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GUÐMUNDAR SÓGUR BISKUPS:

AUTHORIAL VIEWPOINTS AND METHODS

Guðmundr Arason was born in 1161. He was a priest at various places in the north of Iceland and bishop of Hólar from 1203 until his death in 1237.

When Guðmundr was young, Þorlákr Þórarinnsson was the bishop of Skálholt. Guðmundr was involved in the translation of Þorlákr's relics in 1198, and of those of Bishop Jón Ögmundarson of Hólar two years later. Both these bishops were declared saints at the Alþingi, but papal recognition came only at the beginning of this year when Þorlákr was acknowledged as the patron saint of Iceland.

Guðmundr was renowned during his lifetime for working miracles and doing deeds of charity. In ecclesiastical matters, he campaigned steadfastly for the undiminished right of the Church to judge in legal cases involving the clergy.

Sagas about Bishops Jón and Þorlákr were written at the beginning of the 13th century, so that there were precedents for the writing of saints' lives, or bishops' sagas, about Icelanders. Indeed, most of the conditions were right for the composition of a saga about Bishop Guðmundr and his miracles straight after his death. But there was one obstacle. Guðmundr's popularity, and belief in his miracles, were probably restricted to the lower social classes, and were frowned upon by the Church as an institution.

One saga about Guðmundr probably was begun shortly after his death, but it was never completed. This was the so-called Prestssaga, which covers Guðmundr's childhood and youth and his years as a priest. The Prestssaga is preserved in various forms in five other works: in Sturlunga saga, where it is shortened and split into sections; in the A-version of Guðmundar saga (the so-called "Oldest Saga"), with interpolations; in the B-version of Guðmundar saga (the "Middle Saga"), where it is defective; in a re-worked form in the C-version of Guðmundar saga (which has not been printed), and

in a very much shortened and altered form in the D-version of Guðmundar saga by Arngrímr Brandsson. The author of the Prestssaga was very particular about chronology. Every event in the saga is set in a particular year of Guðmundr's life, and annalistic notices, covering Icelandic and foreign events up to the year 1199, are included for extra precision. Most of these notices have parallels in the Icelandic annals that have been preserved, and it seems certain that they were derived from an annal rather than that the first Icelandic annal used the Prestssaga as a source, as Ólafía Einarsson has maintained (Studier i kronologisk metode i tidlig islandsk historieskrivning (Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis XIII [1969]), pp. 293-317).

The Prestssaga contains a great deal of material, and the first part of it is rather confusing. It begins with genealogies involving lots of Guðmundr's relatives. A few chapters, covering the period of Guðmundr's childhood when there is really not much to say about him, tell of his father and his uncles, who are depicted as fighting men and respected priests in Norway. Some of them lose their lives in Greenland, where their bodies are preserved uncorrupted for years in true saintly fashion - and, incidentally, under ideal physical conditions.

Guðmundr is depicted as a disobedient child who is driven to book-learning by the priest Ingimundr, his uncle. One indication of his later career is when he plays the part of a bishop in a children's game. In due course, he takes minor orders, and is ordained priest in 1185. At the age of 19 Guðmundr is shipwrecked in Reykjarfjörör á Ströndum. He breaks his leg badly and almost drowns, and a few years later he loses his best friend Þorgeirr, who is a bishop's son. The result of these experiences is that he becomes "mikill trúmaðr í bænahaldi ok tíðagerð ok harðrétti ok örlæti" (GA, c.25).

The second half of the Prestssaga tells of Guðmundr's work as a priest and various miracles that he performed or which were connected with water that he blessed - or merely washed in - and sacred objects he acquired.

During the summers he travelled far and wide throughout Iceland, and the reader learns of his ever-increasing popularity and respect among the people. On these journeys he gathered disciples, of whom it is said, in language reminiscent of the Bible, that they "létu frændr sína ok vini ok gimtuz at fylgja honum" (GA, c.83).

This part of the saga also contains Rannveigarleiðsla, a vision which according to the saga's chronology is supposed to have taken place in 1198 in the east of Iceland. A woman named Rannveig had had sexual relations with two priests. After falling "niðr í forskála, er hon skyldi ganga fram ór stofu" (GA, c.58), she saw in a vision the torments she could expect in the next world as punishment for adultery, pride, and vanity, and she was also shown the torments that awaited nearly all the powerful men in Iceland. Finally she was also shown the abode of the holy - both those who were already dead and some who were still living. Guðmundr Arason was named among these, and the reader is informed that Iceland is saved from destruction because there are not "á öðrum löndum at jafnmiklum mannfjölda fleiri heilagir menn en á Islandi" (GA, c.58).

All these passages serve the purpose of showing that Guðmundr was of saintly stature even while he was a priest, but the writing is also characterised by realism and attention to practical detail, not least in the descriptions of difficult journeys by sea and land. The shipwreck on the coast at Strandir is related in fine detail, not least the panic of the terrified sailors, who are presented in a slightly comic light, and later in the saga there is a long and terrifying description of a winter journey across Heljardalsheiðr, when Guðmundr and his party are caught in a snowstorm and some of his companions perish. But the grimness of this episode is tempered by the incident in which Guðmundr saves a girl named Una by covering her with his tunic. Una is found a few days later, "ok var hon alls hvergi kalin váðakulða nema á tá eina, en þat eitt hafði tekit undan kyrtlinum Guðmundar prests" (GA, c.44).

