

Some early Christians in Landnámabók

The aim of this paper is to examine aspects of the treatment of pre-Conversion Christians in Landnámabók and other texts which might illuminate the nature of literary activity in 13th- and early 14th-century Iceland, particularly that involving the Icelanders' understanding of their Christian prehistory. Rather than attempting a broad survey of pre-Conversion Christianity or concentrating on the obvious Christian founders of dynasties like Auðr in djúpauðga or Helgi inn magri, I have chosen as the object of my investigation the lesser-known character Ásólfr, a man who was not even a landnámsmaðr proper and had no illustrious descendants, but is nevertheless accorded a great deal of attention. His story is told in different form in the Sturlubók and Hauksbók redactions of Landnámabók (abbreviated LdnStb and LdnHb) and in Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta (OsTm). A comparison of these three versions raises a number of interesting questions about how and why the Icelanders assimilated (or did not assimilate) Christian elements into texts dealing with the non-Christian period of their national history. Comparison with other texts will place the Ásólfr-texts in context in the Icelandic literary tradition and indicate the religious and literary preoccupations of 13th- and 14th-century Icelanders. First, however, it is necessary to analyse the three texts with which we are primarily concerned.

The first is in ch. 22-24 of LdnStb (see Appendix I). 22 and 23 are brief, typical Ldn chapters giving the names of two brothers (but not their place of origin or ancestry), the boundaries of their settlement and the names of some of their descendants. The second brother, Ketill, has a son called Jörundr enn kristni, who plays a part in the next chapter. This (ch. 24), on the other hand, is not at all like the laconic, informative chapters that make up most of LdnStb, with their abundance of names of people and places but not much else. For one thing, it concerns a man who is not a settler in his own right, only an unspecified relative of Jörundr. He has no family connections apart from Jörundr and no interest in establishing himself in the usual way. Rather, the chapter is constructed like

a saint's legend, concentrating on Asólfr's conflicts with heathens. Three times he builds himself a skáli, three times he is driven away by his neighbours when they discover that he has a seemingly unlimited supply of fish, and three times the fish disappear from the water after his departure. Finally he seeks the protection of Jörundr. After his death he is known as a very holy man. Although this tale stands out in the context of LdnStb, there is little indication of what its origin might have been, or how it got there.

More or less the same story is told at greater length in ch. 21 of LdnHb (Appendix II). Here we find that Pormóör and Ketill are given a place of origin (Ireland) and a patronymic (Bresason) and that, in spite of their Norse names, it is expressly said that they were Irish. Their landnám and descendants are described at greater length than in LdnStb, with some minor changes. Other additions include reference to a certain Kalman, after whom a local river is said to be named, who is also said to be Irish, and the information that Jörundr was an einsetumaör in his old age. Asólfr's relationship to Jörundr is explained by his being a son of Jörundr's sister Köna who stayed behind in Ireland and married an Irishman. After the arrival of Asólfr in Iceland, the story is expanded in two ways, first by the addition of certain details to the account of Asólfr's conflicts with his neighbours and then by the addition of a complete episode that takes place after his death and concerns the invention and translation of his relics.

Thus, Asólfr had eleven companions in his wanderings, according to LdnHb. Three of these died at their first stopping-place and their bones are later found and placed in the church at Holt. Asólfr's conflicts are described without the strict parallelism of LdnStb, the word 'heathen' is not mentioned and in the first two instances the opposition is concentrated in the person of one farmer, Porgeirr, thus diminishing the stylized legendary quality of the tale and connecting it more closely with the locality in which it takes place. However, the saintly quality is not entirely absent, for Porgeirr finally realizes that the Irishmen are góðir menn. Their final move westward is not expressly connected with Jörundr but, like him, Asólfr becomes an anchorite in his old age, and is rather improbably kitted out with a list of descendants.

The additional episode in LdnHb 21 has no parallel in LdnStb, although it could be seen as an explanation of the fact mentioned there that the church at Hólmr stands on Ásólfr's grave. The threefold structure of the earlier part of the narrative is repeated in Ásólfr's dream-appearances to respectively a dairymaid, a monk and Halldórr Illugason. Similarly, the finding of Ásólfr's bones echoes the finding of the bones of three of his companions related earlier. The Irish leitmotiv is picked up again when Halldórr, having acquired Ásólfr's relics and sent his son Illugi abroad for timber, builds a church which he dedicates to St Columcille.

