

New Studies in the Manuscript  
Tradition of *Njáls saga*

The *historia mutila* of *Njála*

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Edited by

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# The Manuscripts of *Njáls saga*

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THE FOLLOWING OVERVIEW IS based on Susanne M. Arthur's 2015 PhD dissertation on the codicology of *Njáls saga*. The dating, names of scribes, and nicknames of manuscripts were adopted from the dissertation though manuscripts that were unknown when the dissertation was completed have been added. The manuscripts appear in chronological order. Fragments with different call numbers that were originally part of the same manuscript are listed together. The list is numbered consecutively; a lowercase letter has been added to fragments with different call numbers belonging to the same manuscript. The list provides the call number, nickname (where applicable), number of folios on which *Njáls saga* text is copied (leaves left blank are not counted), repository, date of writing, name of the scribe (where known), and the writing support (parchment or paper) for each manuscript. In cases where additional leaves have been added to manuscripts at a later point in time (e.g., to replace damaged or missing leaves), these later inserts are given their own entry in the list, with a cross-reference to the original manuscript. Manuscripts that are lost today, though attested in written sources, are not given a number but are labeled with the symbol (†). Likewise, summaries and translations are not numbered but are marked with (sum.) and (trans.) respectively.

## Repositories

- SÁM: Manuscript department of the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum), Reykjavík, Iceland
- Lbs: Manuscript department of the National and University Library of Iceland (Landsbókasafn Íslands—Háskólabókasafn), Reykjavík, Iceland

- KBK: Manuscript collection of the Royal Library (Det Kongelige Bibliotek), Copenhagen, Denmark
- AMS: The Arnamagnæan Collection (Den Arnamagnæanske Samling), University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- KBS: Manuscript department of the Royal Library (Kungliga biblioteket), Stockholm, Sweden
- NBO: Manuscript department of the National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket), Oslo, Norway
- TCD: Manuscripts & Archives Research Library, The Library of Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
- BL: Manuscript department of the British Library, London, United Kingdom
- UBR: Manuscript department of the University Library, Rostock (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock), Germany
- Þj: The National Museum (Þjóðminjasafn Íslands), Reykjavík, Iceland

- 1 a AM 162 B β fol. (1 fol.) SÁM ca. 1300 parch.  
 b AM 162 B δ fol. (Þormóðsbók; 24 fols.) SÁM ca. 1300 parch.

The two fragments belong to the earliest textual transmission of *Njáls saga* and were most likely originally part of the same codex.<sup>1</sup>

- 2 GKS 2870 4to (Gráskinna; 95 fols.) SÁM ca. 1300 parch.  
 For the younger part of the codex which supplies missing or illegible text see no. 20 (Gráskinnuauki).
- 3 AM 468 4to (Reykjabók; 93 fols.) AMS ca. 1300–25 parch.  
 On folio 93v (the saga ends on 93r), a different but contemporary hand added additional stanzas (*visnaauki* 13 to 15, as well as 27 and 28, see Beeke Stegmann in this volume). The additional stanzas 16 (24r), 17 (24v) 18 (29r), 19 (31v), 20 (32v), 21 (33r), 22 (37r), 23 (37r), 24 (39r), 25 (40v), 26 (47v) and 29 (52r) were added by the same hand in the margin. One folio was added during the seventeenth century; see no. 44.
- 4 AM 162 B γ fol. (Óssbók; 5 fols.) SÁM ca. 1325 parch.
- 5 AM 162 B ζ fol. (5 fols.) SÁM ca. 1325 parch.
- 6 AM 162 B θ fol. (2 fols.) SÁM ca. 1325 parch.
- 7 AM 132 fol. (Möðruvallabók; 48 fols.) SÁM 1330–70 parch.  
 13 folios were added during the seventeenth century; see no. 42.

