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Rewriting the Settlement

Lawmen and the Formation of *Landnámabók*, 1270–1320

Introduction

Landnámabók ("The Book of Settlements") is one of the most important historical texts composed in medieval Iceland. It is a book which describes in considerable detail the settlement of Iceland by the Norse in the ninth and tenth centuries. It mentions around 430 settlers (or "more than 400", cf. Jakob Benediktsson 1966, p. 275) from all four Quarters of Iceland. Moving geographically around Iceland, it relates where each settler took up residence and often there is a brief genealogy listing each settler's important descendants. There are also anecdotes concerning quarrels between the earliest generations of Icelanders, shorter versions of the material often found in the *Íslendingasögur* (family sagas), which are mostly devoted to events in Iceland between 870 and 1030.

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Abstract: *Landnámabók* (The Book of Settlements) is one of the most important historical texts composed in medieval Iceland. It describes in considerable detail the settlement of Iceland by the Norse in the ninth and tenth centuries. In this article the key differences between the three medieval versions of *Landnámabók* are analysed. It is argued that there is very little material in later versions which can be traced directly to this earliest version which was purportedly composed in the twelfth century. However, it is argued that two lost versions from the early thirteenth century are likely to have influenced later versions. The surviving versions of *Landnámabók* were all composed during the first decades of royal rule in Iceland. In these versions the emphasis is placed on the status and nobility of the settlers, who are depicted as involved in high politics in Norway before their move to Iceland. However, there are notable differences between each of three surviving versions from that time, which reflect the different viewpoint of the redactors.

Keywords: Medieval Iceland, historiography, the settlement of Iceland, Old Norse philology, *Landnámabók*.

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The first version of *Landnámabók* is believed to have been composed early in the twelfth century. This version has been lost, and it is difficult to determine which episodes from the preserved versions are drawn from the original. In addition, other versions of *Landnámabók* were composed in the first half of the thirteenth century and are important sources of the surviving versions. Only three medieval versions of *Landnámabók* have been preserved, either in entirety or in fragments, and they were all originally composed between 1270 and 1320. They are called *Sturlubók*, *Hauksbók* and *Melabók*. Despite the uncertain status of textual preservation, most treatments of *Landnámabók* have been devoted to the lost original, either to determine its contents or to discuss the possible motives for its composition. In contrast, much less attention has been devoted to the motives of the people who put together the three medieval versions of *Landnámabók* that have been preserved. Nevertheless, the level of interest devoted to the settlement of Iceland in the decades following its incorporation into the realm of Norway between 1220 and 1281 (see Sverrir Jakobsson 2009; Sverrir Jakobsson 2021), is noteworthy. Why did the settlement of Iceland become a topic of interest to Icelanders at this juncture in the country's history?

The aim of the present study is to analyse the medieval texts of *Landnámabók* and the circumstances of their creation. Who composed these versions of the text and what was their motivation? What differences between the texts are due to their use of source materials and which textual elements can be ascribed to the situation in which each redactor found themselves? Does the meaning of *Landnámabók* change when it is viewed as a text arising out of the first decades of royal government in Iceland? This analysis of the three different texts of *Landnámabók* will shed some light on these issues.

The Elusive Original

There is no extant version of *Landnámabók* which dates from the twelfth century. The sole evidence for any work on the settlement dating from that period is in *Hauksbók*, a text from the first decade of the fourteenth century. According to an epilogue to the *Landnámabók* in *Hauksbók*, the settlement is traced "eptir því sem fróðir menn hafa skrifat, fyrst Ari prestr hinn fróði Þorgilsson ok Kolskeggr hinn vitri" ('according to what wise men have written, the first of these being the priest Ari Þorgilsson the

Learned, and Kolskeggr the Wise', *Íslenzk fornrit* I, p. 395). Ari Þorgilsson (1067–1148) is well-known as the author of *Íslendingabók* and other texts from the twelfth century (see Sverrir Jakobsson 2017a). Kolskeggr the Wise is less known, but he is quoted as an authority on a few occasions in the surviving versions of *Landnámabók* (see *Íslenzk fornrit* I, pp. 302, 317). The statement in *Hauksbók*, our sole piece of evidence for the existence of early twelfth-century writings on the settlement, does not make reference to a single text encompassing the settlement of Iceland.

In *Íslendingabók*, Ari Þorgilsson mentions four "settlers" (*landnámsmenn*), one in each Quarter (*Íslenzk fornrit* I, p. 6), and at the end of that chronicle, he traces the ancestry of the first four bishops of Iceland who descended from these four settlers (*Íslenzk fornrit* I, pp. 26–27). The use of the term "settlers" can be used as evidence for an interest in settlers as a particular group among the first inhabitants of Iceland (see Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 1974, pp. 88–92, Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, p. 75). The so-called settlers "were only a very small fraction of the people who actually migrated to Iceland in the age of the settlements" (Jakob Benediktsson 1966, p. 289). Thus, being a settler was a marker of a high social status, defining a group of regional leaders (Bruhn 1999, pp. 184–85). Within this group, which itself formed an elite among farmers, four settlers are granted distinction, due to their kinship with later bishops. Thus, already in the early twelfth century distinction was being made between individual settlers on account of their nobility. It is noteworthy that the settler representing the Western Quarter was a woman, Auðr djúpúðga (Auðr the Subtle). This reflects the importance of women among the colonists of Iceland, but also the fact that she was the ancestor of Ari Þorgilsson. It is conspicuous that her gender did not preclude Auðr being regarded as a notable ancestor (see Callow 2011, p. 21).

This kind of genealogical reference to the leading clergy of the time has parallel in the surviving versions of *Landnámabók*. Four settlers are traced from the Irish king Cerball mac Dúnlainge (d. 888) and it turns out that all four were ancestors to the first four bishops of Iceland. It seems likely that such genealogical information stems from an early redaction of *Landnámabók*, from the time of Ari Þorgilsson, as the special status of the first four bishops is not likely to have lasted for a long time after the death of Bishop Þorlákr Runólfsson in 1133 (Hermann Pálsson 1996, 119–27).

