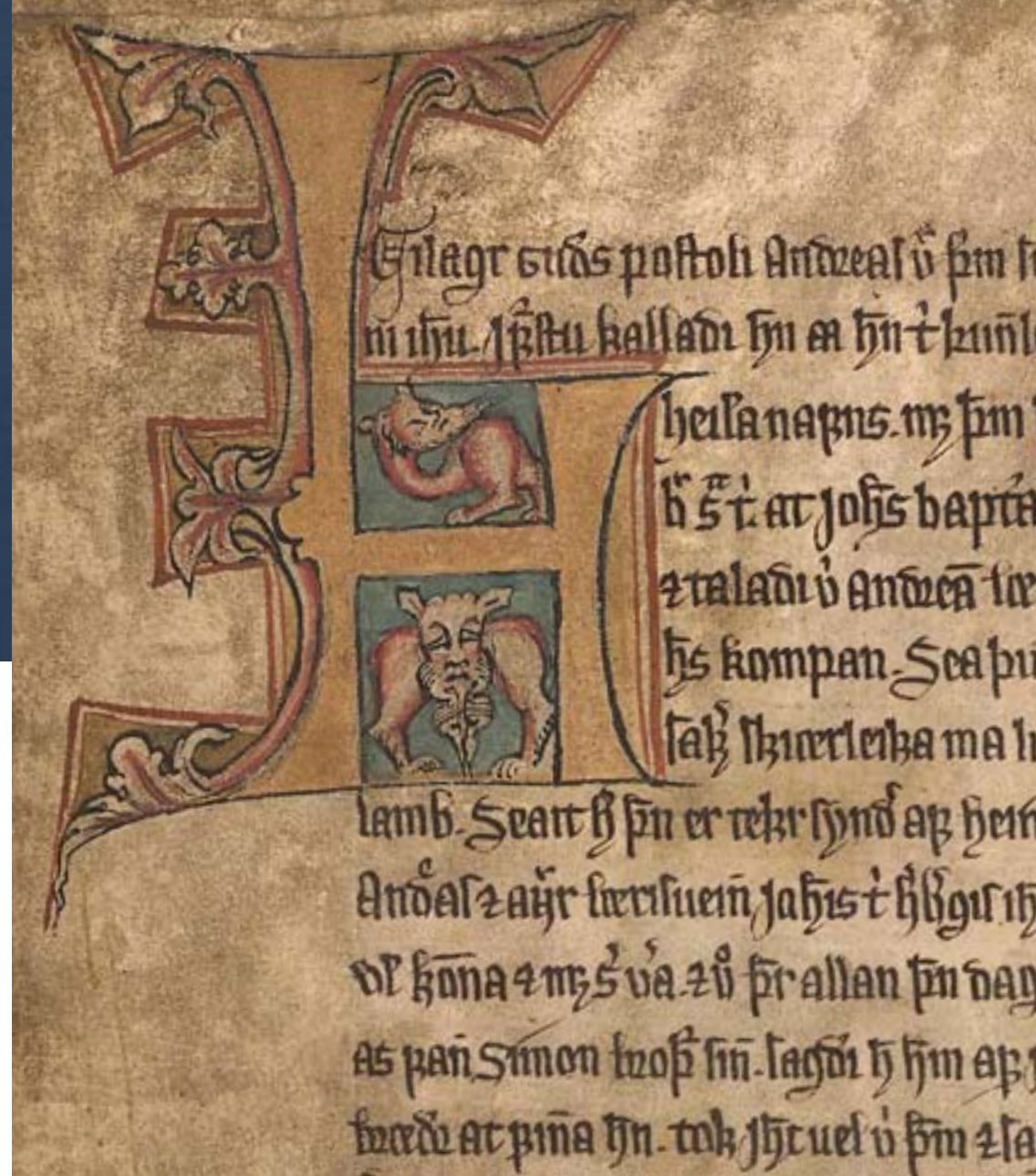




A letter dated 2nd October 1371 from Jón Eiríksson, Bishop of Hólar (1359-1386), concerning the division of hunting rights on glacial lakes in the Skagafjörður region between Miklobær Church and the estate of Reykir in Tungusveit. The Bishop's seal is furthest to the left. AM Dipl. Isl. Fasc. III, 19.