It is well-known that Haukr Erlendsson based his redaction of Ldn on the earlier redaction by Sturla Þórðarson (LdnStb); he tells us so himself in LdnHb ch. 354. In the same place he tells us that his other main source was a redaction by Styrmir the Wise. This redaction is no longer extant and it has been a major task of Ldn-research to discover how much of LdnHb can be traced to Styrmisbók. At the same time, it is clear that Haukr was being slightly coy in not mentioning the third strand in his Ldn, being the additions and changes he made himself, from a variety of sources (Íslendingabók, Landnámabók 1968, lxxvi-lxxx) and consistent with his independent approach to his texts throughout Hauksbók. Scholars have been divided in their opinions on the source or sources for Haukr's additions in ch. 21. It has been suggested (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, 188-90) that Haukr's text was based on a lost þáttur about Ásólfr, although it is difficult to imagine exactly what sort of þáttur this is supposed to have been. An alternative explanation is that Haukr's additions derive from Styrmisbók, as maintained most recently by Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (1974, 78-9). The third possibility is that the LdnHb text is entirely due to changes made to the LdnStb text by Haukr himself, without dependence on any one specific outside source. We have already seen how the basic structure of the narrative is the same as in LdnStb, while Haukr seems to have built further on this structure in the episode of the dreams. Without wishing to resolve the complicated question of the derivation of Ldn here (for which our third text would also have to be taken into account), I would like to call attention to

those aspects of LdnHb 21 which indicate this third possibility.

One of the strongest indications is the interest in Irish settlers of Iceland which is characteristic of Haukr and which has been well documented (Helgi Guðmundsson 1967, 73-77). In that part of LdnHb 21 which has a parallel in LdnStb, most of Haukr's additions involve such 'Irish' information: the fact that the Bresasynir are Irish, the irrelevant information that Kalman, who otherwise plays no part in the story, is Irish (it is interesting to note that in LdnHb 30, where Kalman is the landnámsmaðr, Haukr has not bothered to change the statement of LdnStb that he was suðreykskr), Ásólfr's Irish parents and birthplace, and the fact that the church at Hólmr was dedicated to Columcille (note the Irish form of the name rather than the latinized Columba). As these Irish additions are not present in our third Ásólfr-text (ÓsTm), they must derive from Haukr himself and I believe the reason is not far to seek. Although Haukr's oft-quoted pride in his descent from Kjarvalr Írakonungr must have been a contributing factor, I believe the reason for his hibernicization of the story was that he recognized Ásólfr's miracle with the fish as quintessentially Irish. I am not suggesting that the narrative itself was in any way Irish (as implied by Hermann Pálsson 1953, 106), only that Haukr thought it was.

Although the miracle of causing fish to appear and disappear from rivers, lakes, streams and waterfalls at the convenience of the saint has been attributed to other saints (Loomis 1948, 69-70), it is a miracle that became almost a hallmark of Irish saints, including the most famous ones. Thus, Patrick blessed and cursed rivers with monotonous regularity (e.g. the 11th-century Irish Tripartite Life 1887, I, 35, 37, 71, 143, 145, 147, 149, 161, 211) and the miracle is also attributed to the aforementioned Columcille (Adomnan's Life of Columba 1961, 364-7); both of these were missionary saints, and of Columba it is said that 12 men accompanied him on his mission to Scotland (Adomnan's Life..., 546-7). Other Irish saints with this power include Ailbe, Brendan and Enda (Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae 1910, I, 59-60, 140, II, 72-3, see also Plummer's introduction, pp. c-ci, and for the episode in an Irish life

of Brendan, Bethada Náem n-Ereenn 1922, II, 78).

The final scene of LdnHb 21, in which Illugi throws the church-timber overboard, also seems to me likely to derive from Haukr. The scene is reminiscent of others in which settlers arriving in Iceland throw their high-seat pillars overboard in order to choose a settlement site, such as Ingólfur Arnarson in LdnStb/LdnHb 8:

Þá er Ingólfur sá Ísland, skaut hann fyrir borð ǫndugis-súlum sínum til heilla; hann mælti svá fyrir, at hann skyldi þar bygga, er súlurnar komi á land.

Illugi's action, described by Dag Strömbäck (1970, 138) as 'den gamla hedniska seden i kristen stöpfung' has most meaning in a text like Ldn, where it forms a contrast to the frequently-repeated heathen variant, and is not likely to have been in the narrative when it was in another form or context. Illugi's action may echo the episode a few chapters earlier in which Þrilygr, a protégé of 'Patrekr byskup í Suðreyjum', löses an iron bell overboard and settles near where it comes to shore (LdnHb 15; this particular detail is not in the corresponding LdnStb 15). Similarly, the dedication of the church at Hólmur to Columille echoes the mention of the same saint in the same chapter (LdnHb: Kolumkilli; LdnStb: Kolumba), and is also a fact that has most meaning in its Ldn context.

