> -i mín <b>líf</b> -stund <i>naum-a</i>	- + - - + - + -	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ef <b>löst</b> -um mér <b>eft</b> -ir <i>laun-ar</i>	- + - - + - + -
1 2 3 - og <i>naum-a</i> .	- + -	1 2 3 - og <i>laun-ar</i> .	- + -
2		11	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Ev</b> -a, mín <b>elst</b> -a <i>mód-ir</i> ,	+ - - + - + -	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Eytt</b> hef eg <b>tíð</b> og <i>tóm-i</i>	+ - - + - + -
1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>aum</b> -le-ga <b>gætt</b> -i <i>að</i> ,	+ - - + - +	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 og <b>treg</b> -leg-a <b>séð</b> að <i>mér</i>	- + - - + - +

<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 þá <b>orð</b> Guðs hún <b>yf-ir-trað</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 eitt þjó hún <b>kál-ið það</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 sem <b>á</b> kenn-a <b>all-ar þjóð-ir</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>þjóð-ir</b>.</p>	<p>– + – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>– + – – + – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>brest-ur á bötn-un er</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>bið</b> eg því <b>hrygg-ur hér</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Þyrm</b> mér á <b>þín-um dóm-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>dóm-i!</b></p>	<p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>
3		12	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Og <b>þó</b> henn-ar <b>brot-ið bætt-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>barn-ið</b> Guðs <b>elsk-u-legt</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>vill</b> mér samt <b>veit-a tregt</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 að <b>ver-jast</b> hér <b>synd-a-sekt</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Fell</b> eg oft <b>far-inn</b> að <b>mætt-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>mætt-i</b>.</p>	<p>– + – – + – + –</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>– + – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Náð-a</b> þú <b>nauð-ir mín-ar</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 <b>naumt</b> er <b>stödd</b> mín <b>sál</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fyr-ir <b>dag-legt djöf-uls tál</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>drekk</b> eg oft <b>hryggð-ar-skál</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Bæt-i</b> það <b>ben-jar þín-ar</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>þín-ar</b>.</p>	<p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>+ – + – +</p> <p>– – + – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>
4		13	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Synd-irn-ar sárt</b> mig <b>meið-a</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>synd-ir bú-a</b> mér <b>há</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 svo <b>hætt</b> í <b>him-in</b> þær <b>ná</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Hvört</b> skal eg <b>flý-ja</b> þeim <b>frá?</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Gjör-a</b> þær <b>Guð</b> minn <b>reið-an</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>reið-an</b>.</p>	<p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>+ – + – – +</p> <p>– + – + – – +</p> <p>+ – – + – – +</p> <p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Eg</b> vil nú <b>ill-u</b> af <b>lát-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 og <b>al-a</b> minn <b>ald-ur skár</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>hat-a</b> mín <b>heimsk-u-ár</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 en <b>hald-a</b> þín <b>boð-orð klár</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Þér</b>, Guð minn, <b>því</b> vil eg <b>ját-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>ját-a</b>.</p>	<p>+ – – + – – + –</p> <p>– + – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>– + – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – – + –</p> <p>– + –</p>
5		14	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Sagt</b> er að <b>synd-gist eig-i</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 sá af <b>Guð-i fædd-ur er</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>hætt</b> oft því <b>hreyf-ir sér</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>hörm-ung</b> í <b>brjóst-i mér</b>.</p>	<p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>– – + – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Lítt</b> tekst mín <b>lof-um veik-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ef <b>lið-semd</b> þín er ei <b>með</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>styrkt-u</b> mitt <b>stirð-a geð</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>stjórn</b> þín mér <b>verð-i léð</b></p>	<p>+ – – + – + –</p> <p>– + – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p> <p>+ – – + – +</p>

<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Tjón</b> eyk-ur <b>mér</b> sá <b>treg-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>treg-i</b>.</p>	+---+---	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>öll</b> mín heit <b>ell-eg-ar</b> <b>skeik-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>skeik-a</b>.</p>	+---+---
6		15	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Því að <b>eg</b> þar í mót <b>reyn-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>þung-leg-an</b> <b>van-mátt</b> <b>minn</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>Vill</b> haf-a <b>vilj-ann</b> <b>sinn</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>vond</b> hold-sins <b>lyst-in-gin</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Oft</b>-ar en <b>eg</b> það <b>grein-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>grein-i</b>.</p>	<p>---+---+</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>+---+---</p> <p>---+</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Svo <b>leng-i</b> <b>vil</b> <b>eg</b> því <b>lys-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 sem <b>líf</b> er í <b>brjóst-i</b> <b>mér</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 að <b>önd</b> mín <b>eig-nar</b> <b>sér</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>ei-líf-a</b> <b>hvíld</b> hjá <b>þér</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 þín <b>orð</b> mér <b>það</b> á-<b>vís-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 á-<b>vís-a</b></p>	<p>-+-+---+</p> <p>-+---+--</p> <p>-+-+--</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>-+-+---</p> <p>---+</p>
7		16	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Vill</b> mér ei <b>verð-a</b> að <b>rád-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>við-leit-ni</b> <b>önn-ur</b> en <b>sú</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 að <b>flýj-a</b> með <b>traust-ri</b> <b>trú</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>tíl</b> míns <b>skap-ar-a</b> <b>nú</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Án</b> minn <b>Guð</b> <b>ei-líf-ur</b> <b>nád-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>nád-i</b>.</p>	<p>+---+---+</p> <p>+---+---</p> <p>-+---+--</p> <p>+--+---</p> <p>+---+---+</p> <p>---+</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 <b>Guð</b> <b>fað-ir</b> og <b>son-ur-inn</b> <b>gód-i</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>greið-ist</b> þér <b>lof-ið</b> af <b>mér</b>.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>Allt</b> eins það <b>einn-inn</b> <b>ber</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>and-i</b> <b>heil-ag-ur</b> <b>þér</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 einn <b>Guð</b> yf-ir <b>all-ar</b> <b>þjóð-ir</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>þjóð-ir</b>.</p>	<p>-+---+---+</p> <p>+---+---</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>+--+---</p> <p>-+---+---+</p> <p>---+</p>
8		17	
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Á <b>fer-il-inn</b> <b>fróm-ra</b> <b>mann-a</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>eg</b> <b>flýt-a</b> vil <b>mér</b> sem <b>mest</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>legg-ja</b> af <b>lýt-in</b> <b>verst</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 en <b>leið-rétt-a</b> <b>mig</b> sem <b>best</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 og <b>drag-ast</b> á <b>veg</b> dyggð-<b>ann-a</b>,</p> <p>1 2 3 – dyggð-<b>ann-a</b>.</p>	<p>-+---+---+</p> <p>-+---+--</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>-+---+--</p> <p>-+---+---+</p> <p>---+</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <b>Sodd-an</b> eitt <b>sorg-ar-kvæð-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>söng</b> af <b>auð-mjúk-ri</b> <b>lund</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 <b>mað-ur</b> sá <b>miss-ir</b> <b>blund</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 mjög <b>oft</b> á <b>nátt-ar-stund</b></p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Minn <b>Guð</b> vor <b>mein-in</b> <b>græð-i</b></p> <p>1 2 3 – og <b>græð-i</b>.</p>	<p>+---+---+</p> <p>+--+---</p> <p>+---+--</p> <p>-+-+--</p> <p>-+-+---+</p> <p>---+</p>

9			
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Heyr mig, heil-ag-i <i>Jes-ú</i>	+ - + - - + -		
1 2 3 4 5 6 h <sup>j</sup> art-a mitt end-ur- <i>nær</i> ,	+ - - + - +		
1 2 3 4 5 6 þitt blóð þá lækn-ing <i>ljær</i> ,	- + - + - +		
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 að lifn-ar mín sál og <i>grær</i>	- + - - + - +		
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 End-ur-líf-gun mín <i>ert-u</i>	+ - + - - + -		
1 2 3 - og <i>ert-u</i> .	- + -		

Most of the verses can be described as a combination of a dactyl and trochee(s), ending with either a female or a male rhyme, that is constant throughout the whole song (*f-m-m-m-f*). The dactyl/trochee unit is a basis that sometimes varies: it either changes the pattern into a sequence of three trochees or it adds one or two unstressed syllables in the beginning that correspond to conjunctions at the beginning of a clause – words that also remain unstressed in normal spoken language.

In this song, the first and fifth verse end with a female rhyme (*auma-nauma*; *móðir-þjóðir*) while the second, third and fourth are male rhymes (*að-yfirtrað-það*; *elskulegt-tregt-syndasekt*). Similarly, the other two songs have a clear pattern of male and female rhymes. All male rhymes rhyme with each other as do the female rhymes, as shown in song No 14, below. It is noticeable how in every stanza there are five different male corresponding rhymes.