In thirteenth-century works such as *Laxdæla saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga*, Ari is quoted as the source for the events of the death of Þorsteinn the Red in Scotland and information about his children (*Íslenzk fornrit* IV, p. 12; *Íslenzk fornrit* V, p. 7). According to genealogies in the sagas,

Þorsteinn was the son of the settler Auðr djúpúðga, who is mentioned in *Íslendingabók* where her descendants are traced to Ari Þorgilsson (*Íslenzk forrit* I, pp. 26–28). It can be surmised that during the time that *Laxdæla saga* and *Eyrbyggja saga* were composed, probably between 1240 and 1270, there existed a narrative about some settlers from the region of Breiðafjörðr that was attributed to Ari. The narrative on the settler Ketilbjörn the Old is also found in a different account and also may go back to a written narrative composed by Ari (see Benediktsson 1966, pp. 281–82). In contrast, Kolskeggr is quoted explicitly as a source on settlers in the Eastern Quarter and is mentioned four times in the preserved text (*Íslenzk fornrit* I, pp. 298, 302, 317, 395).

What is the likelihood of the existence of a single volume on the settlement of Iceland with Ari and Kolskeggr included among its authors? The creation of Icelandic as a literary language using the Latin alphabet seems to have taken place at the beginning of the twelfth century and may relate to introduction of Latin education in Iceland. In a twelfth-century text on phonology, *Fyrsta málfræðiritgerðin* ("The First Grammatical Treatise"), the use of the Latin alphabet with special characters for Old Norse is explained in some detail. It demonstrates that the adaptation of the Latin alphabet was a conscious effort with the explicit aim of creating a new literary language.

The context for the development of this language was the introduction of the tithe in 1096, which must have involved some administrative documentation. Even more straightforwardly, the creation of a cathedral school at Hólar in 1106 would have been conducive to the use of letters, for example for the purpose of translation. Thus, a relatively clear link can be established between the institutionalization of the Icelandic Church and the adoption of the Latin alphabet. The use of that alphabet for the purpose of composing texts in Old Norse was a less self-evident consequence, but this can be connected to the use the new alphabet was put to, in codifying the laws of Iceland in 1117–1118 and the setting of the Christian Law between 1122 and 1133. This coincided with the creation of the first known chronicle of Icelandic history, *Íslendingabók*.

The First Grammatical Treatise lists the literary genres existing in Iceland in the early twelfth century as "lǫg ok áttvísi eða þýðingar helgar, eða svá þau in spakligu frœði er Ari Þórgilsson hefir á bœkr sett af skynsamligu viti" ('both laws and genealogies, or religious interpretations as well as the wise lore which Ari Þorgilsson has composed with a reasoned conception', *The First Grammatical Treatise*, p. 208). The date of composition of the Icelandic laws is well-known and the existence of homilies

(sacred interpretations) is known from an early date. The earliest known Icelandic genealogies stem from a later date, but it is not infeasible that they would go back to this period. But does a volume like *Landnámabók* fit within this context? And why is Ari Þorgilsson singled out at the expense of Kolskeggr?

In fact, not only has the existence of an early version of *Landnámabók* been generally accepted, most scholarly discussion of *Landnámabók* and the purposes of its writing has been devoted to this early lost version. Several theories have been advanced which seek an explanation in the circumstances of the early twelfth century. One of them, disseminated by Einar Gunnar Pétursson, seeks the origin of *Landnámabók* in the bureaucracy involved in the introduction of the tithe. Equating *Landnámabók* to the *Domesday Book* of William the Conqueror, Pétursson argues that there must have been a similar incentive to collect information about the earliest settlers (Einar Gunnar Pétursson 1986). The introduction of the tithe involved the creation of parishes, or more accurately, the selection of which of the previously founded churches merited the status of a parish church and the tithe associated with it. In the end, there were around 330 parishes established in Iceland. In the surviving versions of *Landnámabók* around 430 settlers are mentioned, but at the time of the introduction of the tithe there were 4560 farmers paying attendee dues to the parliament, according to *Íslendingabók*. Only the elite among the farmers would have been able to establish a parish churches, in numbers not far removed from the farms indicated as sites of settlement in *Landnámabók*.

In contrast, Sveinbjörn Rafnsson proposes that *Landnámabók* was the work of a secular elite among the farmers, perhaps even in opposition to the church elite (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, pp. 165–66). Among the 4560 farmers counted in *Íslendingabók*, one out every nine was required to attend the parliament each year and this would imply that among the farmers there was an elite of around 506 or 507 farmers who had the obligation to attend parliament. These could have been regarded as the inheritors of the settlers, who were around 430, according to the surviving versions of *Landnámabók*. The structure of *Landnámabók* and its division into quarters mirrors the division of the parliament into four Quarters, and the Quarter Courts at parliament where most of its activities took place. Rafnsson regards the division of *Landnámabók* into quarters as dating back to the earliest versions, as evidenced by the mention of the four settlers from different Quarters in *Íslendingabók*. The parliament is the body most likely to have been responsible for the collection of data and composition of the earliest version of *Landnámabók*. According to

Rafnsson, this is likely to have been a much more laconic text than the surviving versions.

These two theories, both highly plausible, view the creation of *Landnámabók* as a consequence of the strengthening of ecclesiastical power, either in direct support of it or in a reassertion of secular authority. Most other theories of the composition of the original text of *Landnámabók* are a version of one or the other. A third motive, highlighted by Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson, emphasizes the nature of *Landnámabók* as a historical text; it was an attempt to endow the Icelandic landscape with history. Where there was none, it could simply be invented (Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson 2003). Another important motivation might be explaining the toponyms of Iceland with reference to the settlers who named them (Barraclough 2012).

However, an element of uncertainty must remain as we know so very little about the earliest texts about the settlement (see Jakob Benediktsson 1966, p. 284). The existence of an early volume of *Landnámabók* encompassing all of Iceland is a reasonable hypothesis, but not an established fact. Due to the impossibility of establishing whether any part of the surviving text belonged to the original, most theories concerning the earliest version of *Landnámabók* limit themselves to a few hypotheses concerning its structure rather than its specific contents or information on individual settlers. Among the assumptions usually made is that *Landnámabók* was originally a text encompassing the whole of Iceland, that it was divided into quarters and the collection of data for *Landnámabók* was in some sense a group effort and thus required some organization. This grants the text the status of a foundational text of cultural memory (see Long 2017a, pp. 63–67).