Finally it should be noted that Haukr was well acquainted with the area around Akranes, where Hólmur is, and also seems to have had access to local knowledge from the area near Eyjafjöll, where Ásólfsskáli and Holt are, (Íslendingabók, Landnámabók 1968, lxxviii-ix). Some of his account may derive from local traditions about Ásólfur in these places.

However, not everything that LdnHb has additional to LdnStb can be traced to Haukr's editorial activity, and the problem needs further investigation.

The third account of Ásólfur is to be found in chs. 127-8 of ÓsTm (Appendix III). On the whole, this text is very like LdnStb, although slightly abbreviated and with occasional changes of wording. One of the effects of the latter is that the tale seems more religious, compare LdnStb: Þá var um forvitnazk with ÓsTm: heiðingjar foro at forvitnaz and LdnStb: er menn skyldu til taka with ÓsTm: er heiðnir menn komo til ok atlaðv at veiða. This christianizing ten-

dency is even more evident in the D class of manuscripts (including Flateyjarbók), where the narrative concentrates on Jörundur and Asólfr from the start, and both God and Óláfr Tryggvason are invoked (see notes to OsTm 1958, I, 276-7).

In one important respect the OsTm text is more like LdnHb than LdnStb: it includes an account of Halldórr Illugason and how he builds a church. However, the account itself is quite different from the one in LdnHb. Asólfr appears only to Halldórr in a dream and, although he complains about the serving-woman's wiping her feet on his grave, comes straight to the point that he wants Halldórr to build a church there. Halldórr immediately takes the hint and sails abroad for church timber (his son Illugi is not even mentioned) straight away. The christianizing tendency noted earlier is also obvious here, compared to LdnHb. Halldórr is uef kristinn, Asólfr has a direct line to God and Halldórr is a model of obedience, unlike his alter-ego in LdnHb who has to be threatened by Asólfr before he takes any action. The final section in which the church timber is thrown overboard is entirely missing from OsTm.

The source of this part of OsTm, which comes in a section dealing with the Christian settlers of Iceland, has variously been taken to be LdnStb (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, 129) or an account of these very settlers by Gunnlaugr Leifsson (in his Óláfs saga), which was also the ultimate source for all redactions of Ldn (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 1974, 78-9, following Björn M. Ólsen). The chapters on Asólfr are the cornerstone of this latter theory because of their similarities with both LdnStb and LdnHb. Most recently the theory of derivation from LdnStb has been repeated by Ólafur Halldórs-son (1982, 30). I cannot here see why such an eclectic text could not have made use of both LdnStb and Gunnlaugr. The verbal similarities with LdnStb are too strong for that theory to be dismissed, yet Gunnlaugr cannot be avoided entirely, either, there are too many indications that point to him, as I will attempt to show. What I cannot accept is that part of Sveinbjörn Rafnsson's theory which states that the LdnHb text derives from Gunnlaugr via Styrmisbók. I have already noted that many of Haukr's additions can be traced to himself and his interests and that, apart from

the bare existence of a story about Asólfr, dreams and the building of a church, Haukr's additions do not have exact parallels in the ÓsTm text. My proposed solution is thus that there once was a legend of Asólfr written by Gunnlaugr Leifsson, which was the ultimate source of the skeleton account in LdnStb. LdnStb formed the basis of the ÓsTm account, but this was augmented by reference to the fuller original. Gunnlaugr's account also became known in the places associated with Asólfr and lived on as local tradition there. From his source LdnStb, from his knowledge of these local traditions, and from his own knowledge Haukr then created his text.

The connection with Gunnlaugr Leifsson is strengthened by the existence of some Icelandic analogues to the legend of Asólfr. The one that shows most similarity is the account of the einsetumaðr Máni enn kristni (who also lived before the conversion of Iceland) in Þorvalds þáttur víðforla ch. 7:

Hann átti veiðistöð í á þeiri, er þaðan var skammt í brottu, þar sem enn í dag heitir af hans nafni Mánafors, þvíat á nokkurum tíma, þá er hallæri var mikit ok sultr, hafði hann ekki til at fæða hungraða; þá fór hann til árinna ok hafði þar nóg laxveiði í hylnum undir forsinum; þessa laxveiði gaf hann undir kirkjuna í Holti, ok segir Gunnlaugr munkr, at sú veiðr hafi þar jafnan síðan til legit.

Þorvalds þáttur was probably first written by Gunnlaugr, as this attribution and another one in ch. 3 indicate.

The connection with the church at Holt should also be noted.