Nær heim-ur-inn leik-ur í hen-di *manns*, (*m*)  
hætt er að skeik-a *meg-i*. (*f*)  
Guð-legr-i ið-ju gjör-ist á *stans*, (*m*)  
þá geng-ur af rétt-um *veg-i*. (*f*)  
Nær eð Guðs við-vör-un vit-jar þá *hans*, (*m*)  
verð-ur hann að hop-a í hrygg-ðar-*dans*. (*m*)  
Með-al-hóf-ið er mjótt til *sanns*, (*m*)  
marg-ur það still-ir *eig-i*. (*f*)

Vant er í heim-i, vil-ji mann *gá* (*m*)  
veg-inn á rétt-u *skeið-i*, (*f*)  
í ljúf-u og leið-u so stöð-ug-ur *stá*, (*m*)  
að stund-um ei lif-nað-inn *meið-i*. (*f*)  
Dýr-legr-a mann-a þó dæm-in *tjá*, (*m*)  
að drep-ið haf-i þeir frekt í *tá*. (*m*)  
Þann tel eg glögg-van sem þar hæf-ir *á*, (*m*)  
að þraut-um hjá öll-um *sneið-i*. (*f*)



Á-föll-inn megn og mót-gangs *hót* (m)  
marg-ir vel af sér *stand-a.* (f)  
Hart þeir við-spyrn-a hrös-un á *mót* (m)  
fyrir hjálp Guðs náð-ar-*and-a.* (f)  
Veik nátt-úr-an þó vökn-i í *fót*, (m)  
vann á því Krist-ur minn full-a *bót.* (m)  
Þó er oss skylt af rétt-ri *rót*, (m)  
ráð vort sem best að *vand-a.* (f)

In No 2 and 9 we could sing the melody throughout by occasionally singing two syllables in one metric unit or by dividing a syllable over two units. In No 9 we needed to omit one note in one place and use the melisma in the first verse in order to fit one more syllable. In No 14 we needed to be more inventive because of differing syllabic structures between stanzas as well as the notation being more rhythmically precise when fitting the syllables into the melody. However, we felt like this was very possible. While doing this we did not change the melody's contour at all.

Although it required some effort to adjust the syllables of each stanza to the melody, we must keep in mind that when these songs were sung in past times, these alterations developed naturally when people learned the songs from one generation to another. So, our attempts to sing the songs can only be seen as our own interpretation.

### 3.3. Formal structure of melodies

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the basic melody structures in such a strophic song are defined by the verses and each verse corresponds to a unit in the melody, a melody-line. Furthermore, there are musical rules that affect shaping melodies, and so this sequence of melody-lines becomes an integral musical whole, a well-formed melodic strophe. In complex art music there are many formal functions that define the musical material used in a definite section of a composition – beginning and ending, developing and transitional, etc. As Urve Lippus has demonstrated with her analyses of very small-scale melodies of old Baltic-Finnish songs, formal functions also exist in very small-scale musical expressions like the one- or two-line melodies in her material (Lippus 1995: 86–87).

She has called this aspect of musical structure melodic syntax, parallel to linguistics, for the rules of syntax define how to form a correct period in language. Those rudimentary formal functions are beginning or initial, middle or developing,

and ending or final, concluding the melodic strophe. In longer strophes, we can also observe inner groupings of melody-lines by means of precise or varied repetition.

Lippus (1995: 87) stresses that the analysis of formal structures is inseparable from tonal analysis because “melodic syntax in linear music is the only possible expression of tonal hierarchy; and vice versa, tonal functions are the main determinants of the choice of tones in syntactically different parts of the melody.” However, in my analysis I have concentrated first on the formal structures and then on the tonal (modal) phenomena. To explain the well-formedness of a melodic strophe without any repetitions, we must turn our attention to the relationships of important scale degrees or tonal centres.

In the following analysis, small letters are used to designate melody-lines and capitalized letters for groups of lines inside a strophe. Variation of a preceding line is marked as a1, a2, etc. The number of quarter-units is an important characteristic, because quite often varied lines are similar in their contour, but they differ in length. If the number of syllables is less than the number of quarter-units, it refers to more or less extensive embellishments sung on one syllable. Divisions of quarter units between two syllables are quite rare, as discussed in the chapter about transcription (3.1).

Table 3.3 Formal structure of the melodic strophe of the songs

Song	Formal structure	Number of quarter-units in each melody-line (separated by a dot)
1. Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans	AAB (abab/cde)	7.7.7.7.8.8.12
2. Ó ég manneskjan auma	AB (aa1a2/bc)	7.6.6.7.12
3. Enn vil ég einu sinni	(abcdef)	8.4.7.6.8.6
4. Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt	(abcd/a1e)	8.8,5.9,5.7.11.15
5. Hress upp þinn hug	(abcb1)	9.8.9.9
6. Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú	(abcd)	10.8.8.10
7. Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel	(abcda1)	11.6.5.5.13
8. Ó Jesú elsku hreinn	(abcd)	6.9.7.7.
9. Dýr fæðing drottins vors	(abcdef)	13.13.6.2.8.6
10. Minn Guð, minn guð	AB (aa1a2/bc)	10.9.12.10.9
11. Þig bið ég þrátt	(abcd/efgh)	4.6.4.7.8.7.6.7
12. Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð	(abcd/efghi)	10.10.10.8.8.9.9.5.10
13. Heyr þú oss himnum á	upper line (abcde) lower line (cdabf)	6.7.6.7.9
14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns	(abcdefgh)	9,5.5,5.6,5.7.6,5.8.6.6,5

15. Framorðið er og meir en mál	AB (ab/cd)	8.9.8.10
16. Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta	AB (aba1b/cdb1)	9.8.8.8.8.8
17. Göfgum góðfúslega	(aabc)	6.6.6.9
18. Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr	(abcdef)	9.10.10.11.15.12
19. Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri	(abcdefg)	13.12.4.4.5.6.11
20. Heyr mig mín sál	(abcdef)	8.8.7.9.9
21. Sterkur himnanna stýrir	ABA (abab/cdb1b1/a1b)	8.6.8.6.6.6.8.8.8.7

As the vertical lines marking a caesura in the melodies correspond to the end of a verse, the overall length and elementary parsing of the melodies is reflected already in table 3.1 describing their verse structures. First of all, let us discuss the inner groupings of melody-lines based on repetition (or varied repetition). In the analysis of song texts in chapter 3.2 we saw that most of the rhyme patterns of longer stanzas contained clear groupings into two or three verses. It would be logical to expect some corresponding regularity and groupings also in the melodic patterns.

However, only a few of the melodies can be grouped into a clear AB or ABA form based on repeated melodic material. These are *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1), in which the first two melody lines are repeated as the A-section and the three final verses that make up the B-section. This is similar to the old medieval bar form that is common in Lutheran chorales and in many secular songs (*Aufgesang* and *Abgesang*).<sup>3</sup> The same form can be found in *Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta* (16) – the lines are notated separately, but the difference between a and a1 is very small – aba1b/cdb1. Repeating some material from the *Aufgesang* in the end of *Abgesang* is also usual in the bar form. *Sterkur himnanna stýrir* (21) can be divided into abab/cdb1b1a1b and described as close to the bar form, but perhaps it is more reasonable to separate cdb1b1 as a clear developing section with sequential movement and prolonged b-phrase, and a1b in the end as the closing – ABA.

In the rest of the melodies, form can be described as more continuous and freely flowing. Thus, we are interested in the forces shaping them as clearly articulated and finished melodic forms, not just as a sequence of different lines abcd, abcde, etc. That is, we are interested mostly in the characteristics of the contour and the use of tonal centres. In each of the melodies, the beginning has an initial or

<sup>3</sup> Horst Brunner. "Bar form" Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 3. Jun, 2013, <http://oxformusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02045>.

opening function, somewhere in the middle there is developing, tonally opposed or unstable section, and finally a closing, finishing section. Those functions are quite universal and we can find them in most melodies, even if some of them are quite short.

Some of the melodies do not contain only repetitions or small variations of lines, but still other segments or contours return. Some melody-lines seem derived from previous lines. These are songs like *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2) where the second and third melody-lines are derived from the first one and then from the fourth line of the melody it continues freely to the end. The strophe is only five lines, but they can be grouped together as aa1a2/bc. In *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (7), the first and the second melody-line begin with the same two notes, but continue differently and the second is much shorter. The third and the fourth lines have similar descending contours and equal lengths. The song ends with a long line that is similar to the beginning long melody-line, thus closing the period, and the strophe of only five lines does not have any major subsections.

In *Minn Guð, minn Guð* (10), the second melody-line is derived from the first, but beginning directly from its most prominent element – the augmented fourth *f-h*, a very special element of Icelandic old songs (which I will talk about further in chapter 3.5 on interesting examples). The third line resembles the previous ones, but now the augmented fourth is achieved by stepwise movement and the final melisma is longer, the last two lines share and elaborate the same figure of stepwise rising to the augmented fourth and descending from it. We may group the strophe of six melody-lines into two sections, but we could make arguments for two different interpretations – aa1/bcd or aa1a2/bc – depending on how we perceive the formal function of the third line (i.e. whether it is a new phrase or a variation). Actually, the rhyme pattern supports the last grouping.

In *Framorðið er og meir en mál* (15), again, the first and the second melody-lines begin with a similar stepwise rising to the fourth. The strophe is short, only four melody-lines, but the two first seem to belong together (the grouping is articulated also in the rhyme pattern).

In *Ó Guð mín heilsa er rýr* (18) each line ends on the same descending movement of the major second *a-g*. There are more elements that grabbed my attention in this melody, such as the usage of *c* and *c'* in the beginning of the second, third, fifth and sixth verse and how it is used as a point of departure for the rising or

descending contour ending with  $a-g$ , and in the very end with  $g-f$ . In this way, the second and third lines form a model that is expanded in the fifth and sixth line, the latter slightly changed to include both  $c$  and  $c'$ , and ending with the tonic  $f$ . It is interesting that this model arises in the second and third line, although by their rhyme patterns, lines couple together. This may come from the tonal structure – it is important to begin and end with  $f$ , then reach to  $c-c'$  in a prominent position to begin a rise or descending to  $g$ , until finally ending on  $f$ , all the lines in between have to move alternately in the higher or the lower part of this octave (more about that in chapter 4.4).