- 8 AM 133 fol. (Kálfalækjarbók; 95 fols.) SÁM ca. 1350 parch.
- 9 AM 162 B κ fol. (2 fols.) SÁM ca. 1350 parch.
- 10 AM 162 B η fol. (3 fols.) SÁM ca. 1350 parch.
- 11 AM 162 B ε fol. (Hítardalsbók; 7 fols.) SÁM ca. 1350–75 parch.  
Folios 2 to 8 of the ε-fragment; the first folio was added during the early sixteenth century;<sup>2</sup> see no. 19.
- 12 GKS 2868 4to (Skafinskinna; 44 fols.) KBK 1350–1400 parch.  
Folio 31 was added during the seventeenth century; see no. 22.
- 13 GKS 2869 4to (Sveinsbók; 10 fols.) KBK 1375–1400 parch.  
Bjarni Gunnar Ásgeirsson (in this volume, pp. 90–92) dates folios 1 to 10 (written by two contemporary scribes) to the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Folio 11 is written in a younger hand; see no. 15.
- 14 AM 162 B α fol. (2 fols.) SÁM 1390–1440 parch.
- 15 GKS 2869 4to (Sveinsbók; 1 fol.) KBK 1400–25 parch.  
Folio 11 of Sveinsbók (no. 13) written in a younger hand (see Bjarni Gunnar Ásgeirsson in this volume, p. 92).
- 16 AM 162 B ι fol. (Reykjarfjarðarbók; 4 fols.) SÁM 1400–25 parch.
- 17 AM 466 4to (Oddabók; 57 fols.) SÁM 1460 parch.
- 18 AM 309 4to (Bæjarbók; 10 fols.) SÁM 1498 parch.
- 19 AM 162 B ε fol. (1 fol.) SÁM ca. 1500 parch.  
Folio 1 of the ε-fragment (no. 11).
- 20 GKS 2870 4to (Gráskinnuauki; 26 fols.) SÁM 1500–50 parch.  
27 folios were added to Gráskinna (no. 2) in the sixteenth century to fill lacunae (see Emily Lethbridge in this volume, pp. 74–75).
- 21 The Lost Codex (3 fols. + 1 lost fol.) ca. 1600–50 parch.  
The following fragments were identified as originally belonging to the same codex by Susanne Arthur.<sup>3</sup> B<sub>j</sub> fragm. I is lost.<sup>4</sup>
- a) AM 921 I 4to SÁM
- b) Lbs fragm. 2 Lbs
- c) JS fragm. 4 Lbs
- d) (†) B<sub>j</sub> fragm. I

- 22 GKS 2868 4to (1 fol.) KBK 1600–1700 parch.  
Folio 31 of Skafinskinna (no. 12) was added during the  
seventeenth century. The text fits seamlessly into the remaining  
text but the folio was bound front to back.
- 23 AM 396 fol. (Melanes-/  
Lambavatnsbók; 46 fols.) SÁM ca. 1600–50 parch.  
Scribe of the Lost Codex
- 24 AM 136 fol. (89 fols.) SÁM 1640–43 paper  
Jón Gissursson
- 25 AM 134 fol. (Hofsþbók; 148 fols.) SÁM 1640–56 paper  
Jón Erlendsson
- 26 AM 470 4to (Hvammsbók; 160 fols.) SÁM 1640–60 paper  
Ketill Jörundsson
- 27 AM 555 c 4to  
(Breiðabólstaðarbók; 75 fols.) SÁM 1640–60 paper  
Halldór Guðmundsson
- 28 AM 137 fol. (Vigfúsarbók; 170 fols.) SÁM 1640–1672 paper  
Jón Erlendsson
- 29 AM 163 d fol. (Ferjubók; 31 fols.) SÁM 1650–82 paper
- 30 AM 465 4to (133 fols.) SÁM 1650–99 paper  
(trans.) GKS 1021 fol. (124 fols.) KBK 1660–64 paper  
Danish translation written in the hand of Þormóður Torfason  
(Torfæus).
- 31 GKS 1003 fol. (46 fols.) SÁM 1667–70 parch.  
Páll Sveinsson
- (sum.) AM 576 a 4to (2 fols.) SÁM 1660–95 paper  
Einar Eyjólfsson; summary in Icelandic
- 32 AM 555 a 4to (65 fols.) SÁM 1663–65 paper  
Páll Ketilsson (with the exception of 1 and 2; see no. 43)
- 33 AM 163 i fol. (Saurbæjarbók; 57 fols.) SÁM 1668 paper  
Hinrik Magnússon (with the exception of folios 1 to 3; see no.  
41)