Miraculous catching of fish is also attributed to St Martin of Tours (ch. 48 in the Icelandic saga, all three redactions, see Heilagra Manna Sögur 1887, I, 572, 597 and 629-30):

Martinus var vanr at eta fisc a pascadogom. En hann spurðe litlu fyrer matmal, ef fiscr være til buenn. En diacn, sa er fózlo munca varþveite, sagði, at hann hafði (engi) fisc tekinn a þeim morne, oc eigi heldr þeir menn, es vaner varo at selia fisca. Þa melte Martinus við diaknenn: 'Farðu oc legg net þit, oc mon fiskr coma.' En scant var til ar fra munclive. Þa foru fleire muncar til ar oc væto goðrar veiþar, er Martinus bauþ at fiskia oc þurfte hann sialfr at

hafa. En þegar es diaknenn lagði net, þá dro hann mikenn lags at eno fyrsta varpe, oc for hann heim glaðr til munclifs.

The reference to this miracle of St Martin in one of the sagas of Guðmundr the Good (Biskupa sögur 1858-78, I, 593-4) points to the interest in this type of miracle at Þingeyrar. Like the episode in Þorvalds þáttur, Guðmundr's miracle takes place at a time of mikit hallæri.

Another aspect of the Ásólfr-legend which suggests a connection with Gunnlaugr and northern Icelandic hagiography is the appearance of Ásólfr after his death in a dream. Although such an appearance of a saint to indicate his resting-place is 'ein Normalfall innerhalb der "Inventio"-Literatur' (Fichtenau 1952, 65), the closest Icelandic analogue I have found is in a miracle of St Jón of Hólar (Biskupa sögur 1858-78, I, 184, see also 257-8):

...þar var kona ein fátæk ok ókröptug, sannorð ok meinlaus ok trúföst. Á þessum tímum lágu á mönnum ríðir miklar ok veðráttu köld, horfði ráð manna til hins mesta voða ok hallæris...en kona stú, er ek gat fyrr, lá einhverja nótt í rekkju sinni vakandi ok baðst fyrir: ok at lokinni þan sinni, þá hnegir hún sik at hægendi ok sofnar. Þá þar firir hana, at maðr kom at henni, mikill vexti ok virðuligr yfirlits; hon þóttist verða redd við manninn, ok þora ekki at kveðja hann... Hann lagði þá ráð til ok mælti svá: 'Taki menn or jörðu kistu heilags Jóns biskups, ok dýrki svá sem menn hafa framast faung á, ok sjái síðan, hvat í gjörist.' Ok er hann hafði þetta mælt, hvarf hann frá henni at sýn, en hon vaknaði ok sagði mönnum fyrirburðinn, ok þótti öllum mikils um vert.

The fact that Jón (if the unnamed man in the dream is, in fact, Jón, see Koppenberg 1980, 153), appears to a poor woman has a certain similarity with Ídrið where Ásólfr first appears to a dairymaid. Similarly, Ásólfr's bones are actually dug up, like Jón's coffin, whereas in Ósfr the church is simply built on his grave without digging it up. This may suggest that Ídrið retains some elements of the legend in its original form, if this did emanate from Þingeyrar.

If the legend of Ásólfr received its written form first in the time of Gunnlaugr Leifsson (d. 1218 or 19), this

was at a time when there was intense hagiographic activity in connection with the canonization of Sts Þorlákr and Jón. The recognition of two official native saints led to an increased interest in native Christianity in general and the accounts of early Christians like Ásólftr must have been a product of this interest. He was of course not a saint, but performed nearly the same function by providing a respectable antiquity for native Christianity and thus acquired saintly characteristics. The connections with Þorvalds þáttur, Jóns saga and Guðmundar saga suggest that this all took place in the context of early 13th-century hagiographic and literary activity centring on the monastery at Þingeyrar and the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson.

Such an interpretation suggests further questions. Did a legend of Ásólftr exist before Gunnlaugr wrote about him? This raises the question of whether there ever was a local cult either at Holt in the south or Hólmr in the west, possibly connected with popular veneration of Columba. It is certainly feasible that there were local legends associated with churches in these places (the church at Ásólfsskáli is attested in 1179, see Diplomatarium Islandicum 1857-1972, I, 255), but it cannot any longer be demonstrated. The local traditions which I have argued were known to Haukr could, by that time, have in their turn been based on the Gunnlaugian legend.