Similarly, in *Heyr mig mín sál* (20) each verse (apart from the first and the last) ends with a descending movement  $b-a-g-f$ , the first begins with  $g$  and the final ends with the same stepwise movement but higher  $c'-b-a-g$ . These elements or aspects of formal structure seem to also have practical functions and I find it very interesting. It is not only repeated or varied lines, but also recurring smaller segments or contours of melodic movement that help the singer to memorize the melody. This is found particularly with elements that can be compressed or expanded according to the performer's wish to embellish or adapt the melody with the different syllabic structure of verses in the numerous stanzas of the songs. This seems to be an important and very practical characteristic of this flexible and unmeasured music.

Then, there are melodies that seem to have completely continuous structure – and this is the largest group of them. In melodies No 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19 we find a constant flow of new melodic movement. Their structural relations are based on the tonal frame and general formal functions like opening, developing and closing. Surely, some of them contain some repeated segments, but they are simple stepwise movements, leaps between tonal supports or endings of a line, they do not stand out as structural parts of the contour like the elements discussed in the previous paragraph, for example: *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (6) – repetition of a stepwise movement in the second line, the first and the third line end in a similar way; *Dýr fæðing Drottins vors* (9) – repeated leaps in the melody; *Syng mín sál með glöðværð góðri* (19) – repeated descending movements.

I would like to point to the use of melismas in *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (3) that are used in or near the end of each uneven line and thus tend to take some formal importance pointing to the opening function of a melody-line. This attracts attention and creates some of the song's musical character.

Finally, I compared the number of quarters in a melody-line with the number of syllables in the corresponding verse to see their correlation. Comparing tables 3.1 and 3.3 we see prevailing correspondence of the numbers that is normal in such a syllabic style, but the differences bring out the use of melismas and only in rare cases a quarter is divided between two syllables. Regularly, the final note is prolonged and without melismas the final lines should contain one quarter more than there are syllables in the corresponding verse. It appears that only four songs are strictly syllabic: *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2), *Hress upp þinn hug* (5), *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13) and *Göfgum góðfúslega* (17).

In most songs, there are some melismas (a group of breves drawn together above one syllable) and mostly they are in some middle lines that have a developing function, not in the initial and final line. However, that is not a rule and we cannot conclude anything about the conscious use of melismas for articulating formal structure. It would be interesting to know how the long songs were performed and how stable melismas were in practice. Outstanding in that respect is *Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri* (19) in that it has the least correlation between the number of syllables and quarters because of its unusually long melismatic movements – two first lines end with a group about the length of the line itself sung on the penultimate syllable. In the case of the songs *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt* (4) and *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14), counting of quarters does not make sense because the movement does not only proceed in quarters (No 6 contains two and No 16 one division of a quarter, but in all cases dividing one pitch between two syllables).

I must say that I find quite remarkable to see such a large number of songs in as free form as we see here, compared with the poems that have much more regularity in their structure. It could be compared to the difference in the overall stages of development of musical and literary arts in Iceland at that time.

### 3.4. Tonal structure of melodies

In order to get an overview of the tonal structure of the melodies, I started by analysing the **scales** – what **pitches** make up the **ambitus** of each melody. The pitches or the register for notating the melodies is selected from *c* to *d'*, i.e. the range is accessible and more or less comfortable for any average male voice. We do not know

how important the absolute pitches are. When sung without any instrumental support, it is more probable that each singer could choose the most comfortable pitch range for his (or her) voice. In this case, we should think about those notations as being relative and understand the pitches as scale steps or degrees with important hierarchical tonal relations. Those relations defining the functions of scale steps are of interest in this chapter.

First of all, we have to discuss the concepts and the method of analysis used for describing tonal hierarchies or relations between the scale steps. The analysis is based on the principles of ethnomusicologists who, in studying foreign musical cultures, try to avoid presuming western modal structures even if the scales seem more or less the same in notation. However, in order to perceive pitches as scale steps with definite intervals between them, one or more referential pitches are necessary, tonal centre or tonic.

In the very beginning, a one-voice melody has to establish its referential pitch and when returning to it (or the same group of scale steps) in the end, we feel that the melody is finished. In the middle, to create tonal tension and dynamics, other scale steps are used or temporarily established as centre and we call them opposed tonal group. Although their function is similar to the dominant in harmonic music, we try to avoid the concept because it suggests the interval of a fifth between its most important scale step and the tonic, but in our music that is most often the upper or lower neighbour of the lower note (root) of the tonic group.

When singing without accompaniment, consonant intervals – major third, fourth and fifth – seem to support the singer to intone the scale and they are often used as framing melodic movements. In a narrow melody, an upper tone of a framing interval can relate tonic and oppositional groups, e.g. *f-a* as a tonic and *e-a* used as a contrast. The concepts and the method of analysis is based on (Lippus 1995: 72–94). There, she summarizes the approaches to modal phenomena in medieval studies of European music, ethnomusicology and perception studies and presents her analysis of tones used in syntactically important positions in the melody (initial and final tones of the melody and each of its lines) and statistics of the use of each tone within the ambitus (i.e. the sum of durations).

Let us begin with the inventory of tonal material used. In table 3.4 below the scale and the interval between the highest and lowest tone or the ambitus of each melody are presented.

Table 3.4 The scales of the melodies.

Songs	Scale	Ambitus
1. Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans	defgabc'	minor seventh
2. Ó ég manneskjan auma	efgab	perfect fifth
3. Enn vil ég einu sinni	defgabc'd	octave
4. Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt	cdefgabc'd'	major ninth
5. Hress upp þinn hug	cdefgabc	octave
6. Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú	cefgabc'	octave
7. Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel	efgabc'	minor sixth
8. Ó Jesús elsku hreinn	cdefgabc'd'	major ninth
9. Dýr fæðing drottins vors	dfgabc'd	octave
10. Minn Guð, minn guð	defgab	major sixth
11. Þig bið ég þrátt	efgabc'	minor sixth
12. Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð	cdefgabc'd'	major ninth
13. Heyr þú oss himnum á	cdefgabc'd (both lines)	major ninth
14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns	defgabc'd'	octave
15. Framorðið er og meir en mál	cefgab	major seventh
16. Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta	cdefgabc'd'	major ninth
17. Göfgum góðfúslega	defgab	major sixth
18. Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr	cdfgabc'	octave
19. Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri	defgabc'd	octave
20. Heyr mig mín sál	dfgabc'	minor seventh
21. Sterkur himnanna stýrir	defgabc'	minor seventh

Only one song *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (3) has the ambitus of a perfect fifth, consisting of the notes *e, f, g, a* and *b*. Two songs have the ambitus of a minor sixth, *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (7) and *Þig bið ég þrátt* (11) and they both consist of the same notes *e, f, g, a, b* and *c*. Two melodies, *Minn Guð minn guð* (10) and *Göfgum góðfúslega* (17) have the ambitus of a major sixth, consisting of the notes: *d, e, f, g, a* and *b*. There are three melodies that have the ambitus of a minor seventh *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1), *Heyr mig mín sál* (20) and *Sterkur himnanna stýrir* (21) consist of *d, e, f, g, a, b* and *c'*, No 20 omitting the *e* note. *Framorðið er og meir en mál* (15) covers the major seventh, consisting of *c, e, f, g, a* and *b* and omitting the *d* note. There are seven songs that cover an octave: *Hress upp þinn hug* (5), *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (6) and *Ó herra Guð mín heilsa er rýr* (18) from *c* to *c'*, omitting the *d* note in No 6, and *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (3), *Dýr fæðing drottins vors* (9), *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14) and *Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri* (19) from *d* to *d'*. Then there are five songs that cover a major ninth: *Mér væri skyldugt að*



*minnast á þrátt* (4), *Ó Jesú elsku hreinn* (8), *Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð* (12), *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13) and *Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta* (16) all of them reaching from *c* to *d*. Let's not forget that these are relative pitches and therefore only give us information on the range of the songs, not about the range of the singers performing them.

After seeing the tonal material that the melodies are based on and their ambitus, I can continue to analyze their inner tonal structure. I was interested in finding out how the functions of scale steps are differentiated, defining the tonal centre in a melody and observing whether it stayed the same throughout the song or changed and came back to the initial tonic in the end. By the concept of tonal centre, I am referring to the root-note of the important structural interval of the tonic group of scale steps used in the initial and final segments of the melody. In most cases it is the final note, but in several songs it can be difficult to define which group of scale steps is tonic and which is opposed to it.

If the tones stressed in the beginning and the end of the melody were the same and appeared also repeatedly through the song, we would have one unambiguous tonal centre. Higher scale steps of a third and/or fifth, sometimes also a fourth apart support the feeling of the lower tone of the interval as their root, correspondingly of the tonic or the opposed group. When notes of a minor or a major second (higher or lower) of the tonic group become more significant in the melody, I took it as an indicator that the tonal centre had shifted to the opposed group of scale steps.

These analyses were done both by reading the manuscript as well as by singing the melodies through, with the help of Tui Hirv, trying to concentrate on which scale steps function as referential pitches and which intervals are framing or structural in the melody-contour and help to intone the scale steps correctly. In the following table 3.5 you can see my suggestions of what I consider to be the tonic, i.e. the root of the tonic group of scale steps, and the root of the opposed group in each melody. The notes in brackets are other notes of the corresponding group of scale steps that support the lower tone as the tonal centre. The last column describes how the tonal centres change in the successive melody-lines through the strophe, i.e. I have attempted here to find the dominating tonal centre in each line. Letters in this last column correspond to the scale step of the tonal centre and slashes mark larger groups of melody-lines (designated with capital letters in table 3.3 describing formal structures of the melodies).

Table 3.5 Tonal centres of the melodies.