The Sources of *Landnámabók*

For a long time, scholars have noted that the surviving versions of *Landnámabók* offer genealogical and anecdotal information that is mutually incompatible. Furthermore, certain details in the text seem to stem from sources that are much younger than the original version of *Landnámabók*, such as the thirteenth-century Icelandic family sagas (*Íslendingasögur*). In this respect, pioneering work was done by Björn M. Ólsen who made a comparative analysis of the existing versions of *Landnámabók* and several sagas, including *Egils saga*, *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Laxdæla saga* and *Hæs-*

na-Þóris saga (see for instance Björn M. Ólsen 1904; Björn M. Ólsen 1905; Björn M. Ólsen 1908). His conclusion was that the surviving versions of *Landnámabók* had incorporated material from these sagas. In some cases, the sagas had resulted in structural changes to *Landnámabók*, with the most conspicuous example being alterations made in the *Sturlubók* version of *Landnáma* (short for *Landnámabók*) to encompass information on the settlement in Borgarfjörðr and Rangárþing in *Egils saga*. Following Ólsen, scholars such as Guðni Jónsson and Jón Jóhannesson have made further use of such comparative analysis. The comparison has not only extended to sagas that seem to have influenced the composition of *Landnámabók*, but also to sagas that seems to incorporate different traditions from the one preserved in the existing versions of *Landnámabók*, such as *Laxdæla saga*, *Njáls saga* and *Hrafnkels saga*. It can be assumed that at the time of the composition of the earliest family sagas there were competing memories of the past which resulted in multiple narratives (See Hermann 2010, p. 82).

Thus, it can be deduced that later versions of *Landnámabók* were based on earlier written versions, which did not include this material from the sagas. One such hypothetical source is the *Melabók* Source*, which was composed sometime between 1200 and 1240, most probably in the 1220s. The main argument for the existence of this source is that there are genealogies in two or more of the existing versions where the line of descendants is traced to people living in this period. There also seems to be a connection between material in *Melabók* and eddic material which dates to the 1220s. As will discussed below, there are differences between *Melabók* and other surviving versions of *Landnámabók* which stem from *Melabók*'s use of this source, but not the other lost sources, which we now turn to.

In *Hauksbók* there is a reference to a lost source, *Styrmisbók**, which was composed by the lawspeaker and prior Styrmir Kárason (d. 1245). According to this source, *Hauksbók* was composed "eptir þeiri bók, sem ritat hafði herra Sturla lǫgmaðr, hinn fróðasti maðr, ok eptir þeiri bók annarri, er ritat hafði Styrmir hinn fróði" ('following the one written by Sturla the Lawman, a most learned man, and the other book, written by Styrmir the Learned', *Íslenzk fornrit* I, pp. 393, 397). Styrmir Kárason was a respected historian and the author of a lost saga of Saint Olaf. According to the statement in *Hauksbók*, *Styrmisbók* is used interchangeably with *Sturlubók*. As the structures of *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* are very similar, it has been surmised that *Styrmisbók* shared its structure with both versions and was probably also utilised as a source for *Sturlubók*.

However, it is far from clear whether *Styrmisbók* was also used as a source for *Melabók*.

Sveinbjörn Rafnsson has argued that following the composition of the *Melabók* Source*, a new version of *Landnámabók* was created which incorporated material from king's sagas, especially *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* by Gunnlaugr Leifsson, a monk at the monastery of Þingeyrar. Olaf Tryggvason was regarded as an apostle of Norway and Iceland and there are several episodes on the Christianization of Iceland in the preserved sagas of Olaf. Among the material inserted into *Landnámabók* was information on the discovery of Iceland and on Christian settlers. A new history of the Christian mission in Iceland, *Kristni saga*, was appended upon *Landnámabók*, and in *Hauksbók* these two texts form a single narrative. This material was probably not included in earlier versions of *Landnámabók*, including the *Melabók* Source* (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, pp. 38–72). As no mention is made of Christian settlers in *Íslendingabók*, it is likely this was a more recent addition to the tradition and in some of the family sagas, such as *Laxdæla saga* which seems to have drawn on Ari Þorgilsson as a source, settlers who are described as Christians in *Sturlubók* and later versions of *Landnámabók* are portrayed as pagans. Also, it appears that the inclusion of discovery narratives at the beginning of *Landnámabók* lead to some reconstruction of the text as the later version begins with the settlement of Reykjavík, but there are textual traces that indicate that in an earlier version the narrative began at the demarcation between the Southern and Eastern Quarters.

The discovery narratives were an extension of the brief treatment accorded to the settlement in *Íslendingabók* where the first settler is described as a Norseman by the name of Ingólfr. In the late twelfth-century narrative *Historia Norwegiae* there is a longer description in which two earlier discoverers of Iceland, Garðar and Oddr, are mentioned, and the settlement is credited to two Norwegians, Ingólfr (or Ingvar) and Hjörleifr, who "ob reatus homicidiorum patriam fugientes cum conjugibus et pueris naues ingredientes insulam … per pendulas pelagi undas tandem reperierunt" ('fleeing their homeland because they had been accused of murders, took ship with their wives and children and through pitching ocean waves sought the island … till at long last they found it', *Historia Norwegiae*, pp. 68–71). This is the outline of the narrative which was later included in *Sturlubók*, with some modifications. There are thematic similarities to *Historia Norwegiae* and a lost Latin biography of King Olaf Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason, a monk in the Benedictine monastery at Þingeyrar, which indicates that they used the

same source or, alternatively, that *Historia Norwegiae* draws on the work of Oddr.

Another biography of Olaf Tryggvason was composed at Þingeyrar in the late twelfth century by the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson, with additions to Oddr's material. Gunnlaugr added material on early missionaries in Iceland, most especially a man called Þorvaldr víðförli (Þorvaldr the Far-Traveller) from the region near Þingeyrar. He also seems to have mentioned Christian settlers, most probably one from each Quarter, but it seems that such information was not included in the works of Ari Þorgilsson. There are similarities to Gunnlaugr Leifsson's version and information on Olaf Tryggvason in *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensiu*m, which was composed around 1180, although it is not evident which source influenced the other. In *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* the discovery of Iceland is explicitly connected to the foundation of the Norwegian state, as it was presented in these early histories of the Norwegian royal line (see Lincoln 2014). It is also described in a slightly different manner than in *Historia Norwegiae*. It is related that during the reign of Harald Finehair in the late ninth century, certain traders sailed to the Faroe Islands but were caught in a storm and driven to a remote land "quam quidam arbitrantur esse Thule insulam" ('which some believe was the island of Thule'). Then they returned to Norway and encouraged other to seek this land: "Inter quos tamen præcipue vir quidam nobilis, Ingulfus nomine, de provincial, quaæ dicitur Horthaland" ('prominent among these was a man of noble blood by the name of Ingólfr, from the province which is called Hörðaland'). Ingólfr prepared a ship and settled the land along with his people. It is said that he was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Hjörleifr, and many others. No mention is made of any crimes of Ingólfr. However, two predecessors are said to have come before Ingólfr, one called Garðarr and another Flóki (*Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ*, pp. 8–9, see also Theodoricus, *De antiquitate*). Thus, the details of the discovery of Iceland differ in the extant twelfth-century narratives, although both accounts mention a companion to Ingólfr and some predecessors, of whom one was Garðarr. A harmonization of these account appeared in later narratives, such as the *Sturlubók* version of *Landnámabók*, with the important shift being that Ingólfr was no longer associated with Hörðaland but with the more northerly region of Sogn (see Höfig 2017, p. 74).