Another question that suggests itself is that of hagiographic connections between the north and south of Iceland. Thus we have seen that Ásólftr's legend is most easily understood in the context of the northern hagiographic tradition. However, the monks at Þingeyrar were also interested in southern saints and collected the miracles of Þorlákr, many of which took place in the north. The account of Máni enn kristni also demonstrates northern interest in southern miracles. It would be fascinating to know more about the routes such knowledge took and it is tempting to think that the account in the longer Jóns saga helga of Jón's arrival in Iceland (Biskupa sögur 1858-78, I, 234):

för hann fyrst til Noregs, sýslandi sér þar kirkjuvið,
ok þat sana sumar letr hann í haf, ok verðr val reiðfara,
ok kemr skip þat á Eyrrar fyrir sunnan land

is based not so much on a historical fact about Jón, as on

the regular experience of the Þingeyrar monks, travelling between north and south (note also the preoccupation with kirkjuvið!).

The Ásólftr legend as it appears in Ldn no longer reflects so clearly what must have been its original hagiographic concerns. Thus, in LdnStb the narrative, while retaining its stylized legendary quality and its theme of conflict with heathens, is nevertheless tailored to suit its context. Only events occurring in the settlement period are mentioned and Ásólftr's importance is largely restricted to his connections with the places Ásólfsskáli and Hólmr. It is remarkable that Sturla included Ásólftr at all, since he had no descendants or other influence on later Icelandic history and was not a settler proper. However, there is a tendency in LdnStb to move away from the mere cataloguing of settlers towards a more structured account in which the settlement is seen as a part of the continuous developing history of Iceland, including its developing Christianity (thus Sturla followed Ldn with Kristni saga), and Ásólftr must be seen as part of this tendency. The growing importance of Christian history in the context of Icelandic national history must have been due to the influence of early 13th-century hagiographic activity and the discovery (or invention) of native pre-Conversion Christianity.

This tendency is carried further in LdnHb where, paradoxically, the increased interest in early Christians like Ásólftr is accompanied by a toning down of the religious elements, as we have seen. Haukr's text demonstrates quite clearly the tension caused by literary forces pulling him in different directions. Thus, the influence of the Ldn context on the chapter has already been noted, and Haukr's delight in narrative has led him to produce an almost burlesque account of the recalcitrant Hallóorr and the threatening ghost of Ásólftr. His concern to emphasize the Irish origins of Icelandic Christianity led him to change the whole character of the legend. Haukr's Hibernomania may have found its catalyst in ch. 1 of Íslendingabók:

Þá váru hér menn kristnir, þeir es Norðmenn kalla papa, en þeir fóru síðan á braut, af því at þeir vildu eigi vesa hér við heiðna menn, ok létu eptir bokr írskar ok bjǫllur ok bagla; af því mátti skilja, at þeir váru

menn írskir.

His knowledge of Bishop Hröðólfr may also come from this source (ch. 8).¹⁾ -

Haukr's version of the Ásólfr-legend thus raises the question of Irish contacts with medieval Scandinavia. Examples of Irish references in and influence on Old Icelandic literature have been collected by Helgi Guðmundsson (1967, 72-7, 83-94), but the nature and extent of post-Viking-Age contacts between Ireland and Scandinavia have not been fully explored (Chesnutt 1968). If I am right in suggesting that Haukr recognized the adventures of Ásólfr as being typical of Irish saints, then this suggests that he had some knowledge of Irish matters, and may confirm Chesnutt's conclusion (1968, 126) that there were 'ecclesiastical relations between the two regions' in the thirteenth century, which may have been the basis of this knowledge. Haukr's connections with Norway suggest a possible centre for these relations, the Konungs skuggsjá displays a similar interest in Irish saints and miraculous events, the sources of which are still not satisfactorily accounted for (Chesnutt 1968, 125). However, any conclusion on this matter would need to be based on a much fuller study of Haukr's writings and life.

The legend of Ásólfr's miracle with the fish in its Gunnlaugian version, however, may have had more to do with the influence of St Martin of Tours than of Celtic Christianity. This interest in the saint is reflected in the episode in Jóns saga (shorter and longer versions), in which the relics of Martin at Hólar are miraculously split in two. This provides another indication that the Ásólfr-legend originated at Þingeyrar.