Song	Scale	Tonic tonal centre	Opposed tonal centre	Initials and finals of each line	Tonal centres of each line (if shifting)
1. Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans	<i>defgahc'</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e-h,a-e,e-h,a-e/d-d,h-e,d-e</i>	<i>eeee/dee</i>
2. Ó ég manneskjan auma	<i>efgah</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f-g,f-g,f-g/a-e,e-e</i>	<i>fff/ee</i>
3. Enn vil ég einu sinni	<i>defgahc'd</i>	<i>e(g-b)</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e-(g)a,c-h,a-g,e-e,d-(a)f,g-e</i>	<i>eeede</i>
4. Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt	<i>cdefgahc'd'</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>c'-c',a-g,d-c,a-e/c'-c',c-c</i>	<i>ccddcc</i>
5. Hress upp þinn hug	<i>cdefgahc'</i>	<i>f</i>		<i>f-g,a-g,c'-c,a-f</i>	
6. Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú	<i>c_efgahc'</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f-e,e-a,c'-e,c-f</i>	<i>feef</i>
7. Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel	<i>efgahc'</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f-f,f-g,h-f,a-e,e-f</i>	<i>fffef</i>
8. Ó Jesú elsku hreinn	<i>cdefgahc'd'</i>	<i>d</i>		<i>h-a,g-d',f-d,f-d</i>	
9. Dýr fæðing drottins vors	<i>d_fgahc'd'</i>	<i>g</i>		<i>g-a,h-g,a-g,a-f,h-g,c-g</i>	
10. Minn Guð, minn guð	<i>defgah</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e-f,f-f,f-f/a,h-e</i>	<i>eff/fe</i>
11. Þig bið ég þrátt	<i>efgahc'</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e-f,g-e,g-g,f-f/f(a)h,g-f,e-f,e-f</i>	<i>eeeffef</i>
12. Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð	<i>cdefgahc'd'</i>	<i>d(a)</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d-g,g-a,a-e,e-g/f-c,c-a,c'd,f-c,d-d</i>	<i>dddd/ccccd</i>
13. Heyr þú oss himnum á	<i>cdefgahc'd'</i> (both lines)	<i>d</i>		<i>dd'-da,ff-dd',dd'-da,ff-dd',dd'-dd'</i>	
14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns	<i>defgahc'd'</i>	<i>g(d)</i>		<i>g-g,h-d,d-g,g-a,c-a,h-c,d-f,h-g,d-g</i>	
15. Framorðið er og meir en mál	<i>c_efgah</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e-e,e-g,a-f,c-f</i>	<i>ee/ff</i>
16. Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta	<i>cdefgahc'd'</i>	<i>a(e)</i>		<i>e-a,c'-e,e-a,c'-e,h-e,c-a,c'-a</i>	
17. Göfgum góðfúslega	<i>defgah</i>	<i>g</i>		<i>g-g,g-g,g-a,g-g</i>	
18. Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr	<i>cd_fgabc'</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>f-g,c'-g,c-g,a-g,c'-g,c-f</i>	
19. Syng mín sál með gláðværð góðri	<i>defgahc'</i>	<i>f</i>		<i>f-f,a-f,a-h,c'-d',c'-a,e-a,f-f</i>	
20. Heyr mig mín sál	<i>d_fgahc'</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g-g,g-f,d-f,f-f,f-g</i>	<i>ggffg</i>

21. Sterkur himnanna stýrir	defgahc'	g	g-d,f-g,g-d,f- g/g-a,a-a,f- g,f-g,g-d,f-g
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There are six different **tonal centres** in the songs: *c, d, e, f, g* and *a*, all except *a* are used as tonic in some and as oppositional in some other melody. Ten of the melodies do not have clear group of oppositional scale steps dominating in some middle line(s) while the other eleven move the tonal centre to the opposed group, always either a major second above or below the tonic.

Only one song has the *c* note or the highest and lowest scale step as its tonal centre, *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á* (4). The first line is clearly based on *c'* as the tonal centre, beginning and ending on *c'* and using the fourth *g-c'* as the framing interval. Also the fifth line repeats it, but in the sixth line the melody moves to the lower part of the range and *c* is established as the tonic. I would describe these lines as based on two successive fourths: *c-f* and *g-c'*. However, in the second, third and fourth verse the tone centre shifts to *d* and its fifth *a*. Here, it can be debated whether the tonal centre in the first and fifth line is *d*, bearing in mind that this is the highest pitch in the melody and the *a-d'* leap is just as noticeable as *g-c'* in those lines.

Also, only one song has *a* as its tonal centre, *Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta* (16). What makes this melody an interesting study is the ambivalence between *a* and *e* (its subfourth) as the tonal centre. If we look closely, in the first and third line we can see the melody as framed by the interval of the fourth *e-a*, with *a* being the tonal centre and *b* as an embellishment, but we can also look at *e* as the tonal centre and *b* as its fifth. In the second, fourth and fifth lines, the melody line has a rather wide ambitus reaching up to *c'* and *d'*, but always coming down to *e* in the end of each line. However, the melody does not change to a clearly articulated opposite tonal centre at any point.

Three songs have *d* as the tonal centre. Two of them, *Ó Jesú elsku hreinn* (8) and *Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13), keep the same tonal centre throughout the song. One of them: *Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið oss hljóð* (12) has *d* as its tonal centre, but from the fifth line it shifts to the opposite tonal centre *c*, and stays there until it comes back with the last line. But another interesting aspect is how, in the end of the second and the beginning of the third line, the melody rests on *a*, the fifth from *d*, and then, in the

end of the third line and the beginning of the fourth on *e*, the subfourth from *a*, before taking a leap to *a*. So, it is as if the fifth is used to connect these two tonal centres.

Five songs have *g* as their tonal centres, *Dýr fæðing drottins vors* (9), *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14), *Göfgum góðfúslega* (17), *Heyr mig mín sál* (20) and *Sterkur himnanna stýrir* (21). Remarkably, none of the melodies No 9, 17 and 21 move their tonal centre throughout the songs. However, it is debatable whether the actual tonal centre in these songs is *g* or, rather, it could also be *d*. It is easy to imagine it as an underlying bourdon in those songs.

Two melodies stand out: No 14 does not change its tonal centre, but it seems to have similar interval-of-fifth relationships as described in No 12. The song starts with *g* as the tonal centre, the first line is based on the interval of fourth, *d–g*, with *a* as an embellishment. In the next two verses the ambitus widens and the tonal centre shifts between the *d* root-note and its fifth *a*. Then, from the end of the fourth line and throughout the fifth and the sixth line, *a* seems to have taken over as the fundamental and the melody is based on the interval of a minor third: *a, b* and *c*, with occasional *g* as an embellishment. But the seventh line starts with *d* and leads to the final note, that is *g*. No 20 begins and ends with *g*, but from the third line it shifts to the opposite *f* as tonal centre and stays there until shifting back to *g* right before the end.

Five songs have *e* as the tonal centre and all of these shift from these tonal centres. *Sjálfur Drottinn sannleikans* (1) and *Enn vil ég einu sinni* (3) both use the lower major second *d* as the opposed tonal centre. No 1 has a rather clear form of tonal centres articulating its formal structure as *Barform*: the first two melody lines, which are repeated, are clearly based on *e*, the third (actually fifth) line moves to *d* and the final line takes us back to *e*. No 3 stays in the same tonal centre through the first four lines and in the fifth line the melody shifts to the opposed tonal centre *d* only for a while until returning with a melisma the end of the line. *Minn Guð, minn guð* (10), *Pig bið ég þrátt* (11) and *Framorðið er og meir en mál* (15) move their tonal centre from *e* up a minor second to *f*.

No 10 starts with *e* as the tonal centre, but by the beginning of the second line it has shifted to the opposite *f*, where it stays until the melody concludes again with *e*. This melody leaves quite an ambiguous feeling, because the beginning and the end of the song stress opposed tonal centres.

No 11 is based on the interval of a fourth, between *e* and *a*, with *b* and *c* as embellishments. It shifts to the *f* note, opposite tonal centre between the third and

fourth lines, where it stays until the end with the exception of the sixth and seventh line, where the melody makes a temporary shift to *e* as tonal centre.

No 15 is, like No 11, based on the interval of a fourth, between *e* and *a*, with the *b* note as embellishment as well as the *c* note serving the purpose as the fifth of the opposed *f*. The melody begins with *e* as the tonal centre, but in the third line shifts to *f* and stays there until the end of the song.

The largest group of songs, six in total, have *f* as the tonal centre. *Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2), *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú* (6) and *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel* (7) all contain clear opposite tonal centres: No 2 is based on the major third: *f*, *g* and *a*, with *b* as an embellishment and *e* as the opposed tonal centre. The song begins with *f* as the tonal centre and in the third line, with the only leap in the song from *e* to *a*, it shifts to the opposite *e* where it stays until the end. This is rather unusual, that the song does not shift back to its initial tonal centre before the very end. That leaves a definite ambiguity between *f* and *e* as tonic and oppositional centres.

No 6 resembles No 15 remarkably and it even suggests that they derive from the same melody. In No 6 the interval of fourth between *e* and *a* is prominent in the beginning while during the third verse, the melody line seems to establish *f* as the tonal centre, clearly stated with the leap between *c* and *f* in the beginning of the final fourth line and the final long note.

No 7 also contains the interval of a fourth between *e* and *a*, but it is less ambiguous since the initial and final lines are based on the fifth *f-c'*. *Hress upp þinn hug* (5) and *Syng mín sál með glaðværð góðri* (19) keep the same tonal centre throughout. *Ó herra Guð mín heilsa er rýr* (18) is the only song that has a key signature *b*-flat in the beginning of each stave. This can be interpreted as an indication of the accuracy of other notations: that there is not any *musica ficta* thinking there to avoid augmented fourths with flattening in the course of singing. Here, *f* is obviously the tonal centre and it definitely leans towards the opposite tonal centre – a major second above at *g* – since each line except the last one ends with it. But it also relies strongly on the harmonic dominant, the fifth *c*. In the next chapter I will discuss further the use of the augmented fourth in Icelandic music.