In 2009, the Árni Magnússon Manuscript Collection was placed on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list known as the Memory of the World Register. With this Register, UNESCO aims to highlight the importance of preserving the world's documentary cultural heritage and the Register therefore identifies collections of exceptional importance. The inclusion of the Árni Magnússon Institute's Collection in the Register represents a major acknowledgement of Iceland's manuscript heritage. Explaining its decision, UNESCO states that the Institute has custody of priceless manuscripts which are of great significance for the history and culture of Scandinavian countries, and indeed of much of Europe, from medieval to modern times. The Sagas of Icelanders (the "Family Sagas") are mentioned as a particular example of texts in the manuscripts that are of major significance for the wider world.



Front page: Initial from *Skarðsbók* (*Lives of the Apostles*) SÁM 1; 3rd quarter of the 14th century.

Eunang Sigurð / Litraf

The Árni Magnússon Collection is preserved in the two Árni Magnússon Institutes, one in Reykjavík and the other in Copenhagen. It consists of approximately 3,000 medieval and post-medieval manuscripts, as well as some 14,000 documents, both originals and copies.

Árni Magnússon was born in the Dalir region in the west of Iceland in 1663. Educated first in Iceland and then in Copenhagen, he became secretary to the Royal archives, and later also held the post of Professor of Danish Antiquities at the University of Copenhagen. Árni was the most active collector of Icelandic manuscripts of his time. He received some codices as gifts but purchased others and also engaged scribes to make copies of texts in manuscripts that were not for sale. Árni lost a part of his collection of manuscripts and rare books in the Great Fire of Copenhagen in 1728 but most vellum manuscripts in his possession were saved from the flames. Árni died soon after the fire, by which time he had bequeathed the manuscripts to the University of Copenhagen.

Illustrations in many legal manuscripts offer insights into the daily activities of people in Iceland in past times. To the left, ale is drawn from a cask and, to the right, various measuring tools are tested. AM 147 4to, Heynesbók; first half of the 16th century.

Manuscripts from Árni Magnússon's collection form the core of the holdings at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. They were sent to Iceland from Copenhagen between 1971 and 1997 following the resolution of a dispute between Denmark and Iceland as to whether the Icelandic manuscripts should be returned to their country of origin or kept permanently in Denmark. In addition to manuscripts from Árni's collection, the Danes handed over a number of Icelandic manuscripts from the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Various other manuscripts are also kept in the Árni Magnússon Institute, among them the Skarðsbók codex containing Lives of the Apostles: this was purchased by Icelandic banks at a London auction in 1965 and presented to the Icelandic nation as a gift.

Möðruvallabók (AM 132 fol.), from the mid 14th century, is the largest extant manuscript containing Sagas of Icelanders ("Family sagas"). There are 11 sagas in the codex, including Njáls saga, Egils saga and Laxdæla saga. The parchment is bound between wooden boards, a common technique in the medieval period.



sonu h' leud h' ve sem hjarn h'opdu oad t' lein. h'af' p'ost' p'und
v' h' z' aru f'ir d'isaga par pell g'irorg' z' h' f'ir m' s'm z' mar' d'
nat' h' d' sidm sigde h'af' f' ve om cilur z' l'at h'ap h'allt' s'ud m' h'
z' ho p'ra d' d'ann'k' pos p'a d' p'und h'ir. h'ir d'ina h'ar' pek' p' god' d' cob'
ur d'ualdest' par v' verim. p'a v' z' m' d'at' h'eg' m'ada' la' e' h'ir. her
h' d' san h'm' g'orm' p' h'odur. h'ra d'oe h'eg' h' v' b'om' o'z' v'isig' h'm'
h'apde lengit' h'at' z' pengit' ap' lausa' p'iar. p' d' kallads; gull h'ir b'
p'atte' uel ol' b'om' at' va' h'eg' d' an' m'b. **vers' v'iki' g'und' h'ana**