Towards the end of the Prestssaga there is a long account of the events leading up to the election of Guðmundr as bishop. Naturally he declines the position for a long time out of genuine humility, but his uncle Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson urges him not to reject the honour shown to himself and his family. The Prestssaga ends in the middle of Guðmundr's voyage to Norway for his consecration.

It is not certain whether the author of the Prestssaga used any written sources apart from a few letters relating to the election of Guðmundr as bishop and the annals, although written sources may lie behind the first part of the saga, where genealogies are traced from Guðmundr's grandfather and grandmother and there are accounts of some of his paternal relatives. These could have been written at the instigation of Guðmundr's relatives who were keen to have the family feature in a saga about him.

The author of the Prestssaga was undoubtedly one of the young clerics who followed Guðmundr during his last years as a priest. In his edition of Guðmundar saga in 1858 (in Biskupa sögur, published by Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag), Guðbrandur Vigfússon made the attribution to one of these men, Lambkárr Þorgilsson, who later became an abbot, and this attribution has been generally accepted ever since. There are other possible candidates, but Lambkárr's death in 1249 could be the explanation for the saga breaking off in the middle of the sea voyage before Guðmundr is consecrated bishop.

There seem to have been plans to continue the Prestssaga shortly after the extant part was finished. In the introduction to the B-version of Guðmundar saga, dating from about 1320, it says that the saga had "lengi í salti legit, ok eru nú allir dauðir þeir er hana ætluðu langa at gera ok gerst vissu ok bezt mundu vilja, ef þeim hefði lífit til enz. Bar ok svá til um þat, er menn höfðu fjölda bréfa ritat ok í einm stað komit í ^{þau} Laufásskirkju, ok brunnu/þar inni öll í kirkjubruna einum, ok munu þau aldri síðan ritin verða" (GB, c.82; Bisk. I, 565-66. The word "bréf" here

cannot be used in the usual sense, and the suggestion was made by Professor Magnús Jónsson (Sturl.(1946) II, xxix) that it has here a wider and more original meaning in the sense of "a small written work" ("smárit"). It is also worth pointing out that the Latin adjective "brevis" exists in mediaeval Latin as a noun meaning "summary", as did the word "breviarium".

According to the annals, Laufáskirkja burnt down in 1258, but two 13th century sagas fill to some extent the gap left by the loss of the material that was burnt in that fire.

One of these is the saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, who was slain in 1213. Hrafn was a friend of Guðmundr, and he accompanied him on the voyage to Norway in 1202-03, when Guðmundr was consecrated bishop. In Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar there is a detailed account of the journey and also a few lines about the consecration itself.

The other saga is the chief source about Guðmundr's years as a bishop from 1203 to 1237. This is Sturla Þórðarson's Íslendinga saga, possibly written only shortly before Sturla's death in 1284. Sturla's father, Þórðr, was always one of the Bishop's closest friends. Guðmundr stayed with Þórðr at Hvamnr while on the run from his enemies in the winter of 1227-28. Sturla Þórðarson was then 14 years old and must have got to know the Bishop personally.

It is to Sturla that we owe the account of how Guðmundr fell out with most of the powerful men in the country, and of the battles that resulted from these quarrels. Also from Sturla come the accounts of Guðmundr's travels throughout Iceland with his followers, and of how he was captured and escaped.

As is well-known, Sturla's Íslendinga saga is not preserved as an independent work, but as part of the compilation Sturlunga saga, made in about 1300 or shortly thereafter, and parts of Íslendinga saga also appear in the various versions of Guðmundar saga. The Prestssaga was also used in Sturlunga saga in a shortened form, most of the miracles and Rannveig's vision being omitted there. But at one point in Sturlunga saga, the original Íslendinga saga text is expanded with extra material

about Guðmundr, where a letter of rebuke from the Archbishop to the powerful men of Iceland is quoted in full, whereas Sturla only summarised the contents of the letter in a few words.

Sturla Þórðarson mentions that during Guðmundr's travels there occurred "margir hlutir þeir er frásagnar væri verðir ok jarsteinum þótti gegna" (Sturl. (1906-11) I, 290), but he says little about these miracles. An attempt was made to make good this deficiency by collecting miracles associated with Guðmundr in a single book. This Miracle Book falls into two distinct parts, as Hallvard Magerøy has pointed out (Maal og minne (1959), 22-34), the first of which could not, however, in its present form pre-date the opening years of the 14th century, and at least some chapters of it were obviously written as an appendix to Sturla's account, and make reference to it. This part of the Miracle Book concentrates on miracles which occurred during Guðmundr's lifetime, but it is not a pure miracle book ("miracula") in so far as descriptions of journeys and family history are interspersed between the miracles. It seems clear that relatives of Guðmundr played a part in the composition of this appendix to Islendinga saga.