The analytical methods of Prof. Urve Lippus, which were presented in the beginning of this chapter, proved to be a good source when it came to understanding the inner tonal structure of the songs. The songs' tonal structure is based on the relationship between the tonal centre – a referential pitch, often more than one, which

the melody is based on (the lowest of those pitches serves like a root-tone) – and the opposing tones – always either a major/minor second above or below the root-tone of the tonal centre. An example of this might be where a song's tonal centre is *f–a*, and its opposing tones might be *e–a*. When a melody shifts to its opposing tones, it creates tonal tension that resolves when the melody returns to its tone centre.

As I say in the beginning of the chapter, the analysis is based on the principles of ethnomusicologists who, in studying foreign musical cultures, try to avoid presuming western modal structures even if the scales seem more or less the same in notation. This, along with my consultation with my professor and colleagues, convinced me to direct the focus of my tonal analyses to, as said before, the inner tonal structure of the melodies rather than, *e.g.* comparing to the medieval scales. I must also add that from my own perspective as a composer, this approach interested me partly because I found it brought me closer to the logic behind the music and also because I drew some parallels with my own composition techniques, as I discuss briefly in chapter 4.

### 3.5. Some interesting examples

Now I would like to direct our attention towards those songs that I found in some ways interesting either because of some problems I encountered in transcribing them or their tonal structure or formal aspects, which I think warrant closer study.

*Heyr þú oss himnum á* (13; example 3.1) is the only two-part song in the manuscript, which means that it uses the Icelandic traditional style of polyphonic singing *tvísöngur*. Example 3.1

#### 13. Heyr þú oss himnum á

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Heyr þú oss himnum á'. It consists of two systems of two staves each, representing two different voices. The music is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system contains the first two lines of the song, and the second system contains the last two lines. The lyrics are: 'Heyr þú oss himn-um á, hýr vor fað - ir börn þín smá, lukk - u oss þar til ljá, lif ei - lift þér erf - um hjá, og að þér aldr - ei flæm - umst frá.' The melody is simple and homophonic, with the two voices moving in parallel motion.

*Tvísöngur* refers to a two-voiced singing, the most characteristic feature of which is abundant (though not exclusive) use of parallel fifths. Another important feature in this style is unusual voice leading – the voices move in the same register and often cross each other and there is no clear differentiation between the high and low voice (Bjarni Þorsteinsson 1906–1909: 764–775).

In this song, counterpoint is very limited – only three harmonic intervals make up the whole song: unison, perfect fifth and an octave. The song is homophonic throughout, always one syllable for each breve-like note. The ambitus of the song is rather wide covering a major ninth from *c* to *d'*. It is rather exceptional for this melodic style how the upper voice descends over an unusually wide ambitus with only one (the first) melody-line – a whole octave from *d'* to *d* – and the lower voice repeats the same figure in the third line.

But there are two other things I find very interesting in this song. One of them is related to the specifics of *tvísöngur* – the upper and the lower melodies actually cross each other in the middle of the melody. The other interesting aspect is the formal structure of the voice-parts. As said in chapter 3.3, the melodies of each voice are continuous, but looking at how the melody-lines are divided between the voices, we discover some interesting imitation in the four first lines: the two first melody-lines of both voices are crossed and repeated with the third and fourth verse resulting in a canon-like polyphony: abcde and cdabf. This can be described as AA1B, although the conclusion (B) is too short to balance the beginning as an equal formal division.

Dr. Róbert Abraham Ottóson was an important figure in Icelandic musical life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was German, but lived most of his life in Iceland teaching music as well as researching old Icelandic music. In his article (Ottóson 1969) he wrote about this song and its origin, as well as comparing it to the *tvísöngur* style. He describes the style of the song as “*Stimmtausch*” – two voices sing the same material as in a canon, but the second voice does not wait until the first lines are sung, but instead sings later material in the beginning and the voices begin together.

He says that the style can be traced back to the books on organums and descants of the middle ages such as “*Pseudo-Cotto*”, written by Johannes Cotto, “*De Musica*” (around 1100) and “*De Speculatione Musicae*” by Walter Oddington (around 1300). He says that this method was still found in “*Piae Cantiones*”, an important Finnish book of songs (1582). He tried to find the original version of the song and his search lead him to a text in another copy of the manuscript (registered as AM 240 8vo; 1702) in which this song was marked: “*með tvísöngs lag sem Sanctus*” (with a *tvísöngur* song as Sanctus). He looked for the Sanctus songs in the Graduale Romanum without success. He then directed his attention to the many Sanctus songs that were sung in North-European churches of the late middle ages. There he found the song in at least ten Central-European sources from the 14th and 15th century (Ottósson: 256–257).



*Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns* (14) was probably the most difficult song for me to transcribe because of the problems that arose from its mixed notation.

Example 3.2

#### 14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns

Nær heim - ur - inn leik - ur í hend-i\_\_manns, hætt er að skeik-a meg - i,  
Guð - legr - i iðj - u gjör-ist á stans, þá geng - ur af rétt - um veg - i,  
nær eð Guðs við-vör - un vitj-ar þá hans, verð - ur hann að hop - a í hryggð-ar - dans,  
með - al - hóf - ið er mjótt til sanns, marg - ur það still - ir eig - i.

The song contains four different note-shapes: the breve-like notes like most of the songs in the manuscript, the white semibreve (a diamond) and the minima (a diamond with a stem), and a graphically longer breve-like final note. This put me in the difficult position of having to decide what durational values to use in the transcription.

To begin with, in this song there are two different kinds of notation mixed. The breve-like notes are not mensural, as said before, they are syllabic: only the length of the syllable and performer's manner of singing determine their actual duration. White semibreves and minimas are note-shapes of mensural notation with definite rhythmic proportions: they bring some rhythmic thinking into the otherwise unmeasured song (NB: there is no time-signature). Semibreves are longer notes and contain two (or three, depending on the measure) minimas.

I had decided to use quarters for transcribing the breve-like unmeasured notes in all the songs and here I confronted the problem of what should be the most adequate relationship between the indefinite breves and white semibreves. I did not find it suitable to transcribe the minimas as sixteenth notes; it seemed to suggest a movement that was too fast for this music. So, the conclusion was to transcribe

minima-like notes as eighths and both semibreve- and breve-like notes as quarters. This can be controversial but, as discussed already in chapter 3.1 about transcription, we did not see any other musically logical way.

This is a good example of how different the thinking behind this music is from our modern understanding of music. We can also speculate whether this way of notating indicates some specific features in the expressive qualities of the singing; whether the breve-like notes, which are placed in the beginnings or endings of a verse, are to be sung more freely (presumably slower) and the middle of the line in a more rhythmic way.

*Ó ég manneskjan auma* (2) is an interesting example of how ambivalent the tonal structure of a song can be.

### Example 3.3

#### 2. Ó ég manneskjan auma

Ó ég mann-esk-jan aum - a, erf - itt mér gang - a vill, mátt - ur er minn lít - ill,  
að má af mín ó - sköp ill, þó lið - i mín lífs-stund naum - a, og naum - a.

In this case, the melody starts on the *f* note and, for the first two verses, it is based on the major third between *f* and *a*, which might imply its tonal centre. In the third verse, however, there is a descending motion to *e* and a following leap to *a*, with the notes *e* and *a* more repeated and stressed, resulting in the melody's tonal structure becoming ambivalent. Since the song begins with *f*, my first impression was that the interval of *f*–*a* is the tonic group with its root on *f* and *e*–*a* is opposed to it and is used in the middle developing section of the melody. However, proceeding with my analysis, I realised that this might be also seen in the opposite way: that the first two melody-lines stress the opposing tones and when the melody makes a leap in the third verse, from *e* to *a*, it is in fact going to its tone centre *a*, from which the interval *e*–*a* becomes the tonic group.

Since the melody ends on *e*, which has been prominent from the third line onwards, it takes over as the tonic. However, through the melody the upper central tone is *a*, connecting both of these important intervals *f-a* and *e-a*, you can easily imagine an underlying *bourdon* with the *a* note. But since the *f* note is very present in the beginning of the song, then the competition between *e* and *f* as the tonic create an interesting ambiguity.

We have to keep in mind that the melody-strophe was repeated and this particular song had 17 stanzas (see table 3.2), thus the beginning and the end together form a melodic link repeated much more together than separately. Although the tonal structure of this song is perhaps more ambivalent than most of the others, this is however a good example of how different interpretations of the tonal structure in this repertoire are possible.

In *Heyr mig mín sál* (20) we have a good example of the usage of the augmented fourth, one of the main characteristics of old Icelandic music.

#### Example 3.4

### 20. Heyr mig mín sál

Heyr mig mín sál og hraust þú vert, hvað er þér að þú sorg-full ert, ó-vær í þín-um and-a,

treyst þín - um Guð - i og hug þinn hert, hann mun vel hjá\_ þér stand - a.

Although the augmented fourth is prevalent throughout the songs in the manuscript, I decided to use this song as an example because of its frequent use within this song. The tonal centre in this song is *g* and the middle of the melody *f* is used in prominent positions as an opposition. I would say that the shift takes place toward the end of the second verse, when the melody line descends from *b* to *f*, but the augmented fourth becomes even more apparent as an important framing interval in the leap in the third melody-line. From there on, the melody is based on the scale steps between *f* and *b* until, in the last line, the initial *g-b* returns and brings the melody back to its tonal centre of *g*.