- 34 Holm. papp. fol. nr 9 (459 fols.) KBS 1684 paper  
Jón Vigfússon
- 35 AM 135 fol. (188 fols.) SÁM ca. 1690–97 paper  
Ásgeir Jónsson
- 36 BL Add 4867 fol. (99 fols.) BL ca. 1690 paper  
Jón Þórðarson
- 37 AM 464 4to (162 fols.) SÁM 1697 paper  
Jón Halldórsson; copy of *Kálfalækjarbók* (no. 8).
- 38 Lbs 222 fol. (*Rauðskinna*; 102 fols.) Lbs 1698 paper  
Jón Þórðarson
- 39 Lbs 3505 4to (179 fols.) Lbs 1698 paper
- 40 NKS 1220 fol. (*Vigursbók*; 108 fols.) KBK 1698 paper  
Magnús Ketilsson
- 41 AM 163 i fol. (3 fols.) SÁM 1600–1700 paper  
Folios 1 to 3 of manuscript AM 163 i fol. (no. 33), in a different hand. On folio 4, the text of folio 3 continues seamlessly; the folios were presumably added during the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>
- 42 AM 132 fol. (13 fols.) SÁM 1600–1700 parch.  
Folios 1–11, 20, and 30 of *Möðruvallabók* (no. 7).
- 43 AM 555 a 4to (2 fols.) SÁM 1600–1700 paper  
Folios 1 and 2 of manuscript AM 555 a 4to (no. 32) in a different hand. The text on folio 3 does not continue the text of folio 2 directly but repeats part of the previous passage.
- 44 AM 468 4to (1 fol.) AMS 1600–1700? parch.  
Folio 7 of *Reykjabók* (no. 3).
- (sum.) Holm. papp. 96 fol. (5 fols.) KBS 1700–1750 paper  
Swedish summary
- 45 SÁM 33 (1 fol.) SÁM 1700–1800 paper
- 46 AM 469 4to (*Fagureyjarbók*; 149 fols.) SÁM 1705 paper  
Einar Eiríksson
- 47 AM 467 4to (301 fols.) SÁM ca. 1707–22 paper  
Jón Magnússon; copy of *Reykjabók* (no. 3).<sup>6</sup>

- 48 KB Add 565 4to (329 fols.) SÁM 1707–22 paper  
Jón Magnússon; direct copy of Reykjabók (no. 3).
- 49 KB Add 565 4to (4 fols.) SÁM 1707–22 paper  
Folios 22r–25r (pp. 43–49) containing the text corresponding to that of folio 7 in AM 468 4to (no. 44) are in a different hand. The inserted text continues the preceding text seamlessly but does not copy the text of folio 7 in AM 468 4to directly. On folio 25v the text copied from AM 468 4to continues seamlessly.
- 50 ÍB 421 4to (325 fols.) Lbs ca. 1707–22 paper  
Jón Magnússon; copy of Reykjabók (no. 3).
- 51 NB 313 4to (157 fols.) NBO 1711 paper  
Jón Halldórsson; copy of AM 464 4to (no. 37).
- († sum.) Biörner's Swedish summary ca. 1720–30 paper  
Carl Julius Biörner; Swedish summary (with some Icelandic text) written for the Swedish Antikvitetskollegiet.
- (sum.) Rostock Mss. philol. 78/2 (5 fols.) UBR ca. 1730? paper  
German summary of certain passages of the saga with occasional quotations in Icelandic.
- (trans.) Holm. papp. 93/96 fol. (235 fols.) KBS 1733–63 paper  
Þorvaldur Brockmann; Swedish translation.
- (trans.) Holm. papp. 93 fol. (140 fols.) KBS 1733–63 paper  
Carl Hagelberg; clean copy/revision of Þorvaldur Brockmann's translation; see entry above.
- 52 ÍB 261 4to (Lágafellsbók; 125 fols.) Lbs 1740 paper  
Jón Jónsson  
Seven folios were added in the nineteenth century; see no. 68.
- 53 Thott 1776 4to III (82 fols.) KBK ca. 1742–99 paper
- 54 Thott 984 fol. IIIa (168 fols.) KBK ca. 1750 paper  
Jón Ólafsson
- 55 Thott 1765 4to (138 fols.) KBK ca. 1750 paper
- 56 ÍB 322 4to (128 fols.) Lbs ca. 1750–70 paper  
Jón Helgason



- 57 TCD MS 1002 (Dyflinnarbók;  
191 fols.) TCD ca. 1750? paper  
Copy of Hvammsbók (no. 26).
- 58 Kall 612 4to (214 fols.) KBK 1753 paper
- 59 NKS 1788 4to (Bjarnastaðabók;  
207 fols.) KBK 1760 paper  
Jón Helgason
- 60 NKS 1219 fol. (248 fols.) KBK ca. 1760–80 paper
- 61 Without call number (Landakotsbók;  
240 fols.) LK 1760–80 paper  
Copy of Reykjabók (no. 3) owned by Landakotskirkja in  
Reykjavík, Iceland.
- 62 SÁM 137 (Flateyjarbók yngri;  
87 fols.) SÁM 1767–69 paper  
Markús Snæbjörnsson
- 63 AM Acc. 50 (139 fols.) AMS 1770 paper  
Jakob Sigurðsson
- 64 ÍB 270 4to (Urðabók; 133 fols.) Lbs ca. 1770 paper  
Magnús Einarsson
- (trans.) NKS 1221 fol. (63 fols.) KBK ca. 1770 paper  
Jón Eiríksson; Danish translation of the first part of the saga.
- 65 Lbs 1415 4to (237 fols.) Lbs ca. 1770 paper  
Two folios were added in the nineteenth century; see no. 70.
- 66 NB 372 4to (169 fols.) NBO 1772 paper  
Engilbert Jónsson; copy of NB 313 4to (no. 51).
- 67 Lbs 437 4to (175 fols.) Lbs 1773 paper
- 68 ÍB 261 4to (7 fols.) Lbs 1840 paper  
Folios 1–5 of Lágafellsbók (no. 52) were added, presumably  
during the nineteenth century; the text that follows continues  
seamlessly. Likewise, folios 134–35 were added later but are  
written with a hand different from 1–5. The text overlaps with  
the preceding text. It is thus possible that the folios 134–35 were  
taken from a different paper manuscript.<sup>7</sup>