The later part of the Miracle Book is a different matter. It consists exclusively of miracles that occurred after Guðmundr's death (miracula post mortem). Some of them are dated, the first occurring in the year that Auðunn rauði Þorbergsson was consecrated bishop (i.e. 1315) and the last in "anno præcedenti" (GB, c. 144 d; Bisk. I, 617), which probably refers to the year 1319. At the end of some of these miracles it is said that their authenticity was attested under oath - even under oath sworn "á honum sjálfum" ("on [Guðmundr] himself"). As was mentioned before, the church authorities in Iceland tried to suppress the veneration of Guðmundr during the first few generations after his death, but this changed with the coming of Bishop Auðunn rauði from Norway, and, partly, because of the encouragement of King Hákon háleggr, according to Lárentíus saga. Auðunn had Guðmundr's relics translated in the year that he arrived at Hólar, and the later part of the Miracle Book bears witness to the systematic collection of attested miracles that could be

cited in an application to the Pope to have Guðmundr recognized as a saint.

One other source must be mentioned before turning to the preserved sagas about Guðmundr. This is Áróns saga. The central character, Arón Hjörleifsson, joined Guðmundr's followers in 1221, or earlier, and accompanied the Bishop when he fled to Málmeý that year. Arón fought heroically in the Battle of Grímsey the following spring. He escaped alive, but was pursued by Guðmundr's enemies during the following years until he fled to Norway, where he settled after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As a source about Guðmundr, Áróns saga covers the same events as are related in Sturla's Islendinga saga, Áróns saga containing fuller, but probably less reliable accounts. Áróns saga is certainly a considerably younger work, and is unlikely to have been written before the veneration of Guðmundr was formally encouraged in 1315. Opinions have been divided as to the relationship between Islendinga saga and Áróns saga, as the two sagas contain material incongruities and yet similarities of wording. The discussion has not taken sufficient account of the mutual influences of written and oral narratives which must exist in a literary society.

Now we can turn to the extant sagas about Guðmundr. There are four of them, all composed in the first part of the 14th century, probably all after the year 1315, a key date in these matters as I have already mentioned. I call these sagas the A-, B-, C- and D-versions of Guðmundar saga, abbreviated as GA, GB, etc. Only two of these versions are printed in Biskupa sögur in the form in which they exist in the manuscripts, i.e. GA, which has been called the "Oldest Saga", and GD, the version by Brother Arngrímur. The B-version, the so-called "Middle Saga", can be said to have been published in the sense that additional passages from it are printed as a sort of appendix to the A-version.

My designation of the so-called "Oldest Saga" as the A-version does not imply that this is the oldest of the four versions. It may in fact be the third oldest. But the designations as A-, B-, C-, and D-versions imply an assessment of how far the respective versions are removed from the principal common sources from which they are sprung.

The manuscript in which GA is preserved was probably written between 1330 and 1350. It is deficient, but the gaps can be filled from a copy dating from 1592, except for the end, which is missing in both manuscripts, but the loss amounts to no more than a few pages.

Björn M. Olsen gave a fairly thorough account of the sources of GA in his essay "Um Sturlungu", 1897 (Safn til sögu Islands og íslenzkra bókmennta III (Kh. 1902)). GA is a compilation, containing the Prestssaga - probably in its entirety - and also parts of Hrafns saga, Íslendinga saga and Áróns saga, and the compiler also used annals.

In the Prestssaga sections, material from the annals appears as an addition to the annalistic elements that were already in the Prestssaga, and notices from the annals are also interpolated in the part of GA that is about Guðmundr's life as a bishop. Discounting the notices from the annals, the first 93 chapters of GA consist purely of material from the Prestssaga. The next 20 chapters mix material from the Prestssaga and Íslendinga saga, covering Guðmundr's election as bishop and the first part of his voyage to Norway. Material from the Prestssaga runs out in Ch. 114. Two and a half chapters are taken from Hrafns saga to cover the remainder of the voyage, the consecration and Guðmundr's return to Iceland. The remaining 141 chapters consist of material from Íslendinga saga, with notices from the annals, although a section of 50 chapters draws on Áróns saga as well. The last 15 of these 50 chapters do not, however, concern Guðmundr directly: they cover the years that his friend Arón spent as a fugitive following the Battle of Grimsøy.

Many of the other chapters borrowed from Íslendinga saga in GA also do not concern Guðmundr directly. At the most, they serve to introduce characters who feature later in his life.

For the most part, the compiler manages to avoid repetitions and contradictions, even though he is drawing on two texts about the same subject. There are however two different accounts of Kolbeinn Tumason's part in the election of Guðmundr as bishop. According to the Prestssaga

account, Kolbeinn pretended not to care whether Guðmundr or Magnús Gizurason was elected (GA, c. 100), but in a section from Islendinga saga Kolbeinn it is plainly stated that chose "við ráð vina ok franda Guðmund prest hinn góða Arason til biskups" (GA, c.94).

The sources of GA present him in a favourable light, and so does GA. Guðmundr is the hero, and the saga is written in order to preserve his memory and increase his fame. The compiler has followed his sources conscientiously and added scarcely more than a few words of his own, mainly in connection with the annalistic material in the later part of the saga specifying how many years Guðmundr had served as bishop.

The compiler of GA did not intend to write a saint's life. Admittedly the Prestssaga could be regarded as forming the beginning of such a work, even though it contains family history not strictly relevant to it, but in the part about Guðmundr the bishop there is practically none of the praise of the holy man that could be expected. It also seems unlikely that any miracles were included in the original GA. But both these things ought to be present in a saint's life, i.e. a hagiographic legend, so as to conform with ecclesiastic literary convention. GA was therefore probably not compiled by a very learned cleric.