Sveinbjörn Rafnsson indicates that this restructuring of *Landnáma* might have taken place in an earlier lost version rather than in *Styrmisbók*. It is, however, also possible that Styrmir Kárason was the respon-

sible for this rewriting of *Landnámabók* (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2001, p. 164). As Rafnsson dates the rewriting of *Landnámabók* to a period shortly after 1238, there would hardly be much time left for Styrmir to make a new version before his death in 1245. Styrmir Kárason himself is not an unlikely candidate for such an undertaking. He was raised at the monastery at Þingeyrar and was probably very familiar with the works of Gunnlaugr Leifsson. As both a lawspeaker and a canon, he displays combined interests in the secular and clerical strands of Icelandic history. Also, Styrmir seems to have combined studies of the settlement with the composition of king's sagas (the lost saga of Saint Olaf), so linking together narratives of that order would have come easy to him. As Torfi H. Tulinius has pointed out, Styrmir was a prior at the canonry at Viðey in his later years and might have had a natural interest in the settlement of Reykjavík, placing it at the forefront in his version (Torfi H. Tulinius 2019). As an origin myth featuring the early death of one of two brothers and hinting toward a semi-divine origin for the other of one of the two brothers, the tale of Ingólfr and Hjörleifr echoes elements of dioscuric traditions which were often connected to the foundation of new societies (Höfig 2017, pp. 76–78; Höfig 2018). In the remaining versions of *Landnámabók*, the first settler Ingólfr has different patronyms (Björnólfsson in Melabók, but Arnarson in Sturlubók and Hauksbók), which suggests that his genealogy was not reported in the earlier texts. Thus, at least two traditions developed in the thirteenth century concerning the ancestry of Ingólfr (Höfig 2017, pp. 73–76).

As has been noted, more can be said concerning the contents of the lost early thirteenth-century versions of *Landnámabók* than just the elusive original version. However, even if arguments concerning the restructuring of *Landnámabók* are plausible, other explanations are also possible. Auður Ingvarsdóttir has argued against the hypothesis that *Melabók* represents an earlier stage of narration than the other two surviving versions. She points out that *Melabók* is also replete with genealogical and anecdotal information, and this may already have been included in its source. Furthermore, she points out that the *Melabók* Source* was not necessarily composed earlier than *Styrmisbók* and it is only speculation that one draws on the other. However, she concedes that the geographical restructuring of *Landnámabók* might be a relatively recent invention in *Sturlubók* which did not affect *Melabók* (Auður Ingvarsdóttir 2004).

According to theories of a fundamental revision of *Landnámabók* having taken place around 1240, the text that has survived is largely a product of that redaction. As has already been noted, the rewriting of

Landnámabók did not end there, as thirteenth-century sagas were used as sources for later versions of *Landnámabók*. Some of these sagas may have drawn on earlier versions of *Landnámabók* but the extent of that use is very unclear and can only be established in the rarest cases, such as the occasional reference to Ari Þorgilsson. Thus, it seems that already in the early thirteenth century, the process of re-writing *Landnámabók* had begun.

Sturlubók: A Manifestation of Nobility

The *Sturlubók* version of *Landnámabók* is the work of Sturla Þórðarson (1214–1284), who was an active participant in the power struggle in Iceland, known as Age of the Sturlungs (1220–1264). At the end of that period, all the Quarters of Iceland submitted to the Norwegian king and agreed to pay annual taxes. Some of the major protagonists of the civil wars emerged victorious and became the king's representatives in Iceland. Chief among those were Earl Gizurr Þorvaldsson over the South and North and Hrafn Oddsson over the West. Sturla Þórðarson had mixed feelings about both, as he had been in active opposition to Hrafn and felt let down by his former ally Gizurr. Sturla went into exile but managed to rehabilitate himself with King Magnus of Norway. Sturla was then hired to compose a voluminous biography of King Håkon, the father of Magnus, called *Hákonar saga*. He later also composed a biography of Magnus, which has only survived in fragments. Sturla thus gained renown as a biographer of Norwegian kings. During the Age of the Sturlungs, Sturla had served as a lawspeaker on several occasions. The position was mostly ceremonial, as the laws had already been written down and the lawspeaker's task of memorizing the laws been made redundant. Nevertheless, due to this position Sturla was regarded as a legal expert and tasked with composing a new law code for Iceland, based on the new Norwegian laws of King Magnus. This is the law code later known as *Járnsíða*, which was adopted at the Icelandic Parliament in 1271–1273. In the following years, Sturla was appointed to the position of lawman of Iceland (Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Sverrir Jakobsson 2017). During this tenure as lawman, Sturla composed a chronicle about the rise of the Sturlung family and the civil strife in Iceland, called *Íslendingasögur*, which spans the period between 1183 and 1264. It is possible that a prolonged stay in the Faroes during the winter of 1277 to 1278, when Sturla was accompanied by

his long-time rivals Hrafn Oddsson and Þorvarðr Þórarinsson, was the incentive for historical reflection, as *Íslendingasaga* is generally regarded as rather more objective than *Hákonar saga* in its portrayal of Icelandic leaders and their political motives (Sverrir Jakobsson 2019).

Sturla Þórðarson is generally regarded as the redactor of a large manuscript called *Resensbók*, which perished in the great Copenhagen Fire of 1728. It included several texts which contain historica and geographical miscellanea. Of the thirteen parts of the original manuscript, eight have been preserved in copies, but five have been lost. Stefán Karlsson managed to trace the existing parts and provided most of the arguments for attributing the writing of this manuscript to Sturla Þórðarson. In *Resensbók*, we can see Sturla Þórðarson at work as a historian from the late 1240s until his death in 1284. His erudition was such as one would expect from a secular official like a lawspeaker, but his interest in chronology, astronomy, and mathematics might be evidence of a clerical education, wherever Sturla acquired it (see Sverrir Jakobsson 2017b). This is evidence of a new role for lawspeakers following the codification of the law, as individuals in that position became noted for their learning in various topics such as world history, the history of Danish and Norwegian kings, and poetry and rhetoric. As can be seen from the case of Styrmir Kárason, knowledge about the settlement of Iceland was a part of the erudition which could be expected of a lawspeaker.