- 69 Lbs 747 fol. (89 fols.) Lbs 1871–72 paper  
Guðlaugur Magnússon
- (trans.) Lbs 4855 8vo Lbs 1772–1900 paper  
German translation of part of the saga written into a copy of the  
1772 Copenhagen edition.
- 70 Lbs 1415 4to (2 fols.) Lbs 1800–1900 paper  
Folios 225–26 of Lbs 1415 4to (no. 65) were added later to  
replace lost folios in the manuscript. The text fills the lacuna  
seamlessly.
- 71 SÁM 168 (Seattle Fragment; 3 fols.) SÁM 1800–1900 paper  
(†) Gullskinna 1300–1400? parch.  
Hofsbók (no. 25) contains marginal variants from a parchment  
codex designated as Gullskinna (see the chapters by Margrét  
Eggertsdóttir and by Alaric Hall and Ludger Zeevaert, in this  
volume).
- (†) Peder Resen’s library fol. no. 28 1600–1700? paper
- (†) Peder Resen’s library 4to no. 3 1600–1700? paper
- (†) Peder Resen’s library 4to no. 12 1600–1700? paper  
The manuscripts are listed in a catalog of Peder Resen’s library  
printed in 1685. The collection was given to the Copenhagen  
University Library but was lost in the fire of 1728.<sup>8</sup>
- (†) Hannes Finnsson’s library 4to no. 40 1700–1800? paper  
Manuscript ÍBR 78 4to, housed by the National and University  
Library of Iceland, contains a list of manuscripts owned by  
Bishop Hannes Finnsson (1739–1796). A manuscript containing  
“Saga af Birni Hítðalakappa. Niála” is listed as no. 40 (see p. 19).<sup>9</sup>
- (†) Þj fragm. II<sup>10</sup> 1600 parch.
- (†) Stockholm 1 1600–1700? paper
- (†) Stockholm 2 1600–1700? paper  
The paper manuscripts Stockholm 1 and 2 appear on a 1693 list  
of manuscripts owned by the Swedish Antikvitetskollegium from  
1693; “Nials Saga Manuscript in 4:to på Papper” and “Niala M. S.  
på Papper in 8:vo”. They were housed in the Royal Palace but were  
lost in the fire of 1697.<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir and Zeevaert, “Við upptök Njálu,” 164; Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 42.

<sup>2</sup> Bjarni Gunnar Ásgeirsson, “Njáls saga í AM 162 B ε fol.,” 35.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 57.

<sup>4</sup> According to Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (*Studies*, 83 and 86), the two fragments ÞjI (no. 21) and II were studied for his edition of *Njáls saga*. He says this about ÞjI: “The fragment has recently been the subject of a careful study by one of my students, Mr. Gunnar Sveinsson” (*Studies*, 83). This means that the fragments still existed around 1950; see also Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 39. However, Magnús Már Lárusson does not mention them in his 1963 overview of the parchment manuscripts in the National Museum of Iceland. A list, compiled by Björn M. Ólsen, of variants where the fragments diverge from the text in Konráð Gíslason’s and Eiríkur Jónsson’s 1875 edition is printed in Jón Þorkelsson’s survey (“Om håndskrifterne,” 712–16).

<sup>5</sup> Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 69.

<sup>6</sup> The additional stanzas 13, 14, 15, 27, and 28, which in the exemplar were added by a different hand than that of the main scribe on folio 93v and are very difficult to read, were added on folios 300r to 301r by Árni Magnússon.

<sup>7</sup> See Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 81.

<sup>8</sup> See *Arne Magnussons i AM. 435 A–B, 4to indeholdte håndskriftsfortegnelser*, 111, 113–15.

<sup>9</sup> See Jónas Kristjánsson, “Skrá um íslenzk handrit í Noregi,” 76–77, and Arthur, “Writing, Reading, and Utilizing *Njáls saga*,” 233, on the possible identification of Hannes’ manuscript with either NB 313 4to (no. 51) or Landakotsbók (no. 61).

<sup>10</sup> See note 4.

<sup>11</sup> See Gödel, “Fornnorsk-isländsk litteratur i Sverige,” 284; Schüek, *Kgl. vitterhets historie och antikvitetsakademien*, vol. 4, 100.

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