Three of the five sources of GA are also used in the B-version: the Prestssaga, Hrafns saga and Islendinga saga, but Áróns saga and the annals are not used. But these three main sources are not woven together: material from Hrafns saga takes over from the Prestssaga at the same place as in GA, but GB, unlike GA, does not draw on Islendinga saga until Guðmundr's return to Iceland after his consecration. GB also contains less material from Islendinga saga in the section about Guðmundr's life as bishop, the author taking only passages about Guðmundr himself. This practice results in the frequent mention of people without any introductory information about them. GB also contains interpolations in text taken from both the Prestssága and Islendinga saga, and after the account of

Guðmundr's death and burial (from Islendinga saga) there follow both parts of the Miracle Book. In fact the chief manuscript of GB, dating from the middle of the 14th century, is deficient, and ends in the second chapter of the second part of the Miracle Book. This deficiency can be supplied from other manuscripts, though it is the only part of GB that can be reconstructed in this way.

Material found in GB but not in the other versions is of two types: additional subject matter on the one hand, and authorial comment on the other.

Additional subject matter includes a miracle that has been added into the Prestssaga, and, in the Islendinga saga section, a letter from the Archbishop to the Icelandic chieftains and a long theological discussion between Guðmundr and the Archbishop during his second visit to Norway in the years 1214-18. GB also contains fuller descriptions of three of the battles involving Guðmundr's forces that are described in Islendinga saga.

The first of the authorial additions in GB is the prologue, which states that the saga is divided into three parts, the first dealing with Guðmundr's ancestry and his life up to his ordination as a priest, the second covering his life as a priest, and then the third in which it is "sagt frá þeim þrautum ok ónáðum er hann þolði í sínum biskupsdómi ... ok frá lífláti hans ok þar með át lyktum ... nokkurar jarteinir" (GB, c.1; Bisk. I, 559.). In the saga itself, however, the division between the first and second of these sections is not specifically made, as these two parts, comprising the first 79 chapters, are for the most part drawn from the same source, i.e. the Prestssaga (using that title in the wide sense that it has always had in literary discussions over the last century or so), and then Hrafns saga at the end. But at the beginning of chapter 67, before the death of Bishop Brandr, it says that the third part is beginning and that it covers the time until Guðmundr's return to Hólar after his consecration (Bisk. I, 561).

Chapters 80-85 (Bisk.I, 565-67) contain an epilogue to the section covering Guðmundr's life as a priest and a prologue to his career as bishop. These chapters contain some examples of Guðmundr's prophecies. Finally, there is another authorial addition in chapter 96. The beginning of this is lost, but it praises Guðmundr's generosity towards the poor and extols love of one's neighbour as oneself as the highest duty of Christian man (Bisk. I, 571).

The authorial additions before and after the Prestssaga emphasise that the saga is trustworthy, having been composed by good and reliable men who were contemporaries of Guðmundr and who can be relied upon to have known about the things they describe.

It is more clear in GB than in GA that relatives of Guðmundr instigated the writing of the saga. In the prologue to the section about Guðmundr's career as bishop, the author uses the first person plural: "vér ... vinir og frændr Guðmundar biskups" (GB, c. 85; Bisk. I, 567).

GB represents an attempt to write a saint's life about Bishop Guðmundr, but it is an unsuccessful one, whether one views it from a hagiographic or an artistic point of view. As hagiography, it fails because the Miracle Book is placed in its entirety after Guðmundr's death, despite the fact that a large part of it actually belongs in the biographical part of the saga, and, according to the practice of hagiographic legend writing, only posthumous miracles (miracula post mortem) ought to follow the account of the saint's death. The posthumous miracles are admittedly placed last, but no division is made between them and those that belong to the period of Guðmundr's life. Artistically, the saga suffers not only from structural weakness, but also from extreme inconsistency of style, the principal sources being reproduced without any conscious alteration to their style, while the additions - not least those of the compiler himself - are couched in a high rhetorical style, which is at great odds with the unadorned narrative of the principal sources.

The C-version of Guðmundar saga is preserved in only two manuscripts dating from the 17th century. The lost original of these copies, which was probably mediaeval, was deficient in several places, and in one of the copies the first lacuna was filled with material from the D-version. Shortly after this point, however, the copyist abandoned his work. The editors of Biskupa sögur knew only this incomplete copy, and the passage derived from the D-version misled them into thinking that this was a late composite version, based partly on GD and partly on an older version. Nevertheless, they printed the material additions found in GC over and above GA and GB in Biskupa sögur at the foot of the page up to the point where their manuscript ended (Bisk. I, 492). It was not until 1960 that Peter Foote drew attention to the existence of a longer text of GC in a manuscript in Stockholm and published the later chapters: (see *Studia Centennialia in honorem memoriae Benedikt S. Þórarinnsson*). This part has only partial correspondences in other works, and deals with Bishop Jörundur's interference regarding Guðmundr's earthly remains, ending with Jörundur's death in 1313. Foote considered it likely that the saga had originally continued to include the translation of Guðmundr's relics, which took place in 1315, and this has been confirmed by two small unpublished 17th century works, one about the church buildings at Hólar and the other about Þingeyraklaustur. GC is one of the sources used in these, and two small passages from the lost ending of GC are quoted in them.