The *Sturlubók* redaction of *Landnámabók* can thus be viewed in the larger context of Sturla Þórðarson's other known historical writings. In *Resensbók* we can find an overview of the Ages of the World divided into Jewish judges, kings of the Jews, Persians and Egyptians, Roman emperors and Roman popes. There is also various information on the German rulers of the Holy Roman Empire. An interest in key events of world history and the reckoning of time is a feature of the existing works of Sturla Þórðarson and is evident in both *Hákonar saga* and *Íslendinga saga*. In a prologue to *Landnámabók* there is also a list of rulers of various nations and religious organizations at the time of the discovery of Iceland, such as the popes in Rome, the Carolingian and Byzantine emperors, and the kings of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England, Dublin, and the Orkneys. Thus, the *Sturlubók* edition of *Landnámabók* places the settlement of Iceland into a wider historical context of the time. The settlement is dated to the year 874, whereas *Íslendingabók* dates it more broadly around 870. There is a general similarity between the chronology of Sturla's version of *Landnámabók* and that of the annals which were a part of *Resensbók*.

Thus, the *Sturlubók* redaction is indebted to Sturla's general concept of the history of Iceland.

Nevertheless, *Sturlubók* is also somewhat atypical in view of Sturla Þórðarson's other works which were mostly devoted to contemporary history. How does an interest in the settlement of Iceland fit into the larger context of Sturla's historical writings? Sturla probably composed his redaction of *Landnámabók* during his tenure as a lawman from 1272 onwards, which can be surmised through his use of *Hænsa-Þóris saga* as a source, as it is a text which reflects the legal concerns of Icelanders during the codification of *Járnsíða*. An overview of the settlement of Iceland, in which Sturla was at pains to amplify and revise the content of earlier versions which were available to him, can thus be viewed in the context of his status as the leading legal expert of Iceland at the time. The extent of Sturla's revision can only be roughly estimated, as the earlier versions of *Landnámabók* have been lost, but it can be surmised that Sturla used *Styrmisbók* as a source and that the differences between *Styrmisbók* and *Sturlubók* were considerable, seeing as they are regarded as two different versions in *Hauksbók*. Some of the family sagas used in *Sturlubók*, such as *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Hænsa-Þóris saga*, and *Droplaugarsona saga*, were probably composed after the death of Styrmir Kárason and could thus not have been used for *Styrmisbók*. Also, the large-scale revision of the settlement narrative in Borgarfjörðr and Rangárþing, based on *Egils saga*, does not seem to have been a part of *Styrmisbók* and could thus be the work of Sturla Þórðarson. There seems to be no doubt that *Sturlubók* was an amplified version of *Landnámabók*, compared to earlier versions.

The addition of material to *Landnámabók*, which is a marked feature of *Sturlubók*, may be an integral part of the methodology of a medieval historian who wanted to augment the information provided by earlier versions of the text, by drawing on other material available to him. There is ambition clearly inherent in the text, aimed to provide a fuller and more comprehensive text than could be found in earlier versions (see Wellendorf 2010, p. 3). However, it is also a reflection of Sturla's interests. He was at pains to add material from *Egils saga* and *Hænsa-Þóris saga* due to a special interest in the region of Borgarfjörðr, where he had lived for a time and had been granted as a benefice by Gizurr Þorvaldsson in 1259, only to have it snatched away by King Håkon and granted to Hrafn Oddsson in 1261. The region of Borgarfjörðr had been a consolidated domain for most of his lifetime and thus he probably found the depiction of the settlement in *Egils saga* more credible than the information offered by earlier versions of *Landnámabók*. As Sturla resided in the region of

Breiðafjörðr in his later years, the inclusion of material from *Eyrbyggja saga* would also have come naturally to him (see Long 2017b, pp. 63–68).

Among the material in *Sturlubók* which does not seem to have been in earlier versions of *Landnámabók* is the list of notable settlers, which is echoed by lists of notable Icelanders in 981 and 1118, included in *Kristna saga*. These are an indication of an elite among the settlers and among Icelanders in earlier times, which only consisted of few men, eight to ten in each quarter (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, pp. 72–75). The number is approximate to that of the number of chieftains who had attended parliament and indicates the presence of a strong regional elite in the country from earliest time. This may reflect the viewpoint of the regional elite which had developed in Iceland by 1200 and had concentrated power within territorialized domains. They formed an elite which had made a formal grant for the transfer of power into the hands of King Håkon and his son, King Magnus, in 1262, 1263, and 1264. However, this elite expected these kings to select representatives from their own number, as King Magnus had practiced throughout his rule. In the augmented version of the Old Covenant, which is usually dated to 1302, it is specifically demanded that the royal governors and lawmen should be Icelandic and "of the families that gave up the chieftaincies in former times". This was a direct iteration of a claim to power which had probably been implicit right from the Icelandic elite's submission to the Norwegian king.

There are also additions that involve Sturla Þórðarson directly, such as genealogies traced from settlers to his more recent ancestors. The genealogies of his paternal grandfather, Sturla Þórðarson, are concentrated on the Northern and Western Quarters, emphasizing his suitability as a royal representative there. A relatively direct interest can also be seen in tracing the foundation of the estate at Staðarhóll, a long-time residence of Sturla, to a man called Sturla Þjóðreksson around 1000 (*Íslenzk fornrit* I, p. 159). As Sturla Þjóðreksson was not a settler, this information seems redundant, but he was an ancestor of the Sturlungs and thus his foundation of the estate could strengthen the claims of descendants occupying it.

Thus, *Sturlubók* is much more than a mere copy of earlier versions of *Landnámabók*. The selection of material reflects an active concern on behalf of the redactor. He emphasizes the nobility and strength of several settlers who appear in a manner similar to the rulers of the thirteenth-century domains, carving out large pieces of land and granting them to their followers. Following family sagas such as *Egils saga*, many settlers are depicted as vehement opponents of Norwegian kings but in contrast, some settlers are depicted as royal allies (see Kreutzer 1994;

Gísli Sigurðsson 2014; Long 2017a, pp. 106–111). The main emphasis is on the status and nobility of the settlers: they had been involved in high politics in Norway before the move to Iceland. Parts of this depiction must stem from earlier versions of *Landnámabók*, but Sturla Þórðarson takes any opportunity to enhance it. *Sturlubók* serves as a manifestation of the nobility of the ancient settlers and, as a direct consequence, their thirteenth-century successors.