Fir g'rap' z' p'ir b'v'ed'z' h'ellou' h'ir s'im' d'v'oz' d' h'ir h' z' p'ir g'u'
p'ar ongud' moer'odu' s'im' h'af' f' v' s' b'u'ru' toba' p'ir p'a z'
at' d' z' h'v'ill' z' allar h'ar' t'eb'ur z' p' v' p'm' l'etu' p'ir b'v'ed'z' g'ia'
l'at' it'oz' g'iald' p'ar h'ar'n' h'opdu' p'a langa' h' d' h'ir p'e' p'egit' o'z'
p'rad' h' er h'af' h'apde' p' l'et' m'z' p'ialm' z' at' v' p'o' v' h'ga' v' h'ant'
it' p'oz' h'ir h'ar' s'ud; f' h' m' p' h'o' p'iet' e' p' d'amb'm'le' e' e' h'ed'z' h'm'
lar' p'ar' ep't' m'z' s'im' h'ide. h' h'apde' p'a en' m'ubla; k'rap' v' b'v'ed'
z' z' g'eg'ed' h'ard' z'at' p'ra en' b'v'ed'z' k'v'ind' u' illa z' g'eg'oz' d'
z'ad' s'im' sid'm' v'm' u'ec'n' g'op' h'v'v'at' b'v'ed'z' s'at'm' z' p'egu' l'is'
m'ib'it' it'ep'adu' s'ad'm' at' e' l'ell'end' h'eg' p'ar' s'e' h' v' a' v'ar'is'lu' z' h'el'
du' v' h' v'oz'at' p' pell' er' z' m' l' suer' m'a' m'z' h'm'. p' s'eg'ia' m' at'
s'u' o'ld' v' i' em' h'oz'v'at' er' g'uh' p' s't'm'p'u' z' ap' p' at' v'et'm' s'p'ill'
t'ust' en' b'om' at' h'at' s'iom' h'v'p' l'oz'at' z' h'opdu' s'ika' b'v'ed'
p' d'obu' f' m'ore' s'ult' z' s'eg'ru' z' p' n'act' m'a'at'p'a' f' an'at' s'ad' v'anz'
v'ol'eg'd'm' p'ra m'a' er' d' l'etu' h'p' d'is'p'at'z' m'ib'it' it'erp' h'apde' h'ir'
p' h' s' s'm' z' l'it' m'z' n'yr' l'end' b'e' m'a' h'ir' m' v'iu' h'm' p'o' m'ib'it'
p'uar' h' v' p'm' g'od' p'at' h' v' b'v'ed' m'ub' h'v' **h'v'ed'z' at' t'ru' s'**

Fir h'et' k'ona' s'her' at' h'apde' t'v'ig' h'ar' ol'ap' s'em' p'ir'
s'ep' h'o' d' d'at' o'v'it' b'v'ada' s'h'alla' v'el' m'at'z' er' b'io' d' o'f'
m'it' en' er' p'all' t'v'ig' h'ar' p'ly'z' at' h'v'od' d'at' ap' e'ign'it'
s'im' m'z' l'ey' d' z' h'apde' m'z' s'er' nob'v'ur' l'ausa' p'e' p'at' h' h'ug'a'
at' v'm' h'v'ar' m'z' v'nd'ir' sig' d'isaga' allar' o'v'ig' p'oz' er' p'au'
t'v'ig'u' h'ir h'opdu' at' z' at' f'ir' m'adu' p'ar' k'ona' z'v'and' s'ia' z' z'
s'up'ra' h'a' al'ba' s'ed' ep' h' h'ep'v'at' p'ar' v' h'er' z' m' p'v'ig' d'e' h'ir'
p'oz'it' p'ad'ir' h'v'ar' z' t'v'ig'v' t'v'and' m' e' p'oz'ol'v' er' z' v' k'ad'
l'ady' l'us'ar' s'eg' h' s'v'ide' al'd' v' h'a' m'z' p'au' m'adu' s'ad'm' v'a' e' d'aga'
ar'm'ad'ar' m' s'ia' h'apde' h'o' d' m'ash' at' v'ica' h'ut' v'v'ud' h'v'ar' h'o'
p'v'ud' at' p'uar' h'o' h'v'od'v'at' h'ard'la' m'ig' ep' p'e' v'v'ud' v' v'ar' h'u'
l'h'ir' v' ol'p'ent' at' p'ir' m'z' h'a' h'ar' t'aba' z' p'v'ara' g'uh' h'g'am' en'
h' v'ill'd'i' p' v'az'at' en' s'v' h' m' h'v'et'ra' s'v' d' h'v'ar' b'v'oz'p'at' z' p'lot'
at' p'ud' s'ir' z' at' f' s'v'as' m'ad' v' d' h'v'oz' m'z' b'v'v'ic' s'v'ar' t'v'ig' h'ar'
z' p'v' m'z' h'o' p'oz'v'at' p'ud' p'v' g'uh' z' s'ona' h'v'ar' l'et' h' p'ly'z'
id' sig' v't' a' cur' v'at'm' f' v'at'm'm' v' o'v'm' h'ol'm'i' p' l'ey'nd'v'at' d'at'
z' p'oz'ol'v' m'z' h'ir' b'v'og'v'it' p' h'ir' v'v'et' g'am'all' v' p'a' h'ia' s'im' z'
n'ob'v'ur' m' z' d' **h'v'ed'z' at' h'ir' t'v'ig'v'at' h'm' h'ol'm'm'**