Practically all the narrative material found in GB also appears in GC, judging by the parts of both that can be compared, there being deficiencies in both versions, as we have already seen. Of course, we cannot say for certain whether the later part of the Miracle Book, containing the miracles between 1315 and 1319, was used in GC, since the surviving text breaks off in 1313. But since GC was certainly longer, and since some of the latest miracles appear in GD - which is based on GC, as we shall see - it is possible that the later miracles were in the original version of GC.

The relationship between GC and GB is not, however, quite clear. The similarity in the content of the two versions is easiest to explain in terms of GC being based on GB, possibly excluding the later part of the Miracle Book, but on the other hand there are various abridgements of the sources in GB that are not found in GC. Moreover, there are readings in common between GA and GC where GB and Sturlunga saga have corrupt readings in common. If the author of GC based his version on GB, which is most likely, then he must also have had some of GB's source texts in more original forms than those actually used in GB.

Very little of the authorial material in GB is to be found in GC, although there are some traces of it. For example, GC retains the tripartite division of the saga, but slightly differently from GB. In GC, the first part of the saga (the Prestssaga) ends at the same point as it does in GB, i.e. when Guðmundr returns to Iceland after his consecration (GC, c. 67), but the author of GC obviously regards the accounts of Guðmundr's ancestry and childhood as belonging to this section, since he says in chapter 117 that the second part of the saga is ending and that the third part begins with the account of Guðmundr's death and the miracles wrought by God as a result of his intercession.

The composition of GC is considerably different from that of GB. To some extent, the author of GC has made up for the structural faults of his sources by re-ordering some details so that they appear in a more natural chronological order, but the greatest difference lies in the treatment of the miracles. As we have seen, the earlier part of the Miracle Book in GB contains both miracles from his time as Bishop and those that occurred after his death, all these miracles being in a somewhat jumbled order in GB, where it says: "...enda liggr eigi við mikit um þat hvat fyrst er frá góðum manni sagt; allt kemr í einn stað niðr þat er gott er gjört í guðs augliti" (GB, c. 122; Bisk. I, 593). In GC, the miracles

dating from Guðmundr's life are transferred and placed in the account of his life at the points where the dating of the miracles themselves, when this is clear, or else their place of occurrence, indicate. In this way the author of GC achieves a thorough chronological treatment of Guðmundr's life, and brings the account of his life as a bishop up onto the same level as the Prestssaga, with the miracles constantly reminding the reader of the bishop's sanctity. The result is that the saga as a whole acquires the structure of a saint's life about a confessor, i.e. first a vita and then miracula post mortem (although the author himself places the structural division before Guðmundr's death, as has been mentioned already).

The miracles after Guðmundr's death actually comprise a very small part of the whole saga in GC. First there is an account of the fulfilment of his prophecies and of some dreams in which he appeared after his death, and then follows a group of miracles associated with water that he blessed. Then there are two miracles dating from the time of Bishop Jörundr of Hólar (1268 - 1313), and an account of Jörundr's attitude to Guðmundr's relics, as already mentioned. In the lost ending of GC there was doubtless an account of the translation of the relics in 1315. After that, the church would have recognized vows made in Guðmundr's name, and it is credible that GC contained some records of further miracles.

Even though the author of GC demonstrates sufficient freedom in his treatment of sources as to alter the composition (and the style, as we shall see later), he was faithful to the content of his sources, and reproduces practically everything found in them without abridgements or alterations.

Compared with GB, GC contains a considerable amount of additional material, including a few miracles, reference for two of these being made to named authorities. One of these miracles is actually a variant of a miracle that was already in the Miracle Book (GB, c.118; Bisk. I, 588-89), and is also used in GC in that version.

The three longest and most important additions in GC are derived from written sources, two of them directly and the third indirectly. The first two are two letters from Norway to Bishop Guðmundr. One is from the Bishop of Stavanger, who addresses him courteously, but advises him at the same time to be moderate in his dealings with secular potentates and come to terms with them. The other letter is from a Norwegian priest, who sends him an account of Elizabeth of Schönau's visions of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. This letter is given in Old Norse in the saga, but was originally written in Latin. The third major addition in GC is a long account of Guðmundr's third sojourn in Norway from 1222 to 1226, including the priest Ketill's journey to Rome at Guðmundr's behest. The author of GC was told about this by an old priest who had previously had a written account of it in a book in his possession.