The religious tone of the Ásólfr-legend is most clearly preserved in our third text, Óstfm, although it may be difficult to determine whether this work preserves the original religiosity of the legend, or whether it heightens it in a new religious fervour. In any case, this work, although largely concerned with secular history, was not concerned with Icelandic secular history, but with Norwegian. For the Icelanders, Óláfr Tryggvason's importance, aside from his having been the king of Norway, lay in his missionary activity, particularly to Iceland (and it is a logical consequence of this that the king himself creeps into the Ásólfr-legend in the D class of manuscripts). Unlike in Idn, there

was little need to secularize or adapt the narrative to its context of national history and its religious character shines brighter. Óstn is not concerned with the totality of Icelandic history, only that aspect of it (the conversion to Christianity) which reflects on Óláfr Tryggvason, and in it the importance of early Christians is crystallized (ch. 120):

...þat syniz eigi vviðr kvæmiligt at geta i þessi fra-
sögn nokkurra þeira manna. er her hafa truat aa sannan
guf fyrr en kristnin var lög tekin a Islandi ok segia
huerrar sttar þeir menn hafa uerit. sva sem þat se
fyrir boðan eðr til rvöning þess hins fagnadar fulla
vm skiptis sem eptir ferr...

The prefiguratory character of early Christians like Ásólfr, here made clear, is somewhat lost in Ldn in the mass of information aiming to provide a complete history of the beginnings of the Icelandic nation.

Thus our three Ásólfr-texts reflect different aspects of 13th- and early 14th-century Icelandic literary activity: the vague outline of early hagiographic activity in the time of Gunnlaugr, the growth of national history and Ldn's synthesis of local and Christian history, the personal interests of an idiosyncratic redactor like Haukr and, finally, the incorporation of Icelandic matters into the international context with a marking off of Icelandic developments from the contemporaneous Norwegian ones in Óstn.

Note

1. In a lecture to the Viking Society in London on 9 November 1984, Paul Bibire argued that Haukr modelled his organization of Hauksbók on the structure of Íslendingabók. The influence of Íslendingabók on Haukr would certainly repay closer attention.

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Appendix

I.

(S22) Bræðr tveir námu Akranes allt á milli Kalmansár ok Aurriðáar; hét annarr Þormóðr; hann átti land fyrir sunnan Reyni ok bjó at Hólmi. Hann var faðir Bersa ok Þorlaugar, móður Tungu-Odds.³

(S23) Ketill átti Akranes fyrir vestan ok fyrir norðan Akrafell til Aurriðáar. Hans son var Jörundr enn kristni. er bjó í Gørðum; þar hét þá Jörundarholt. Jörundr var faðir Klepps, fœður Einars, fœður Narfa ok Hívars,⁴ fœður Þorgeirs.

(S24) Ásólftr hét maðr. Hann var frændi Jörundar í Gørðum; hann kom út austr í Ósum.¹ Hann var kristinn vel ok vildi ekki eiga við heiðna menn ok eigi vildi hann þiggja mat at þeim. Hann gerði sér skála undir Eyjafjöllum, þar sem nú heitir at Ásólfsskála enum austasta; hann fann ekki menn. Þá var um forvitnask, hvat hann hafði til fœzlu, ok sá menn í skálanum á fiska marga. En er menn gengu til lockjar þess, er fell hjá skálanum, var hann fullr af fiskum, svá at slík undr þóttusk menn eigi sét hafa. En er heraðsmenn urðu þessa varir, ráku þeir hann á brutt ok vildu eigi, at hann nyti gæða þessa. Þá fcerði Ásólftr byggð sína til Miðskála ok var þar. Þá hvarf á brutt veiði öll ór lœknum, er menn skyldu til taka. En er komit var til Ásólfis, þá var vatnfall þat fullt af fiskum, er fell hjá skála hans. Var hann þá enn brutt rekinn. Fór hann þá til ens vestasta Ásólfsskála, ok fói enn allt á sømu leið. En er hann fór þaðan á brutt, fór hann á fund Jörundar frænda síns, ok bauð hann Ásólftr at vera með sér; en hann lézk ekki vilja vera hjá öðrum mönnum. Þá lét Jörundr gera honum hús at Hólmi enum iðra ok fcerði honum þangat fœzlu, ok var hann þar, meðan hann lifði, ok þar var hann grafinn. Stendr þar nú kirkja, sem leiði hans er, ok er hann enn helgasti maðr kallaðr.¹

II.

(H21) Þormóðr hinn gamli ok Ketill Bresasynir fóru af Írlandi til Íslands ok námu Akranes allt á milli Aurriðáar ok Kalmansár. Þeir vóru írskir. Kalman var ok írskr, er áin er við kennd, ok bjó fyrst í Katanesi.⁶ Þeir bræðr skiptu löndum með sér, svá at Þormóðr átti fyrir sunnan Reyni ok til Kalmansár ok bjó at Hólmi hinum iðra,⁶ en Ketill bróðir hans átti fyrir vestan Reyni ok fyrir norðan Akrafell til Aurriðáar. Bersi hét son hans, faðir Þorgests, fœður Starra at Hólmi,⁷ fœður Knattar, fœður Ásdísar, er átti Klængr Snæbjarnarson, (sonar) Hafnar-Orms. Geirlaug var dóttir Þormóðs hins gamla, móðir Tungu-Odds. Jörundr hinn kristni var son Ketils Bresasonar; hann bjó í Jörundarholti;