Fir h'et' er' h'at' v' p'ir' h'eg'at'
b'v'ud' v'ar' h'v'ar' h'm' z' m'v' h'und'v'at'
z' l'ey'v'ig' z' m'v' at' z' a' d'v'ud'u' d'v'e'
h'm' p'v'oz'v'at'v'at' s'v'om'v' h'm' m'
l'h'la' k'v'it'ara' z' s'v'v'it'v'at' d'v'e' v'v'at'
v'v'ard'v'at' v'ig'la' h'ar' p'v'od'v'at' d'v'e' v'
v'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at' h'ol'm'm' n'u' d' v'v'at' v'v'
er' v'v'and' h'v'ar' h'm' s'v'at' s'v'at' p'oz'ol'
p'v' v'v'at'v'ic' at' s'v'ir' s'v'at' at' p'a' g'v'v'at'
p'oz'ol'v'at' g'ap' v'v'ev'm'm' n'ap'v' z' h'v'ill'ad'e' h'ol'ap' ep't' p'od'v'at' p'a'
v'v'ud' s'im' ap' p' v'v' d'v'et' m'od'v'at' s'v'ev'm'm' v'v' m'v'v'at' p'og'v'at'
d'z' z' o'v'v' s'v' m' er' p'ar' v' v' v'v'at'v'at' h'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h' h'ol'm'm' s'
l'ey'v'ic' s'v' m' s'v'v'at' k'v'om' h'v'v'at' h'm' at' h'v'ig'v'at' ep't' v'v'at'm' b'v'v'ed' e'
er' v'v'at' d'v'v'at'v'at' e' d'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at'v'at' b'v'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h'v'at'
p'v' s'v'v'at' h'ad' z' p'oz'ol'v'at' en' p'at' v'v'at'v'at' m'a' p' p'a' at' em'

m' b'ig'v'at' er' p'au' l'ey'nd'v'at' v'm' d'aga' z' m'at'ru' ong'ua' m' p'v'ia' p'au' h'o'
v'm' d'ag' at' h'v'ell'ad'e' t'v'it' o'v'v'at' a' o'f'f'v'at'v'at'v'at' p'v'aud'e' al'd'v'at' s'v'end'e' h' p'v'at'm'
h'v'm'z' b'v'om' at' s'v'eg'ia' p' s'v'v'at' s'v'ra' p' v'v'om'u' en' h' l'et' p'v'ig'v'at' p' s'v'v'at' m'z'
v'm' z' s'v'v'at' s'v' m' b'v'og' m'z' h'm'u' d'v'at'u' p'ong'u' v' d'v'at'v'at' p' l'v'ida' h'o' d'v'
p'v'ic'm' s'v'ra' p'oz' b'v'at' en' h'o' v' v'v'at' z' h' p'v'v'at'v'at' v'v'at' m'z' h'ir' z' l'on' h'v'ar'
ol'ap'v'at' p'oz'ol'v'at' s'v'v'at'v'at' z' p'oz'v'at' p' h'ir' v' p'au' p' v' v'v'at'v'at' v'el' h'v'at'v'at' m'z'

Fir h'et' er' h'at' v' p'ir' h'eg'at'
b'v'ud' v'ar' h'v'ar' h'm' z' m'v' h'und'v'at'
z' l'ey'v'ig' z' m'v' at' z' a' d'v'ud'u' d'v'e'
h'm' p'v'oz'v'at'v'at' s'v'om'v' h'm' m'
l'h'la' k'v'it'ara' z' s'v'v'it'v'at' d'v'e' v'v'at'
v'v'ard'v'at' v'ig'la' h'ar' p'v'od'v'at' d'v'e' v'
v'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at' h'ol'm'm' n'u' d' v'v'at' v'v'
er' v'v'and' h'v'ar' h'm' s'v'at' s'v'at' p'oz'ol'
p'v' v'v'at'v'ic' at' s'v'ir' s'v'at' at' p'a' g'v'v'at'
p'oz'ol'v'at' g'ap' v'v'ev'm'm' n'ap'v' z' h'v'ill'ad'e' h'ol'ap' ep't' p'od'v'at' p'a'
v'v'ud' s'im' ap' p' v'v' d'v'et' m'od'v'at' s'v'ev'm'm' v'v' m'v'v'at' p'og'v'at'
d'z' z' o'v'v' s'v' m' er' p'ar' v' v' v'v'at'v'at' h'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h' h'ol'm'm' s'
l'ey'v'ic' s'v' m' s'v'v'at' k'v'om' h'v'v'at' h'm' at' h'v'ig'v'at' ep't' v'v'at'm' b'v'v'ed' e'
er' v'v'at' d'v'v'at'v'at' e' d'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at'v'at' b'v'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h'v'at'
p'v' s'v'v'at' h'ad' z' p'oz'ol'v'at' en' p'at' v'v'at'v'at' m'a' p' p'a' at' em'