Practically all the smaller additions in GC serve to refresh the reader's memory or to explain some point, and it can sometimes be difficult to decide whether they simply contain the author's comments and interpretations of the text he is expanding or whether in fact he had access to additional information about certain details. An example of this can be found in the account of Guðmundr's running of the school at Hólar. In Islendinga saga (i.e. GA, c. 161, GB and Sturlunga saga) there is a two-line account to the effect that on his return to Iceland in 1218, Guðmundr opened a school and that great numbers flocked to it, so that it threatened to become a costly enterprise. In GC, c. 85, we are told that the reason for the opening of the school was that Guðmundr thought that there was a shortage of learning and a dearth of capable priests. GC continues: "Skyldu í þann skóla inn ganga til læringar nær hverr sem nema vildi, hvárt sem hann átti meira kosti eðr minna". This was the reason why it threatened to become expensive, because "þótt ríkir menn gæfi mikit góð með sonum sínum, vóru þeir fleiri er lítit eða alls ekki höfðu sér til kostar". The description of Guðmundr's educational revolution takes half a page in GC, and then

there follows an account, agreeing in content with Islendinga saga, of how Arnórr Tumason arrived at Hólar with his force, drove away all Guðmundr's force, the schoolmasters and all the pupils, captured Guðmundr and threatened to burn down the school. One sentence from this passage will serve to demonstrate the nature of the additions in GC. In Islendinga saga, the treatment meted out to Guðmundr by Arnórr's men includes the clause "þeir drógu hann því harðara". In GC this is worded: "þeir veslu þrælar fjandans drógu þann góða guðs vin því harðara". Sturla's sympathies are obviously with Guðmundr, but the author of GC is not content with simple pronouns for the bishop and his enemies, adding instead his own interpretation and so achieving a sharper contrast.

Among the longer additions in GC are passages describing Guðmundr's virtues. There are of course many mentions made of his virtues, but there are three particular passages: when he is ordained priest (GC, c. 22), when he comes to the See of Hólar after his consecration as bishop (GC, c. 67), and after the account of his death and burial (GC, c. 120). The first of these passages in GC is partly paralleled in the Prestsaaga (GA, c. 25; GB, c.21), but it is expanded in GC. There is an internal reference between the other two passages, which both emphasise Guðmundr's charity by presenting the reaction of the poor, firstly to his coming to Hólar and secondly to his death. The opening words of the two passages are very similar, but then follows a sharp contrast: "Flokkum runnu móti honum aumir menn ok fátækir, mjök fagnandi hans tilkomu ..." (GC, c. 67). - "Flokkum runnu fátækir menn um staðinn með mikilli kveinkan ok gráti ..." (GC, c.120).

The author of GC made alterations not only to the structure of the saga. As can be seen from GB, his sources were of very differing style, but he alters them according to his own taste and produces a consistent style throughout the saga. His text is often longer than that of his sources, and he sometimes brings a passage to life by changing indirect speech to direct. Among the stylistic characteristics of GC - and they are innovations

to the older sources of the saga - are: the prepositional form miðil (= millum), sem used as a temporal conjunction, hverr (er) used as a relative pronoun, and the use of the present participle instead of verbal forms conjugated by person.

The style of GC is reminiscent of that of Nikulás saga by Bergr Sökkason, though Nikulás saga is admittedly even more flamboyant. Other arguments indicate that GC was in fact written by Bergr. In his article on GC, Peter Foote mentions (p. 100) that the author of GC seems "to show an interest in the monastery at Þverá", and he also points to another feature (and there are in fact more) which "would be in keeping if the origin of the work were to be located in Eyjafjörður". It should also be noted that the author of the D-version, Arngrímur Brandsson, says in his Guðmundar drápa that Bergr composed something about Guðmundr: "Bergr ábóti hefir birtan margan/ biskups heiðr í máli greiðu" (Bisk. II, 197). Bergr Sökkason was a monk in the Benedictine monasteries at Þingeyrar and Þverá, and was for a time Abbot of the monastery at Þverá. The first mention of him in the records is in 1312, and the last in 1345. GC was certainly composed between these dates, perhaps shortly after 1315 when Guðmundr's relics were translated.

As has been mentioned, GC used to be considered a composite version, based partly on the D-version, but in fact the reverse is the case: GC is the real "Middle Saga", the intermediary between the older sources and GD. GC was definitely the principal source of GD, and it is unlikely that the author of GD used any other versions of Guðmundar saga. There is not space here to substantiate this assertion, but many things support it and nothing contradicts it.

GD contains considerably more miracles than GC, but some of them have parallels in GB and it is credible that they were in the part of GC that is now lost. In other cases, it is likely that the miracles appeared for the first time in GD. This applies, for example, to a miracle narrated by the author himself in the first person ("ek, bróðir Arngrímur" (Bisk. II, 169),

and to another which is dated 1343 (Bisk. II, 173), which is the terminus a quo for the saga.

On the other hand, there are a few miracles in GC which do not appear in GD. Part of the reason for this may be that towards the end of the saga, Arngrímr abandoned his declared plan for the final section. Near the end of the text of the manuscript group of GD which Jón Helgason showed was the more original (Corp. Cod. Isl. XIX, 17 - 18, 21), it says that there is to follow "minning þeirra biskupa sem verit hafa at Hólum eptir Guðmund biskup fram í minni þeirra manna er nú lifa", but there follows only a mention of Bishop Bótólfur (1238 - 46; Bisk. II, 186), and this version of the saga ends with a passage in which Guðmundr is likened to a palm. In the other manuscript group, the end of the saga is altered, the mention of the later bishops being omitted, the passage about the palm follows directly after Guðmundr's death (Bisk. II, 163 - 65), and the saga is given a new ending in which Guðmundr is likened to a cedar (Bisk. II, 183). This passage is in fact borrowed from Nikulás saga by Bergr Sokkason (Heilagra manna sögur II, 155 - 56).