Settlement and World View: The Case of *Hauksbók*

Hauksbók is unique among Icelandic medieval manuscripts as large parts of it have survived largely intact, written in the own hand of the owner or scribes working in close cooperation with him. Studies of the handwriting in the manuscript have shown that large parts of it were written between 1302 and 1310. The redactor of *Hauksbók* was Haukr Erlendsson, the son of the Icelandic governor Erlendr Ólafsson. Haukr was probably born around 1264. After a brief period as a lawman in Iceland, he moved to Norway and served for a long time as a lawman in the Gulatingslagen and was at that time a notable counsellor of King Håkon Magnusson (r. 1299–1319). Haukr was one of the twelve representatives of Norway which confirmed the ascension of King Magnus Eriksson and the personal union with Sweden in 1319.

Hauksbók has been defined as an encyclopaedia or a private library, although neither term gives it full justice. It is a systematic collection of learned texts on various topics, such as world geography, mathematics, and the calendar, interspersed with voluminous writings on history. Haukr can be defined as "an interpreter and teacher of the world view" of learned Icelanders at the beginning of the fourteenth century (see Sverrir Jakobsson 2007, p. 22). Haukr was an active redactor of his material and often condensed verbose chapters to concentrate on the facts which could be gathered from his material. His interests are historical and etiological. He was interested in the origins of the world as he knew it. Although there are some writings of clerical philosophy in *Hauksbók*, Haukr's historical interests leaned towards secular history. There is no Biblical history of the kind which dominates most of the other medieval Icelandic world histories. However, there is the work *Trójumanna saga* which encom-

passes the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans, interspersed with Greco-Roman religious lore. The focus is on the Trojan war and how the Romans were the descendants of the ancient Trojans. A continuation of *Trójumanna saga* was *Bretasögur*, which traces the Trojan line from the Romans to Britain and the Celtic kings there. At the end of *Bretasögur*, this history is connected to the foundation of the Norwegian kingdom in the ninth century through the fostering of its second king, Håkon, at the court of King Æthelstan in England.

In *Hauksbók*, Scandinavian history is represented by *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, which mostly takes place in Southern Europe and details the conquest of pagan kings in ancient times. The short *Ragnarssona þáttr* is devoted to Danish kings and their conquest in England and the rest of Europe in the ninth century. *Þáttr af Upplendinga konungum* and *Skáldasaga* are also included, which deal with Harald Finehair, who was believed to have been king of Norway during the settlement of Iceland (see Sverrir Jakobsson 2002), and his ancestors in inland Norway. All these narratives deal with the period prior to the settlement of Iceland and could be regarded as ancient history (*fornaldarsaga*) in Nordic terms. This indicates a perspective that can be termed genealogical or translational; it was concerned with the origins and movements of genealogies through time and space. Haukr seems to have been interested in Scandinavian history in so far as it dealt with the Icelanders' Nordic ancestors, but more recent history was of less interest to him and the only narrative in *Hauksbók* devoted to more recent Scandinavian history is *Hemingsþáttr*, which deals with the Norwegian invasion of England in 1066.

There are several themes that reappear in the historical texts of *Hauksbók*, and sometimes also in the miscellanea that accompanies them. One is the transfer of ancient secular power, exemplified in the Greeks and Trojans, to the West, first to the Romans and then to Britain and finally to Scandinavia. This is also the theme of a genealogy in which Haukr Erlendsson is traced back to Adam, the first man. In that genealogy the line does not go through the ancient Celtic kings of Britain, but rather through the Old Norse gods and pagan kings of the past, which were believed to be descendants of the Trojans. This resembles the antiquarian interest in the pagan past which is also found in the Prose Edda and various other writings. Similarly, the ancient Greco-Roman gods are depicted in euhemeristic terms as mighty kings of the ancient past, in the prologue to *Trójumanna saga*, which is not in other manuscripts of the saga. This interest in ancient Paganism and Pagan practices is also reflected in sagas that depict the pre-Christian past of Scandinavia. In

Eiríks saga rauða there is a depiction of an ancient soothsayer, or *völva*, practicing divination.

There are also several themes related to the ninth century, the time of the settlement of Iceland. The sons of Ragnar loðbrók are depicted as ancestors of the royal lines of Norway and Denmark, and the kings of Upplönd as ancestors of the Norwegian royal line, connecting that to Swedish kings. All this material may reflect Haukr Erlendsson's contemporary concerns for the kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, where the balance of power between these monarchies was precarious. Through his daughter, Ingeborg, King Håkon of Norway entered an alliance with the Swedish royal line which resulted in a personal union between the two kingdoms in 1319, of which Haukr was one of the cosignatories. In *Hauksbók* the interest in the Scandinavian kingdoms is directed towards the ancient, demonstrating the ancient relationship between these royal lines.

A further interest of Haukr Erlendsson was material concerning the discovery and settlement of Greenland. Not only is *Hauksbók* the oldest manuscript of *Eiríks saga rauða*, which describes the discovery of Greenland and Vinland, but it also includes one family saga, *Fóstbræðra saga*, which is notable for the fact that part of the action takes place in Greenland. In addition, there are references in the seventeenth-century manuscript *Skarðsárbók* to events in Greenland (called *Grænlandsannáll*) which can be traced to *Hauksbók*, as well as a list of the bishops of Greenland. It seems that Haukr Erlendsson was attempting to be the expert on Greenland and its history at the royal court, which can be placed in the context of Greenlanders submitting to the Norwegian king in 1261, shortly before the submission of the Icelanders.

The inclusion of *Landnámabók* in *Hauksbók* must be regarded in view of the redactor's general interest in ancient history, especially that of the ninth century, in pagan lore, and in the settlement of Greenland, in addition to that of Iceland. In some cases, Haukr Erlendsson's interests coincided with those of Sturla Þórðarson but the main difference is that in Sturla's works the interest is predominantly in recent and contemporary history, whereas Haukr is not concerned with recent history at all but instead looks to the pagan past. The antiquarian interests of Haukr Erlendsson might in some cases be regarded as escapism from the concerns of the present, but it is nevertheless noteworthy that some of the issues which he explores in the past also had modern relevance, such as the genealogies which interconnected the Scandinavian royal lines and also the genealogy of Haukr himself.