Fir h'et' er' h'at' v' p'ir' h'eg'at'
b'v'ud' v'ar' h'v'ar' h'm' z' m'v' h'und'v'at'
z' l'ey'v'ig' z' m'v' at' z' a' d'v'ud'u' d'v'e'
h'm' p'v'oz'v'at'v'at' s'v'om'v' h'm' m'
l'h'la' k'v'it'ara' z' s'v'v'it'v'at' d'v'e' v'v'at'
v'v'ard'v'at' v'ig'la' h'ar' p'v'od'v'at' d'v'e' v'
v'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at' h'ol'm'm' n'u' d' v'v'at' v'v'
er' v'v'and' h'v'ar' h'm' s'v'at' s'v'at' p'oz'ol'
p'v' v'v'at'v'ic' at' s'v'ir' s'v'at' at' p'a' g'v'v'at'
p'oz'ol'v'at' g'ap' v'v'ev'm'm' n'ap'v' z' h'v'ill'ad'e' h'ol'ap' ep't' p'od'v'at' p'a'
v'v'ud' s'im' ap' p' v'v' d'v'et' m'od'v'at' s'v'ev'm'm' v'v' m'v'v'at' p'og'v'at'
d'z' z' o'v'v' s'v' m' er' p'ar' v' v' v'v'at'v'at' h'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h' h'ol'm'm' s'
l'ey'v'ic' s'v' m' s'v'v'at' k'v'om' h'v'v'at' h'm' at' h'v'ig'v'at' ep't' v'v'at'm' b'v'v'ed' e'
er' v'v'at' d'v'v'at'v'at' e' d'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at'v'at' b'v'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h'v'at'
p'v' s'v'v'at' h'ad' z' p'oz'ol'v'at' en' p'at' v'v'at'v'at' m'a' p' p'a' at' em'

Fir h'et' er' h'at' v' p'ir' h'eg'at'
b'v'ud' v'ar' h'v'ar' h'm' z' m'v' h'und'v'at'
z' l'ey'v'ig' z' m'v' at' z' a' d'v'ud'u' d'v'e'
h'm' p'v'oz'v'at'v'at' s'v'om'v' h'm' m'
l'h'la' k'v'it'ara' z' s'v'v'it'v'at' d'v'e' v'v'at'
v'v'ard'v'at' v'ig'la' h'ar' p'v'od'v'at' d'v'e' v'
v'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at' h'ol'm'm' n'u' d' v'v'at' v'v'
er' v'v'and' h'v'ar' h'm' s'v'at' s'v'at' p'oz'ol'
p'v' v'v'at'v'ic' at' s'v'ir' s'v'at' at' p'a' g'v'v'at'
p'oz'ol'v'at' g'ap' v'v'ev'm'm' n'ap'v' z' h'v'ill'ad'e' h'ol'ap' ep't' p'od'v'at' p'a'
v'v'ud' s'im' ap' p' v'v' d'v'et' m'od'v'at' s'v'ev'm'm' v'v' m'v'v'at' p'og'v'at'
d'z' z' o'v'v' s'v' m' er' p'ar' v' v' v'v'at'v'at' h'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h' h'ol'm'm' s'
l'ey'v'ic' s'v' m' s'v'v'at' k'v'om' h'v'v'at' h'm' at' h'v'ig'v'at' ep't' v'v'at'm' b'v'v'ed' e'
er' v'v'at' d'v'v'at'v'at' e' d'v'ag'v' s'v'v'at'v'at' b'v'v'at'v'at' d'v'e' h'v'at'
p'v' s'v'v'at' h'ad' z' p'oz'ol'v'at' en' p'at' v'v'at'v'at' m'a' p' p'a' at' em'



Flateyjarbók (GKS 1005 fol.), which was probably written and illustrated between 1387 and 1394, is primarily a collection of Kings' sagas. However, it also contains various poems (among them the oldest surviving text of rímur – a type of epic poetry), annals and other material not preserved elsewhere, notably Graenlendinga saga, which describes the discovery of Vinland, or America. The codex features many illuminated initials and other decorated letters: these often extend into the lower margin of the page, as can be seen in this photograph. Here, the birth of the missionary King Óláfr Tryggvason is illustrated at the point where his saga begins; Óláfr is celebrated for having converted Iceland, and other countries, to Christianity.