The author of GD obviously did not care to cite all the miracles in GC. This applies especially to the miracles in which Guðmundr healed domestic animals. Cases in which he healed horses are admittedly cited in GD, but those involving cattle and sheep are either briefly recounted in plain language or else completely omitted.

The author of GD omits a great deal of the circumstantial narration in GC, e.g. practically everything about Guðmundr's relatives, and in the Prestssaga section he traces Guðmundr's career in very broad terms only. For this reason the Prestssaga in GD is much shorter than it is in GA, GB and GC, and very different in structure from the other versions. In GD, the miracles dating from Guðmundr's life as a priest are mostly taken out of chronological sequence, grouped by type and presented as illustrations of Guðmundr's spiritual strength and individual virtues.

On the other hand, GD resumes the full circumstantial narrative, as in GC, when it comes to Guðmundr's election, consecration and work as bishop,

well on into Guðmundr's life until the point in GC when the miracles assume larger proportions than the narrative of events. Then the author of GD re-orders the miracles and groups them according to subject (e.g. the beaching of whales, unexpected catches of salmon, etc.). The same principle of grouping is found in the last part of GD, covering the miracula post mortem (which the author calls "tákn biskupsins eftir lífit" (Bisk. II, 166)). Amongst these are to be found, for example, groups of miracles about women who cannot give birth, women who have swallowed worms, the recovery of fishing lines and the curings of horses.

The author of GD omits from his version everything that could possibly show the saint in the slightest bad light, e.g. practically all the descriptions of armed combat between Guðmundr's men and his enemies. Another example of these omissions is that in the Prestssaga, in describing Guðmundr's virtuous life, the A-, B-, and C-versions say that he always went to confession whenever he encountered a priest, and that when he considered that too long a period had elapsed since his last confession, he would write down all his sins and send the report to the bishop. In the D-version there is no mention of this, since, in view of the spotless image of Guðmundr that is presented right from his childhood, he could not be expected to have any sins to confess.

The author of GD seldom allowed himself to make material changes to his source, although there are some examples of this. In GA,GB and GC, it says that Guðmundr was coerced into book-learning with beatings, and that he was unruly and seemed to have inherited a difficult temperament; GD admittedly says that he was "gildrar lundar, eigi gjarn at afleggja sitt mál" (Bisk. II, 11) but elsewhere that he was "til bækr settr á skilningar aldri, hlýðinn ok auðmjúkr sínum meistara sem öllum öðrum er honum vildu gott kenna" (Bisk. II, 7). Arngrímur may have taken this last passage from Bergr Sökkason's Nikulás saga (Heil. m. sögur II, 65).

By shortening the narrative material, the author of GD gained extra space

for his own explanations and learned interpolations, which consist partly of references to parallels in other ecclesiastical literature - not least Tómas saga erkibiskups and Gregory's Dialogues. There is more than one reference to the Speculum Historiale by Vincent of Beauvais, and this work is drawn upon in other places without acknowledgement.

As mentioned previously, GD was written after 1343. The author, Arngrímur Brandsson, who was Abbot at Þingeyrar for a time, died in 1361 or 1362, and the oldest extant manuscript was not written later than about 1360. This manuscript is actually one of the later version of the saga, and may well represent the author's own revision. There is no doubt that GD was written in connection with the attempts to have Guðmundr canonised. His relics were again translated in 1344 by Bishop Orrur of Hólar (1343 - 56), who, like Bishop Auðunn, was a Norwegian, and the sources show clearly that Arngrímur Brandsson was one of his closest collaborators from among Icelandic clerics.

In his essay on Sturlunga saga (see Safn til sögu Íslands og Íslenskra bókmennta III.2-3 (1897)), Björn M. Ólsen advanced the view that GD was an Icelandic translation of a Latin life of Guðmundr. It is clear that the saga was written with foreign readers in mind. This can be seen in the descriptions of Icelandic scenery and conditions, and, in the introductions to some of the miracles, in the descriptions of working conditions and methods, none of which would have been necessary for an Icelandic audience. Another indication of this is that only the principal characters and a few of the main localities are named, some of the latter being briefly described, even where well-known places are concerned. Minor characters are generally not named, and nor are less important places, it being sufficient merely to designate the general area of the country.

Björn M. Ólsen's other main argument for GD having been translated from Latin was the style of the saga. This is not a compelling argument, however, and the studies of the last few decades have made it more and more clear that Latinate style in Icelandic works from the 14th century is no firm indication that they are direct translations. On the contrary, clear cases have been

found of increasing Latin influence on Icelandic style in both translated and native works that were revised in about 1300 and later.

Although the style of GD is very different from that of GC, there is nevertheless a clear connection between the two in the vocabulary, particularly in cases of relatively unusual words. If GD was written in Latin, then GC was not only its main source, but also the text that was most used when the saga was translated into Icelandic. As we have seen, two versions of GD were in existence during the author's life, and it is just as likely that it was composed not in Latin but in Icelandic, but intended for translation - whether any such translation was made or not.

The style of GD is even more ornate than that of GC, but the author of GD nevertheless tempers some of the Latinate features of GC which are commonly found in ornate style. This applies especially to the use of the present participle and to the use of the interrogative pronouns as relative pronouns, but on the other hand he does also frequently have raw translations of various Latin phrases, as Björn M. Olsen pointed out. The ornate stylistic features that are more prominent in GD than in GC are the use of adjectives and other qualifiers with a propagandizing purpose, the use of synonyms, and alliteration.