As both texts exist in more or less complete versions and *Hauksbók's* reliance on *Sturlubók* can be regarded as an established fact, a comparison between these two versions is much more straightforward than a comparison of an existing version of *Landnámabók* with a hypothetical lost version. Of the additions Haukr Erlendsson made in his version of *Landnámabók*, some offer a clear example of Haukr's personal concerns. Among those are numerous genealogies that trace the descendants of settlers to Haukr himself or his wife. Establishing a venerable genealogy was an ongoing concern for members of the Icelandic elite, as already evidenced by *Sturlubók*. Haukr also uses some sources that seem to have not been available to Sturla Þórðarson, including family sagas such as *Laxdæla saga* and *Fóstbræðra saga*. The latter is also included in the codex as the only example of an Icelandic family saga. There are also quite a few additions of material from the southwestern part of Iceland, around the region were the Haukr's parents had their estates. Haukr also knew some texts that were not used by other redactors, such as Prior Brandr's lost twelfth-century work *Breiðfirðingakynslóð* (see Jón Jóhannesson 1941, pp. 192–95).

There are also thematic additions which reflect Haukr's general concerns, as evidenced by other material in *Hauksbók*. Haukr seems to have had a particular interest in early examples of Christianity in Iceland, especially connected to British or Celtic settlers (see Wellendorf 2010, pp. 11–15). This can be linked to the interest in Celtic Britain manifested in *Bretasögur*. Haukr adds three genealogies from the celebrated Cerball mac Dúnlainge (d. 888) that are connected to himself. There are also numerous examples of Haukr's interest in pre-Christian lore, such as the insertion of a narrative dealing with the origin of the pagan laws of Iceland, the division of the country into chief temples, and the role of the chieftains as leaders of pagan cults before the country was divided into Quarters (*Íslenzk fornrit* I, pp. 311, 313, 315). In *Hauksbók* the origin of the tithe is traced to dues that were previously paid to pagan temples and the worship of the Christian trinity is predated by oaths made to pagan divinities. This fragment can be found in other medieval sources, but its insertion into *Hauksbók* fits into the larger context of a special interest in pagan lore, which is typical of *Hauksbók*. Finally, Haukr Erlendsson is the only redactor of *Landnámabók* who gives an account of his sources, and all theories concerning the textual development of *Landnámabók* are to a large degree based on the testimony of Haukr. This reflects his concern for historical sources in general. In another part of *Hauksbók*, he compares Moses, as the first historian, to the first secular historian, Dares

Phrygius, and contrasts sacred history with another kind, which is mainly informative (*Hauksbók*, p. 152, see Sverrir Jakobsson 2007, pp. 27–28). Nevertheless, Haukr is of the opinion that there also must be room for such non-Christian antiquarianism.

The Other *Landnáma*: The Case of *Melabók*

The third medieval version of *Landnámabók*, *Melabók*, has only been preserved in fragments. Thus, we have a limited overview of the size, scope, and content of *Melabók*. Apart from these manuscript fragments that have been preserved, a seventeenth-century version of *Landnámabók*, called *Þórðarbók* offers some clue to the content of *Melabók*. *Þórðarbók* is based on two main sources. One is a large seventeenth-century manuscript called *Skarðsárbók*, which was based on *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*. The other is very similar in content to the manuscript fragments which are known as *Melabók*. It has thus been established with reasonable certainty that *Þórðarbók* used *Melabók* as a source and that some parts of *Þórðarbók*, those which are not derived from *Skarðsárbók*, are most likely based on the lost parts of *Melabók* (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, pp. 19–36).

The structure of *Melabók* is different from that of *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*. There seems to have been no material related to the discovery of Iceland and the voyages of discovery, which form the beginning of the other two manuscripts. In contrast, *Melabók* seems to have been constructed in a strictly geographical outline, starting at the boundary of the Southern and Eastern Quarters. At the end of *Melabók* there is a list of lawspeakers up to the year 1271. It is possible that *Melabók* was composed soon after that date, but it could also have been composed later, as the list is finite; there were no more lawspeakers in Iceland after 1271. A total of 43 genealogies of *Melabók* are related to the estate of Melar, in the region of Borgarfjörðr. Most of these genealogies are traced to the line to the parents of the lawman Snorri Markússon (d. 1313), or to his wife, Helga Ketilsdóttir. Thus, it seems likely that Snorri Markússon was involved in the creation of *Melabók*, although another possibility is his son, Þorsteinn, who was a prior at Helgafell. Snorri Markússon was one of two lawmen of Iceland 1302–1306, which makes his background quite similar to that of Sturla Þórðarson and Haukr Erlendsson.

Apart from the origin of *Melabók*, there are problems concerning the textual context of this version. There is a textual connection between

Melabók and *Sturlubók* which can be traced back to a common original source. However, there are several features that *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* share which are different from *Melabók*. It has thus been surmised that *Melabók* goes back to an earlier variant of *Landnámabók*, the *Melabók* Source*, but did not use the modified versions of *Landnámabók* which can be found in *Styrmisbók*, *Sturlubók*, and *Hauksbók*. As the *Melabók* Source* is believed to have been composed in the early thirteenth century, most likely in the 1220s, *Melabók* may be a partial reflection of an early version of *Landnámabók*. However, there is also material in *Melabók* which must be quite specific to that version and not found in the *Melabók* Source*. The most obvious cases are the list of lawspeakers that dates to a much later period than that of the *Melabók* Source* and the genealogies that lead to the family of Snorri Markússon. Thus, it is not easy to prove which of the material in *Melabók* can be traced back to its source and which was introduced in the version which has been preserved in fragments.

Among the content that is specific to *Melabók* are several genealogies connected with the family at Melar, which demonstrate that the *Melabók* version must have been quite distinct from its source. There are also several anecdotes concerning people from the Saga Age which are different from anecdotes in *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*, but nevertheless indicate that the redactor had more material at his disposal than a concise list of settlers and their descendants. There are also indications that family sagas have been used as sources in a similar manner as in *Sturlubók*, with the most decisive example being an early version of *Vatnsdæla saga* which is used as a source in *Melabók*, but not in the other surviving versions. Like in *Sturlubók*, there are indications of lost family sagas also being used as sources, most notably one concerning farmers in the Eyjafjörðr region with a similar topic as *Víga-Glúms saga* (see Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2017, p. 51). Thus, *Melabók* was also replete with genealogical and anecdotal material, although generally in a more concise form than in *Sturlubók* or in *Hauksbók*. It has been postulated that the redactor was reluctant to use the amplified version of *Landnámabók* available to other redactors due to a resistance to the Church's claims in the contemporary controversy over ecclesiastical property (Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 2017, p. 53).