þat er nú kallat í Gørðum.⁵ Hann helt vel kristni til dauða-dags ok var einsetumaðr í elli sinni. Son Jorundar var Kleppr, faðir Einars, fœður Narfa;⁶ Hávarr hét amarr son Klepps, faðir Þorgeirs. Eðna hét dóttir Ketils Bresasonar; hon var gipt á Írlandi þeim manni, er Konáll hét; þeira son var Ásólftr alskik,¹⁰ er í þann tíma fór af Írlandi til Íslands ok kom í Austfjörðu. Þeir fóru tólf saman austan, þar til er þeir kómu at garði Þorgeirs hins hørzka í Holti undir Eyjaljöllum ok settu þar tjald sitt.² En fœrunautar hans þrfr váru þá sjúkir. Þeir onduðusk þar, en Jón prestur Þorgeirsson, faðir Grfms í Holti,³ fann bein þeira ok flutti til kirkju. Síðan gerði Ásólftr sér skála því nær sem nú er kirkjuhornit at Ásólfsskála, at ráði Þorgeirs, því at Þorgeirr vildi þá eigi hafa við hús sin. Á fell við skála Ásólfss sjálfan. Þat var onðverðan vetr. Áin varð þegar full með fiskum. Þorgeirr sagði, at þeir sæti í veiðistöð hans. Síðan fór Ásólftr brott þaðan (ok) gerði annan skála vestar við aðra á; sú heitir Írá, því at þeir váru írskir. En er menn kómu til árinna, var hon full með fiskum, svá at slíkt undr þóttusk menn eigi sét hafa, en brottu var allt ór hinni eystri ánni. Þá ráku heraðsmenn þá brott þaðan, ok fór hann þá til hins vestasta skálans; fór allt á sömu leið. Boendr kolluðu þá fjölkunniga, en Þorgeirr kvazk⁴ hyggja, at þeir mundu vera góðir menn. Um vário fóru þeir brott ok vestr á Akranes. Hann gerði bú at Hólmi á Kirkjubólstað.⁵ Hans son var Sölví, faðir Þórhildar, er átti Brandr, son Þorgrfms Kjallakssonar; þeira son Þorleifr, faðir Bárðar, fœður Jófríðar, er átti Arni Torfuson; þeira dóttir Helga, er átti Arngrímr Guðmundarson.⁶

En er Ásólftr eldisk, gerðisk hann einsetumaðr. Þar var kofi hans, sem nú er kirkjan. Þar andaðisk hann ok var þar grafinn at Hólmi. En þá er Halldórr, son Illuga hins rauða,⁷ bjó þar, þá vandisk fjóskona ein at þerra fœtr sína á þúfu þeiri, er var á leiði Ásólfss. Hana dreymði, at Ásólftr ávitaði hana um þat, er hon þerrði fœtr sína saurga á húsi hans, — „en þá munu vit sátu,” segir hann, „ef þú segir Halldóri draum þinn.“ Hon sagði honum, ok kvað hann ekki mark at því, er komur dreymði, ok gaf ekki gamu at. En er Hróðólfr byskup fór brott ór Bæ. þar er hann hafði búit, þá váru þar eptir munkar þrú.⁸ Einn þeira dreymði, at Ásólftr mælti við hann: „Sentu húskafl þinn til Halldórs at Hólmi ok kaup at honum þúfu þi, er á fjósgötu er, ok gef við mörk silfurs.“ Munkrinn gerði svá. Húskaflinn gat keypta þúfuna ok gróf síðan jörðina ok hitti þar manns bein; hann tók þau upp ok fór heim með. Ena næstu nótt eptir dreymði Halldór, at Ásólftr kom at honum ok kvezk bæði augu mundu sprengja ór hausi honum, nema hann keypti bein hans slíku verði sem hann seldi. Halldórr keypti bein Ásólfss ok lét gera at tréskrin ok setja yfir altari. Halldórr sendi Illuga son sinn útan eptir kirkjuviði; en er hann fór

út aprt (ok) er hann kom millim Reykjaness ok Snjófjallsness, þá náði hann eigi fyrir stýrimönnum at taka land þar er hann vildi. Þá bar hann fyrir borð kirkjuviðinn allan ok bað þar koma, sem Ásólfur vildi. En austmenn kómu vestr í Vaðil. En þremr^s nóttum síðar kom viðrinn á Kirkju-sand at Hólmi, nema tvau tré kómu á Raufarnes á Mýrum. Halldórr lét gera kirkju þrítoga ok viði þakða ok helgaði Kolumkilla með guði.