An attempt has been made here to describe four sagas about Bishop Guðmundr the Good. It is probable that they were all composed within the span of one generation - in the first part of the 14th century - yet each in a different way: GA as a straight compilation of older sources, GB as a compilation with a prologue and interpolations by the compiler, GC revised and expanded with considerable changes in composition and style, and finally GD, with still more radical changes, compiled with a view to giving the world at large a view of the Bishop's admirable works and to contributing to his recognition as a saint.

If one can judge by the number of preserved manuscripts and fragments, then it seems that it was the saga written for a foreign audience that nevertheless became more popular than the others in Iceland.

GBa (Bisk. I, 599).

Eirekr hét maðr. Hann var Árnason. Hann var veiðimaðr mikill. Hann fór í skor þá er Gráhnakkaskor heitir. Þat er fuglberg mikit, ok skal eigi í fara fyrr en at miðjum morgni, en eigi síðar í brott en at miðjum aptni. Nú ferr hann í bjargit ok fylgir um daginn .viii. hundrað eða meirr, ok var honum dvalsamt í bjarginu, ok fór hann síðar ór en vera skyldi. Ok er hann ætlaði upp at fara þá kom hönd fram ór bjarginu mikil ok skálm í ok skar í sundr .viii. þáttuna (þáttu GBb²) í festinni, ok hrukku þeir um höfuð honum. En einn var óskorinn, ok hafði Guðmundr byskup þann vígt, ok gaf sá honum líf með guðs miskunn ok verðleik Guðmundar byskups.

GCa (Papp. 4to nr. 4, f. 54r).

Annarr maðr kom enn á þessum tíma til Guðmundar byskups, er hét Eirekr Árnason, veiðimaðr mikill, ok bað hann vígja einn festarþátt er hann átti, hvat byskup gjörði gjarna. Fór Eirekr heim síðan, setjandi þáttinn við bjargfesti sína. Hann fór jafnan til fylgingar í skor þá er Gráhnakkaskor heitir. Þat er fuglbjarg mikit, ok skyldi eigi fyrri í fará en at miðjum morgni ok eigi síðar burt en at miðjum aptni. Nú berr svá til einn dag sem Eirekr sitr í greindu bjargi, at hann fylgir .viii.^c eða meirr, hvar fyrir honum verðr dvalsamt ok er lengr en skipat var. Ok sem hann ætlar upp at fara kemr fram ór bjarginu greip harla mikil ok bregðr skálm á festina er hann sat í ok skerr í sundr .viii. þáttu í festinni svá hart ok snöggt at endunum slettir um höfuð honum. En einn þátrinn var óskorinn, með hverjum hann var upp dreginn, ok hafði þann vígðan Guðmundr byskup. Sagði Eirekr þenna hlut mörgum, kennandi þat verðleikum hins góða Guðmundar með guðs miskunn er hann fekk líf.

GDa² (Bisk. II, 111).

Svá er Ísland fallit víða fyrir norðan með sjónum, at standa stór björg með svá frábærri hæð at í-stöðum gengr langt yfir hundrað faðma. Í þess háttar björg samnaz í mörgum stöðum á sumarit svá margr sjófugl at þat er ótöluligr fjölli. Verpr hann í þeim hellum ok holum sem verða í bjarginu. Þessi er fjár-afli margs manns at fara í björgin ok (at GDb^{1,2}) taka egg ok fugl. Þess háttar afli hefz (fremz GDb^{1,2}) á þann hátt at fugl-arian farr í festarenda ofan fyrir bergit. Geriz þat optliga með miklum háska ok bráðum manntapa, því at festinni kaun margt granda. Einn af þess háttar mönnum kemr til herra Guðmundar ok biðr hann bleza eiu festarpátt er hann átti. Sem byskupinn hefir blezat samsetr fuglarinn festina (festi sína GDb^{1,2}) með .viii. þáttum ok þeim níunda er signdr var. Ferr hann síðan til þess bergs er stóð með þeim ummælum fornra manna at eigi (ei GDb^{1,2}) skyldi lengr í vera sandægris en sól væri á góðu lopti kveld ok morgin. Nú einn dag sem hann ferr í bjargit með sömu festi fylgir hann svá margt at hann hleðr sik bæði á (þ GDb^{1,2}) bak ok fyrir. Verðr því dvalsamt um daginn, svá at hann gleymir tímanum. Verðr eigi fyrr varr en myrkr kemr at honum. Ok því næst (nær GDb^{1,2}) brestr fram ór bjarginu greip eigi smálát (smáleit GDb^{1,2}) ok bregðr rétt (títt GDb^{1,2}) á festina stórri skálm, svá at allir þættir .viii. fara í einum rykk í svá hörðum drætti at neðri endana fleygir ofan yfir manninn. En því dásam- ligra var þat er fylgði, at einum þætti herra Guðmundar mátti fjándinn eigi granda, ok sá gaf líf manninum, því at svá var hann sterkr til uppdráttar sem tvífaldr strengr. Bera því lík verk herra Guðmundi ljóst vitni hvárr þeira Arnórs hefir betri mála efní.