*Ó herra Guð mín heilsa er rýr* (18) is a good example proving that the use of the so-called Icelandic scale with the high fourth scale step is not incidental, for in this notation  $B^b$  is used in the key-signature clearly indicating that the lack of it in all other songs is intentional.

There have often been speculations about *Musica ficta* in old Icelandic music: whether melodies were really sung with  $b$ -natural and contained abundant use of the augmented fourth in descending and ascending movements as a clearly pronounced framing interval or even as a quite ear-catching leap, or people simply flattened it when appropriate without inserting alterations into the notation. Evidently, people distinguished between the perfect and augmented fourth between  $f$  and  $b/b^b$ . I'd conclude with quoting the Danish ethnomusicologist Svend Nielsen describing the tonal structures found in old Icelandic folk hymn singing:

“This mode clearly predominates in that it forms the basis of three fourths of the hymn tunes. Its scale differs from that of the major-like mode in that it has an augmented fourth. The augmented fourth is also found in [European] art music, in the ecclesiastical Lydian mode, but it is rather unlikely that this mode and the Icelandic mode have any relation to one another other than the augmented fourth, and this similarity is presumably pure coincidence. Furthermore, the Icelandic mode is also found in many of the tunes to secular ballads, especially in the ballads used in connection with the special part-singing practice *tvisaungur*, as well as in the epic song genre.” (Nielsen 2006: 259).

## 4. Conclusions

My research of the songbook of Father Ólafur from Sandar has been a rewarding experience, which has enabled me to peek into peripheral musical thinking of the past and, in that way, to deepen my understanding of how music can develop with limited connections to the Western art music tradition. In this music you can find two traditions meeting. Through the form of the melodies, you can see structural elements that trace back to Icelandic oral heritage while the music is already composed and notated. The freely floating formal structures of this music refer to an intuitive approach to musical invention, not led by the writer's training in music and knowledge of the rules of composition.

This archaic simple form of notation was the focus of my research: reflecting upon what was not notated. The lack of information on tempo, rhythmic patterns, expression and other characteristics of real sound was intriguing and my musical instinct was sometimes the only thing I could rely on to match syllables and stresses with notes and to create a natural musical realization. This process tells us so much about how oral tradition cooperated in performing such music – it was not necessary to record more details in the notation.

### 4.1. How my compositions and my research relate

In this chapter I'll discuss how my music and my research project relate. I would like to use as my latest piece, *Varjust* (From Shadow to Shadow), for soprano and string orchestra as an example. It was premiered at the Tartu Composers' Festival in the spring of 2013 by Tui Hirv and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra conducted by Mikk Murdvee. The poem is by Indrek Hirv.

I think it is appropriate to begin my reflections by describing my composition studies with Helena Tulve, who has been my supervisor through all of the 6 years as a composition student at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. Most of our composition classes we just sat and talked. We discussed life and asked ourselves philosophical questions, mostly about existentialist matters – religious or secular. We had great fun doing this and these times are very dear to me. Actually, we did not spend much time on technical matters concerning compositional issues and they were

usually left to the end of a class as a formality that also had to be done. Somewhere in all those talks the prevailing subject – music – was present. Now I can see, looking back to those meetings, that we constantly tried to grasp and understand the actual point where philosophical talks and composition meet.

One of the things we talked about was the flow of music: how it developed in what we used to call “a natural way”. Sometimes we used the word “organic” also. Of course, this sounds abstract and vague when I try to describe the experience, but this is the way of talking when composers meet. We don’t always stick to earthbound matters. But I like to make connections between my compositions and elements of my daily life that I consider natural or psychological. This might be described in the following way: I think about energy levels rising and diminishing, about the energy that can release earth movements, for example, in a similar way as an attack point in music. What precedes it and what follows?

I think in similar terms about the psychological state of people – how we are constantly like a barometer that goes up and down. We don’t really ever stop in a certain mode and the same holds for the nature – it never stops, although we cannot always see the movement. In a way these things can be compared to the development of a composition, how one event always leads to another, nothing ever happens from nothing.

In general, I try to work with very limited intervallic material. Usually, in my music there are long sections mainly built of minor seconds, major sevenths and minor ninths, etc. But then, they tend to form clusters and finally you have all the intervals in there. In this sense, we can talk about density like I spoke about energy, it rises and diminishes – and when a few notes die away from a cluster, a chord remains. These are some of the things I think about while composing.

Now, I would like to direct the attention to the last piece I wrote while studying in Estonia, *Varjust varju* for soprano and string orchestra. While writing this piece, I started to connect these compositional thoughts of mine with the inspiration I got from these simple melodies of the manuscript I had been transcribing and analysing for some time already.

Many of the melodies are built up from limited material, often consisting of only five or six notes and mostly moving stepwise. If I had to talk about the songs as compositions, I would describe them as “economically composed”, much material made from little. This thinking became central in my composing. In my piece, I used

the intervals of the major and minor second, such as  $A-B-C$  as the main intervallic relations. These two intervals are, of course, embraced with the interval of the minor third. I also used other intervallic relations, but they were connected to this motive by using the minor second, which is prevalent throughout the piece. Sometimes I also put the minor second into the foreground by making chromatic clusters, giving a rest to the dynamic movements of those intervallic relations. The effect can be compared with putting a car's gear level to neutral – the energy level stays the same until a change is made.

But these main intervals I use in this piece – for me it has a very primitive, somehow old sound – just these three notes. Yet, with this limited material you can produce much music, especially when you change octaves and, in that way, create the major/minor seventh, ninth, etc. Trying to describe how I develop this motive, let's say, I've been using  $A-B-C$  (or corresponding intervals) and want to make a change, as to conclude or to continue the melodic line, I can go to  $B-A-G\#$ . With that, I have mirrored the motive and created a passage to continue to the next three notes that might, for example, consist of  $G\#-F\#-E\#$  (which I always write as  $F$ ). This is only an example how I create new material in the course of the work without changing much the character of the piece.

Of course, this is not precisely the way melodic lines in my composition are made. I've related this in a simplified and superficial way just to explain how they are done from very limited material and how they tend to repeat similar patterns. That is one of the things I found so interesting in the melodies of this manuscript: how certain elements of the melodies are repeated, but seldom in completely the same form. This relates to what I talk about in chapter 3.3 about the formal structure of melodies and how some segments of melodies are repeated in a slightly different way, as if to help the singer remember the line.

As for the string orchestra, tonal material is based on the same elements as the melodic line of the singing voice, but in a more abstract way, it is not always so easy to recognize it. The text and music are intertwined – like a thick rope that is made out of many strings or a tapestry of many small patterns. Close to the the end of the piece, the voice stops singing and the strings take over with a line that contains all the characteristics of the melody. I chose words and phrases from the poem and, instead of having the soprano sing them, I had the violins play them. I accentuated the melodic motives of the strings in the same manner as the accents were distributed in

the verses. So, we can say that in the end of the piece the strings and text become unified.

When I composed the piece, I started by composing the melodic line. It was a suggestion from Helena Tolve. This helped me very much. In this way, I think that I managed to compose a more coherent piece, to preserve the same atmosphere throughout and make the piece stronger.

## **4.2. Conclusions of the analyses**

Father Ólafur Jónsson from Sandar, the West-Fjords, wrote his songbook in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In this thesis I have researched a copy made by Father Hjalti Þorsteinsson in 1693. In the second chapter of this work, the historical background, as well as both of the priests as historical persons, are introduced. The manuscript itself is described in the introductory chapter, in the subchapter 1.2 Source. The central part of this work is the third chapter dedicated to the analysis of the transcription, texts, melodic and tonal structures of the songs.

An essential result of this work is presented as the Appendix – facsimiles and transcriptions of all the 21 melodies.

The music in the manuscript can be characterized as simple hymn melodies resembling folk music. The manuscript is written in a clear and understandable way and I admire how economically it is written. The number of lines per stave is in logical correlation with the ambitus of the melody. The same applies to the usage of clefs in the beginning of each song. The clefs are chosen according to the ambitus of the melody and they are moved between the stave-lines to fit the melody within the stave.

There is no measure or time signature after the clef and in only one song a key signature  $B^b$  is used. The pitches are relative, so the music can be performed by any voice, high or low.

Vocally, the songs are well suited to any singer because of their ambitus never reaching over the major ninth. This shows us that the songs are addressed for everyman; they do not demand specific musical skills or voice training.

Most of the songs are notated using black breve-like notes, resembling earlier mensural notation, and usually one syllable corresponds to a note. In my transcriptions, I decided to write them as quarter notes because I found it to be an



appropriate measure for the most commonly used note. The last note of each song is graphically longer to indicate a longer note, transcribed as a half note. This final note always has an ornamented fermata sign.

Some of the songs include rhythmical notation and, what is most interesting, some of them blend together mensural and non-mensural notation. This is exceptional and I do not think the writer's intentions can be fully explained. It caused me difficulty in deciding how to transcribe such segments. I decided to transcribe minimas as eighth-notes and semibreve also as quarters. That means, I have transcribed two different note-shapes as quarters, controversial as it seems. However, I do think this can be justified and in chapter 3.1 I've presented my arguments.

As described in chapter 3.5 discussing the melody No 14, I look at the breve-like notes in the beginning and end of a melody-line as being sung in a freer, presumably slower tempo before continuing in a more rhythmic way through the line. I would like to propose that this can be seen as the writer's way of adding a slight expression to the music, though that is unusual for the music of his time.

The vertical lines coincide with the punctuation marks in the text and thus can be seen as caesuras or even short pauses. But what is most unusual about them is that they are not all of the same length. They cover everything from the whole stave to only two lines and although there is a correlation between the length of the lines and the ambitus of the music, this correlation is not consistent. I came to the conclusion that this correlation is based on the writer's intuition and he treats this in a rather free way; he is not persistent.