In *Þórðarbók* there is also an epilogue with a rationale for writing about the settlement, which seems to be of an early provenance (Jón Jóhannesson 1941, p. 203). As it is not found in either *Sturlubók* or *Hauksbók*, it most likely stems from *Melabók* rather than a common source of the three versions. The epilogue states that

> Þat er margra manna mál, at þat sé óskyldr fróðleikr at rita landnám. En vér þykjumsk heldr svara kunna útlendum mǫnnum, þá er þeir bregða oss því, at vér séim komnir af þrælum eða illmennum, ef vér vitum víst várar kynferðir sannar, svá ok þeim mǫnnum, er vita vilja forn frœði eða rekja ættartǫlur, at taka heldr at upphafi til en hǫggvast í mitt mál, enda eru svá allar vitrar þjóðir, at vita vilja uphaf sinna landsbyggða, eða hversu hvergi til hefjask eða kynslóðir.
>
> ['… it is said by many that writing about the settlement is irrelevant learning, but we think we can all the better counter foreigners when they accuse us of being descended from slaves or knaves, if we know for certain the truth about our ancestry. And so for these people who want to learn ancient lore or genealogy, to start at the beginning rather than in the middle, as all the wise people want to know the origin of the habitation of their land and how it all began, and their genealogies', *Íslenzk fornrit* I, p. 336]

Whatever the origin of this statement, the rationale of Snorri Markússon for its inclusion in *Melabók* must be sought in the circumstances of his own age. When he took over as lawman, there was crisis in Iceland due to the decision of King Håkon Magnusson, the patron of Haukr Erlendsson, to send Norwegian governors to Iceland. This was countered by a reiteration of the Old Covenant at the Icelandic Parliament in 1302 where a particular emphasis was placed on the king's representatives being Icelanders and from the families that had formerly held chieftaincies. This was certainly the case with Snorri Markússon, whose paternal uncle, Þorleifr Þórðarson, had been one of the leading politicians of the Sturlung Age. Thus, a motivation for writing about the settlement in *Melabók* might have been to illustrate the continuity between the elites of the settlement and those of the present time, the late thirteenth or the early fourteenth century.

The *Melabók* redaction of *Landnámabók* is the most distinctive of the surviving medieval versions of the text. It is also quite poorly preserved and has thus been subject to more speculation concerning its content than the other two versions. However, there is reason to believe that the motive and social circumstances behind the composition of *Melabók* were not all that different from those of the other versions. Of all the *Landnámabók* texts, *Melabók* is the most overtly nationalistic in tone and it is tempting to link its date of composition to the years of conflict between King Håkon and the Icelandic elite in the early fourteenth century. However, all three texts share a certain unease concerning the status of Icelanders within the Norwegian realm and a willingness to emphasize the nobility of the Icelandic elite. *Landnámabók* served as a foundational

text for the Icelandic elite of church owners and farmers who attended parliament. The first decades of royal rule were a time of crisis for this elite, as its central status in society could be placed in doubt. All three surviving versions of *Landnámabók* had the aim of quelling that doubt by establishing the ancient provenance of the Icelandic elite and by ensuring that the Icelanders knew the truth about their forefathers. In no version is this stated more unambiguously than in *Melabók*.

Conclusion

The earliest writings on the settlement of Iceland took place in the early twelfth century, with the works which were later attributed to Ari the Learned and Kolskeggr the Wise. Although it is not certain that a complete version of *Landnámabók* was composed at the time, this has generally been regarded as plausible. There is very little material in later versions which can be traced directly to this earliest version. In the early thirteenth century, two narratives were composed which influenced later versions. One is the so-called *Melabók* Source*, which was structured in a similar manner as *Melabók* and used as a source by all the surviving versions. Another was *Styrmisbók*, in which the inclusion of discovery narratives at the beginning modified the structure. *Styrmisbók* probably also contained material on Christian settlers and a continuation which was later known as *Kristni saga*, which dealt with the Christian missions to Iceland and the first bishops.

The earliest surviving version of *Landnámabók* is *Sturlubók*, composed by the lawman Sturla Þórðarson in the 1270s and early 1280s. Sturla also composed several other works on the history of Iceland. *Sturlubók* emphasizes the nobility and strength of leading settlers, as they appear in a manner like the rulers of the thirteenth-century domains, carving out large pieces of land and granting them to their followers. Many settlers are depicted as vehement opponents of Norwegian kings, although some settlers are depicted as royal allies. The main emphasis is placed on the status and nobility of the settlers, who are depicted as involved in high politics in Norway before their move to Iceland.

The second surviving version was written by the lawman Haukr Erlendsson in the first decade of the fourteenth century. It is included in *Hauksbók*, alongside much material on ancient history, connecting the period of settlement to the history of the Trojans and the Romans. In

Hauksbók, there is much material concerned with ancient Scandinavian kings, the progenitors of later royal lines, which demonstrates an interest in the ancient origins of the Nordic kingdoms. *Hauksbók* manifests a lively interest in the ancient pagan religion and the Norse settlement of Greenland throughout, and this influenced Haukur's adaptation of *Landnámabók* with the inclusion of narratives about the religion of the earliest settlers.

The third version of *Landnámabók* can plausibly be attributed to Snorri Markússon, who was a lawman in the first decade of the fourteenth century. Like Sturla and Haukr, Snorri was concerned with demonstrating his descent from the earliest generations of Icelanders, which was a contemporary issue during his tenure as a lawman, as the Icelandic descendants of former chieftains wanted to monopolize the offices of governor and lawman. Of all the *Landnámabók* texts, *Melabók* is the most overtly nationalistic in tone, directed against foreigners who doubted the noble ancestry of the leading Icelandic families. What it shares with the other two versions is a desire to draw on the history of the settlement as a lesson for its own time. In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, Icelanders had to adapt to a new role as subjects to a state and a king. All three versions of *Landnámabók* are an attempt to understand the present and reconcile it with a recalibrated vision of the origins of the Icelanders.

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