

**The Fantastic Element in the *Íslendingasögur*  
(Abstract of Plenary Paper)**

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My paper raises the question: Does the function of the fantastic, which is present in all or most *Íslendingasögur*, change during the two centuries in which the genre was productive? In order to answer the question a brief account is given of a survey of all the sagas, and an attempt is made to assess in which sagas the fantastic plays a significant role, what kinds of fantastic elements appear in the sagas and how important they are. Subsequently a comparison will be made between a couple of sagas selected from the group that can on good grounds be dated to the thirteenth century, and a selection of fourteenth century sagas. The final question will be: does the varying role of the fantastic in individual sagas justify a categorisation that defines the fourteenth century sagas as a kind of sub-genre which is more fantastic than the sagas from the thirteenth century? The above may sound more like the plan for a book than a short paper, and consequently it will end with suggestions rather than firm conclusions.