In the latter half of the manuscript he only uses lines that cover the whole stave, which might indicate that he abandoned this method in the course of writing the manuscript.

All of the poems follow a clear rhyme pattern, such as: ababccc or ababab, with a few exceptions where the poems have four, or even five, rhyme words. However, when counting the syllables, it became apparent that the syllabic structure of the poems does not always follow the rhyme patterns; the number of syllables varies, in some cases even drastically. This was also apparent when counting the syllables in the stanzas of some long song. They tended to differ, but usually not more than by one or two syllables. However, when looking at the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables underlying patterns became much more clear. We should keep in mind that these songs were sung from memory from one generation to the

next and we can say that time took care of articulating the songs as they passed from one singer to the another.

One of the things I found most remarkable when researching the melodies in the poetry book of Father Ólafur from Sandar is their formal structure. When compared to the clear pattern of rhymes in the text it was surprising to see that only a handful of the songs have a traditional AB form (*Stollen* and *Aufgesang*) or some other regular structure while most of them follow a more intuitive approach. This contrast in the form of the music and text is unusual and without a doubt one of the music's main characteristics.

There are three different types of formal structures including the above mentioned AB form. Some melodies contain repeated segments, usually slightly varied. Sometimes melody-lines are based on the same tonal material or close contour. I must say, from a composer's point of view such elements caught my attention. This is similar thinking to oral music and I like to think about such melodic structures as being a connecting point between the oral and written musical heritage – orally inherited musical experience merging with composition recorded in written form.

Finally, there are melodies, in fact the largest group of them, which seem to have a completely continuous structure.

The music is syllabic and moves stepwise with occasional leaps of larger intervals. Only four songs do not contain any melismas while in all the other songs there are some, usually short, melismatic movements. It is likely that some melismas were used to enable easy adaption of the melody in case of alternating numbers of syllables in the corresponding verses of different stanzas.

When singing the songs, melismas could be used to fit some additional syllables into the melody-line. That brings us to the conclusion that the melisma movements are not only for decorative purposes but have a practical use as well.

The ambitus of the songs is from  $c$  to  $d'$ , with the majority of them ranging between a major seventh and a major ninth. Only one melody has a narrow ambitus of the fifth and four have that of the minor or major sixth. We can describe the inner tonal structure of the melodies as being based on the tension created by movement from one tonic group of scale steps to the opposite group, which is always either a major or minor second, higher or lower. The tonal centre can consist of more than one

note, such as the third, fourth and fifth used as an interval prominent between the syntactically strong positions in the melodic contour.

In some cases it was difficult to decide which scale steps should be considered as the tonic group and which are opposed (used in the middle developmental part of the melody as “going away from home”), mostly such ambivalence of tonal structure resulted from the divergence of the tonal content of the initial and the final part of the melody. Especially in those cases it was necessary (and challenging) to sing the melodies, repeatedly trying to hear the hierarchy of scale steps and rely on your instinct of defining mental referential pitch(es) to locate the scale of the melody without any support of some instrument.

In some cases the melody’s tone centre moves from the fundamental note up a perfect fifth, and sometimes from there up another fifth, such as *d–a–e*. But that does not mean that the tone centre has changed, it is still based on the same root-note: *d*. If the tone centre moved to the *c* note, then the melody line has changed to the opposed tone centre.

Several melodies are based on two opposite successive fourths, so that some melody-lines move in the lower and some in the upper part of the ambitus, such as from *c* to *f*, and from *g* to *c'*. In this way, longer and wider melodies are more easily sung and memorised. Structural elements like this support the idea that the origin of these melodies is, at least partly, rooted in music of vocal heritage.

It is my sincere hope that this research will be of some addition to the Icelandic musicology and bring it at least one step closer to the standard of what we have achieved in literature research. I believe that the viewpoint I was offered by my professor, Urve Lippus, based on her research of Baltic-Finnish music of oral heritage, proved to be inspirational for me and to bring me closer to the subject. It opened up a window into past time musical thinking that I believe the contemporary composer has a lot to learn from.

As music becomes more intellectual we must also look at it from the other end; where it is merely like a reaction of our instinct. The Poetry Book of Father Ólafur from Sandar is a fine example of that. Music that has been written down, as composed, but whose origin lies in the oral tradition of Icelandic folk singing, tracing far back in time. I believe with my research I have gained a deeper understanding of, not only my nation’s musical heritage, but the music that we are all born with and have practised through the ages.

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## **Viisid Sandari pastori, Isa Ólafuri lauluraamatust: vaimulikke laule 17. sajandi alguse Islandilt**

Käesolev uurimus käsitleb viise Sandari pastori, Isa Ólafuri lauluraamatust (*Kvæðabók sr. Ólafs á Söndum*). Uurimuse allikaks on Isa Hjalti Þorsteinssoni ümberkirjutus aastast 1693. Uurimuse eesmärk on transkribeerida viisid kaasaegses notatsioonis ja kirjeldada meloodiate struktuuri, mis on inspireerinud uurimuse autorit kompositsioonitehnilisest vaatepunktist.

Esimeses peatükis tutvustatakse allikat ning transkriptsioonipõhimõtteid ja analüüsimeetodeid: milliseid kaasaegseid võtteid on sobilik kasutada arhailiste viiseid puhul. Järgnev peatükk kirjeldab käsikirja ajaloolist tausta põgusa sissevaatega Islandi kiriku ja koguduselaulu ajalukku. Kolmandas peatükis analüüsitakse käsikirja kahtkümend üht viisi erinevatest vaatevinklitest. Transkriptsioonid on samuti uurimuse osa ning on ära toodud doktoritöö lisa koos algupärase noodistuse faksiimilega.

Kirjeldan transkribeerimise protsessi ja küsimusi, mis selle töö käigus üles kerkisid. Laulud on valdavalt süllaabilised ja üles kirjutatud väga lihtsakoeliselt, ilma meetrumita, kus igale silbile vastab must kandiline noodipea. Mõned rütmilised jaotused ja (*elaborations*) on endiselt kokkuleppe küsimus. Viiside struktuur on küllaltki vaba ja intuiitivne, mis väärib eraldi tähelepanu. Interpretatsioon lähtub suuresti tekstist, samal viisil lauldakse rohkesti salme. Salmide struktuuri kirjeldamiseks on koostatud tabelid riimiskeemide, silbijaotuste ning rõhuliste ja rõhutute silpide järgnevustega. Viiside tonaalne struktuur põhineb enamasti pingel toonika (laadi põhiheli, tema tertis ja/või kvint, vahel ka ülemine/alumine kvart) ja sellele vastanduvate astmete vahel (sekundi võrra kõrgemad või madalamad helid).

Kuigi allikas on kirjalik, põhineb lauluraamat selgelt suulisel pärandil ja eeldab ka vastavat lähenemist. Noodistus on siin eelkõige esitusjuhiseks ning ma olen püüdnud avastada laulude sisemist arenguloogikat, et neid juhiseid mõista.

Appendix: Facsimiles and transcriptions of the melodies



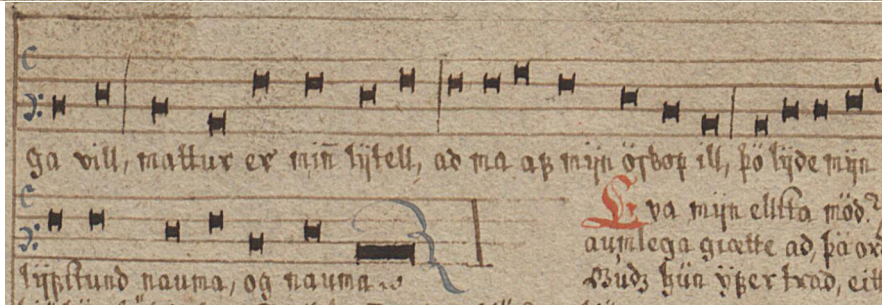
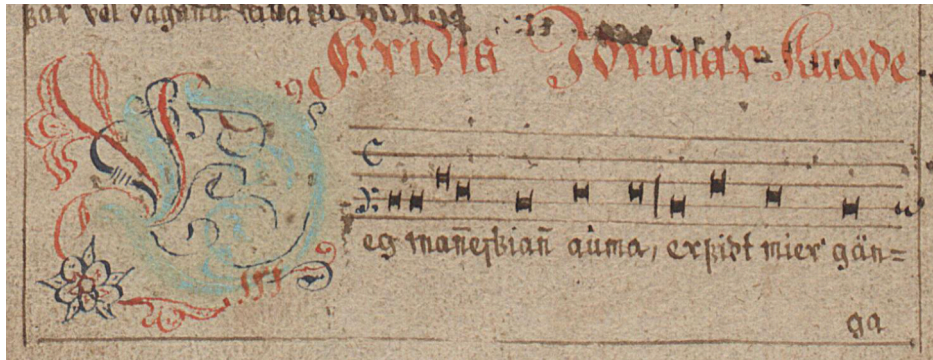


Melody 1: *Sjálfr Drottinn sannleikans*. Lord of Truth Himself

## 1. Sjálfr Drottinn sannleikans

Sjálfr - ur drott - inn sann - leik - ans, sagt hef - ur máls - hátt þann,  
 af nægð hjart - ans munn - ur manns, mæl - ir hvað hugs - ar hann,  
 sodd - an kem - ur mig sjálf - an við, sorg - um vaf - inn ég þann - in bið,  
 Hug - raun - minn - i Guð hjálp - - a þú við.