III.

127. Ræðr .ij. námu Akra nes alt í Borgar firði. het asarr Þormóðr. en asarr Ketill. Ketill atti Akra nes alt fyrir vestan ok fyrir norðan Akra fell. hans son var Jorunðr en kristni er bio í Gjórdum. Asolfr er maðr nefndr. hann var frændi lórvandar í Gjórdum. 257 hann kom vt austri í Ósum. Asolfr var nel kristinn. ok uildfi ekki eiga við heidna menn ok eigi þiggja faðu af þeim. hann gerði ser skala vndir Fyia fióllum. þar sem nv heitir at Asolfs skala enum 6 austarsta. hann fann ecki menn fyrr en heidngiar foro at forvitnaz hvat hann hefði til faðu. ok sa þeir í skalanum marga fiska. En er þeir gengu til laekar þess er þar var hia skalanum þa var hann sva 3 fullr af fiskum. at menn þottuz eigi slik vndr sieth hafa. Ok er heraðs menn yurdo þessa varir. rakv þeir Asolf íbrott ok villo eigi at hann 258 nyti sva mikilla gjæða. Asolfr færði þa bygd sina til Miðskala ok var þar vna hríð en allir fiskar voru horfnir or læknum þa er heidnir menn komo til ok ætlaðv at veiða. En er komit var til Asolfs. þa var vatnfall þat fullt af fiskum er fell hia Miðskala. var hann þa 5 brott rekinn þaðan. hann gerði ser enn skala hinn .iij^a. ok for alt 2 a sómu leið ok fyrr. at veiðrin hvarf þegar. Ok er Asolfr var þaðan brott rekinn. for hann vt a Akra nes til lórvandar frænda sins. Jorunðr tok vel við Asolfi ok laud honum at vera með ser. Asolfr vilkdi eigi vera hia vðrum mömum. Þa gerði Jorunðr honum hus at Hólmi hinum iðra ok let fara honum faðu. ok var Asolfr þar 3 síðnu meðan hann lifdi ok var þar grafin.

128. <V>Lfr het maðr s(on) Grims ens haleska Þoris s(onar) Gvnnlaugs s(onar) Hrolfs s(onar) Ketils s(onar) kiölfara. Mopir Vlfis var Svan laug d(ottir) Þormóþar af Akra nesi. Vlfir bio a Geir landi í Hvít ár síðu. hans s(on) var Hrolfr hin auðgi faðir Halldoru er átti Gizur en hviiti. þeira d(ottir) var Villborg er atti Hialti Skeggja s(on). asarr s(on) Vlfis var Hroalldr. faðir Hrolfs ens yngra. Hrolfr hin yngri atti Þuríði Valþiofs d(ottur) Arlygs s(onar) hins gamla. þeira s(on) var Jllugi enn rauði er fyrst bio í Hravns asi en síþan 254 a Hofstöðum í Reykiar dal. síþaz bio Jllugi at Hólmi enum iðra á Akra n(esi). Halldor het s(on) hans er þar bio eptir hann. Halldor var uel kristinn. Aa einv váre syndiz honum isuefni at maðr kom at honum biarrt ok vegligr ok s(agði) sva til hans. Þat vil ek þer kunnigt gera Halldor at mer mis likar er gríð kona þín þerrir faetr sina a leiði mínu iafnan er hun gengr fra staðli. En þvi segi ek þer til þessa at þu ætlar at lata gora kirkíu a þe þinvm. ok vil ek at

kirkian standi yfir legi minv. Halldor sp(urði) i svefninvm hvorr þessi maðr væri. hann svar(ar). Asolfr heiti ek. kom ek hiðat til landz þessa æ land nama tíð ok vel kristinn sem þv mvnt heyr

hafa getit. lofuði allzvalldandi avð at ek segði þer til graptar míns. Því næst vaknaði Halldor ok hvgsaði dravn sinn. hann þottiz vita uti satt mundi vera þat er fyrir hann hafði borit. þviat hann mundi at Jllugi f(aðir) hans hafði getið at þessi maðr Asolfr væri þar leiddr. Síþan merkti hann þvfv þa er grið konan þerði faðr sína æ. ok banadi henni at gern sva þaðun i fra. Þat sama svmar sigldi Halldor snimma til Noregs ok kom apter at hausti með kirkiv við. let hann kirkivna setia rett yfir leiði Asolfs. sem hann hafði fyrir s(agt). ok or hann kallaðr heilagr.

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