Melody 2: Ó ég manneskjan auma. Oh, I the Weak Man

## 2. Ó ég manneskjan auma

Ó ég mann-esk-jan aum-a, erf-itt mér gang-a vill, mátt-ur er minn lít-ill,

að má af mín ó-sköp ill, þó líð-i mín lífs-stund naum-a, og naum-a.



Melody 3: *Enn vil ég einu sinni*. One more time I Wish to

### 3. Enn vil ég einu sinni

Enn vil ég ein - u sinn - i, — yrk - ja kvæð - i um stund, hægj - a so hugs - un minn i,  
 og hafn - a stigð - ar lund, en þó þé - mætt finn - i, — fátt hér menn og sprund.



Melody 4: *Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á þrátt.* My Duty is to Mention

#### 4. Mér væri skyldugt að minnast á

Mér vær-i skyld-ugt að minn-ast á þrátt, minn-ar sál- fá-tækt og stór-ann van-mátt,

hugs - a um hag-inn minn hvörn dag sem nátt, list ein-a best-a og lukk - u ég tel,

að lif - a hér Guð - leg - a og deyj - a burt vel,

ein - att að vax - a í ótt - a Guðs þótt á - gang - i smátt.



Melody 5: *Hress upp þinn hug*. Cheer up Your Mind

## 5. Hress upp þinn hug

Hress upp þinn hug upp - lát þitt eyr - a, allt fólk sem er for - hert í þér,  
 gaum gæf - a skalt og gjarn - an heyr - a, hvað Guðs þíns boð og vilj - i er.



Melody 6: *Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú*. Set Your Only true Faith to God

## 6. Alleina til Guðs set trausta trú á

All - ein - a til Guðs\_ set traust - a trú, á tæp - a manns-hjálp ei bygg þú,  
 hjá ein - um Guð-i er tál - laus tryggð, en traud - leg - a víð - ar í heims - ins byggð.



Melody 7: *Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel.* Look up my Soul and Treat Yourself Well

## 7. Upp líttu sál mín og umsjá þig vel

Upp lítt - u sál mín og um-sjá þig vel, því að kom-inn ég tel, að kom-inn ég tel,  
þér dóm-inn og deyd, dag - leg - a stytt - ist þitt lífs - ins skeið.



Melody 8: Ó Jesú elsku hreinn. O, Jesus, Dear and Pure

## 8. Ó Jesú elsku hreinn

Ó Jes - ú elsk - u hreinn, æð - ri þér finnst \_\_\_\_\_ ei neinn,  
 barn Guðs og best - i sveinn, björg sál - ar ert - u einn.



Melody 9: *Dyr fæðing Drottins vors*. Glorious Birth of our Lord

## 9. Dyr fæðingin Drottins vors


  
 Dyr fæð - ing - in Drott - ins vors Jes - ú krist - i,


  
 dauð - leg - ann hag vorn með sín - um kraft - i upp - lýst - i, því má nú hugg - un þá,


  
 hvör fá, hvað aumt sem veik - ann nú vill þjá, því oll - i sveinn sá.





Melody 10: *Minn Guð, minn guð. My God, my God*

## 10. Minn Guð, minn Guð

Minn Guð minn Guð mund-u nú til mín, mig for-lát á jörð-hér eig - i,  
 hvörn dag og nótt ég hróp - a til þín,  
 hjalp svo ég bæn-hey-rast meg - i, fyr - ir þitt guð-dóm-legt orð.



Melody 11: *Þig bið ég þrátt*. To You I Pray for Strength

## 11. Þig bið ég þrátt

Þig bið ég þrátt, þýð-ur Guð, dag sem nátt, og heiðr-a hátt, herr-a dóm þinn og al-mátt,

Hlýð - ug - u hjart - a hér, hjálp mér að off - ra þér,

á jörð — ég böl ber, best hjá — þér vist er.



Melody 12: *Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð*. Listen Christians and Remain Silent

## 12. Gaumgæfið kristnir og gefið til hljóð

Gaum-gæf-ið kristn-ir og gef-ið til hljóð, sem guð-rækn-i hafði ið sann-a,

með-an ég syng einn sorg-leg-ann óð, um sál-ar ó-vin-i mann-a,

Guð náð-i vort fár og vand-a, þá slær fyr-ir mér i þögn og stans,

þeg-ar mér svip-ar hug til sanns, það sál-ar-far manns,

sem megn er ei móti að stand-a.



Melody 13: *Heyr þú oss himnum á*. Hear Thou us in Heaven

### 13. Heyr þú oss himnum á

Heyr þú oss himn-um á, hýr vor fað - ir börn þín smá, lukk - u oss þar til ljá,  
 Heyr þú oss himn-um á, hýr vor fað - ir börn þín smá, lukk - u oss þar til ljá,  
 líf ei - líft þér erf - um hjá, og að þér aldr - ei flæm - umst frá.  
 líf ei - líft þér erf - um hjá, og að þér aldr - ei flæm - umst frá.



Melody 14: *Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns*. When the World is Playing in the Palm of Your Hand

## 14. Nær heimurinn leikur í hendi manns

Nær heim - ur - inn leik - ur í hend-i\_\_manns, hætt er að skeik-a meg - i,

Guð - legr - i iðj - u gjör-ist á stans, þá geng - ur af rétt - um veg - i,


nær eð Guðs við-vör - un vitj-ar þá hans, verð - ur hann að hop - a í hryggð-ar - dans,


með - al - hóf - ið er mjótt til sanns, marg - ur það still - ir eig - i.



Melody 15: *Framorðið er og meir en mál*. It is Dusk and More than Time to

## 15. Framorðið er og meir en mál


  
 Fram-orð - ið er og meir en mál, að minn-ast á Guð þinn krist - in sál,


  
 gá að hvörs - u hans gæsk - an blid, gætt hef - ur þín um líðn - a tíð.



Melody 16: *Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta*. Unworthy Though I Should Revere

## 16. Mikils ætti ég aumur að akta

Mik - ils ætt - i ég aum - ur að akt - a, ást og misk - unn Guðs míns góð - a,  
 að hann send - ir oss að vakt - a, engl - a sín - a burt frá voð - a, holl - um þess - um hans höfð - ingj - um,  
 hér vill oft Guðs ves - a - ling - um, mik - il oft ligg - ja makt á.



Melody 17: *Göfgum góðfúslega*: Gladly let us praise

## 17. Göfgum góðfúslega

Göfg - um góð - fús - leg - a, Guð á all - a veg - a,  
 hon - um hljóð - in skart - a, hald - i eitt munn - ur og hjart - a.





Melody 18: Ó herra Guð minn mín heilsa er rýr. O Dear God of mine, my Health is Weak

## 18. Ó herra Guð mín heilsa er rýr

Ó herr - a Guð mín heils - a er rýr, ham-ingj - an við - mér bak - i snýr,  
við heim-inn hef - ég - lít - ið lag, líð - ur so æf - in mín dag eft - ir dag,  
þann - in so veik - ur þrok - - - i ég hér,  
þjón - að get hvörk - i öðr - um né mér.



Melody 19: *Syng mín sál með glæðværð góðri*. Sing, my Soul, with Joy

## 19. Syng mín sál með glæðværð góðri

Syng mín sál með glæð - værd - góð - - - ri,

gleym stúr-u og lund hljóð - - ri, vert vel til friðs, vænt drott - ins liðs

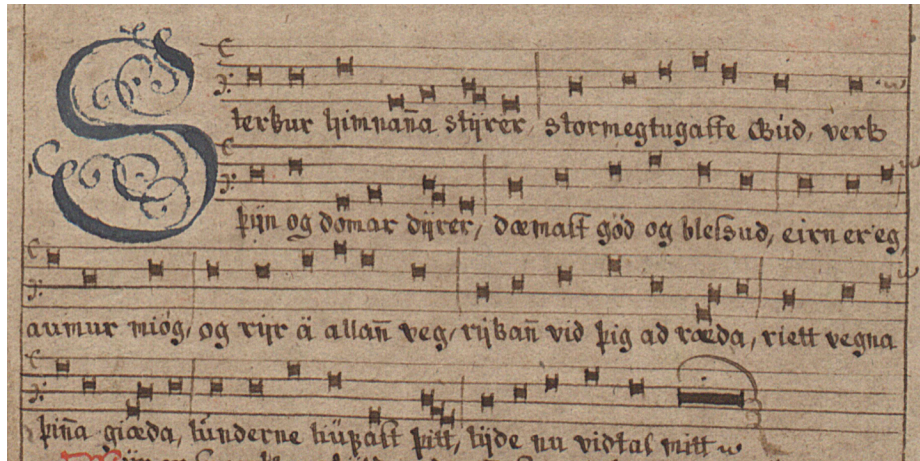
geð mitt því hlær, að Guð er mér nær, góð- a mér heils-u um síð - ir hlær.



Melody 20: *Heyr mig mín sál*. Hear me, my Soul


## 20. Heyr mig mín sál


Heyr mig mín sál og hraust þú vert, hvað er þér að þú sorg-full ert, ó-vær í þín-um and-a,  
 treyst þín - um Guð - i og hug þinn hert, hann mun vel hjá þér stand - a.





Melody 21: *Sterkur himnanna stýrir*. Heaven's Strong Commander

## 21. Sterkur himnanna stýrir


  
 Sterk-ur himn-ann - a stýr - ir, stór-megt-ug-ast - i Guð, verk þín og dóm-ar dýr - ir,


  
 dæm-ast góð og bless-uð, einn er ég, aum - ur mjög, og rýr á all - an veg,


  
 rík - an við þig að ræð - a, rétt vegn - a þinn - a gæð - a,


  
 lund - ern - i ljúf - ast þitt, líð - i nú við - tal mitt.