MEMORY, GENEALOGY AND POWER IN *ÍSLENDINGABÓK*

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Abstract:
The aim of this study is to reveal the manner in which memory and genealogy are employed in *Íslendingabók* with the purpose of legitimizing the power and promoting the prestige of chieftains (*goði*), bishops and kings. This source is probably one of the best known literary production of Medieval Iceland and one of the earliest vernacular prose works (also known as *Saga of the Icelanders* or *Libellus Islandorum*). It was written in Old Norse by Ari fróði Þorgilsson (1067–1148) during the early 12th century (circa 1122-1133), and is regarded by most scholars as the first history of Iceland and the foundation of Icelandic literature. The manuscripts are preserved at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavik in two documents (AM 113 a fol and AM 113 b fol) copied in the 17th century by priest Jón Erlendsson at the indications of Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson (14th September 1605 – 5th August 1675) of Skálholt from an original copy from the 12th century that had been lost afterwards.

Keywords:
Íslendingabók, Ari Þorgilsson, memory, genealogy, power, legitimation, sagas.

Ari Þorgilsson, the celebrated author[1] of *Íslendingabók*[2] was praised by Snorri Sturluson as "truly learned about past events both here and abroad…eager to learn and having a good memory" as well as having a "perceptive intellect" [3]. Despite such examples of praising, more modern commentators have found Ari's *Íslendingabók* lacking in details and

[1] J. Quinn, 2000, p. 47.
[2] In the present work I shall be using the translated version of S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006.
[3] E. Haugen (ed), 1972, pp. 12-13, 32-33 and S. Sturluson, 1933, pp. 5-7, *apud* S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. IX.

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breadth. Siân Grønlie, in the introduction to his translation of the saga, considers that this fault of narrowness of *Íslendingabók* is owed to the "ideological basis" that lied behind the writer's intentions, namely his partiality regarding certain families or chieftains[4]. Unlike family sagas, the colonization of Iceland in *Íslendingabók* begins *in medias res*, remarkably avoiding elaborate or detailed references to myths (with the exception of the second appendix) or to Christian bias in its first folios, even including historical genealogies and lists of law-speakers and bishops, therefore being one of the medieval Icelanding writings closest to modern historical works[5].

The Book of the Icelanders is divided in ten chapters with a Prologue in the beginning and a Genealogy at the end (the last two chapters are also lists of the bishops and *lawspeakers* of Iceland). What interests the present study the most are instances where the political ideology behind the organisation of Iceland are explained. In one of the few studies on the political ideology of Iceland, Norway and the Orkneys, the historian Jón Viðar Sigurðsson points to the fact there have been few analyses of political ideology from this comparative perspective[6]. The same scholar compares the characteristics of chieftains in Icelandic family sagas (such as *Íslendinga saga*) as well as contemporary sagas (*Sturlunga saga*, *Orkneyinga saga*) to the qualities of kings found in sources such as *Heimskringla*, *Sverris saga* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, to conclude that "there was a fundamental difference between kings on the one hand, and earls and chieftains on the other, even though the same terms were used to describe their personal abilities. The king was above all other men"[7] and that later these differences became redundant as the kings legitimized their power by divine grace[8]. The question arises to what extent Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók* prescribes certain important qualities of political leaders, and whether these may be found in similar Icelandic or Norwegian sources.

[4] S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. X.
[5] D. Whaley, 2012, p. 162.
[6] J. V. Sigurðsson, 2011, p. 70.
[7] *Ibid*., p. 101.
[8] *Ibid*.

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Bishops, Chieftains and the Lineage(s) of Power in *Íslendingabók*

From *Íslendingabók* we learn, first of all, that those who spoke in the Althing – on the occasion of modifying the local calendar, be they *höfðingi* or not – were sagacious men: "they were both very wise men" (chapter IV). Little other information is offered in the early chapters regarding chieftainship or the chieftain's relations to the King of Norway. The relations between the Icelanders and the Norwegian monarchy stands out in regards to the process of the Christianization of the country (Siân Grønlie advises that *Íslendingabók* may be read entirely as an ecclesiastical or missionary history[9]). Thus we find out that King Óláfr Tryggvason (ca. 960-1000) felt offended when the missionary Þangbrandr returned unsuccessful from Iceland[10]. The King's political ambition of having a united, subdued and Christian Iceland explain his harsh reaction, as he wanted "to have those … who were there in the east maimed or killed for it"[11]. This shows that in Arni's time (the first half of the 12th century) there existed the perception that the king of Norway had seen it as his duty to Christianize and eventually control Iceland, a country where many Norwegians resided but one that was outside the power of the king. Hence it could be argued that around the middle of the 12th century Christianity was imagined as a vector for the expansion of the Norwegian king's power. This hypothesis is aided by the argument that *Íslendingabók*, with its references to Iceland as a distinct realm, represents a nation-building document in the context of the "emergent sense of Icelandic identity in the early twelfth century"[12].

Returning to the qualities of political leaders in Iceland as evident in *Íslendingabók* , we learn that Skapti fióroddsson (who became lawspeaker and held the office for 27 years, when his uncle, Grímr Svertingsson, from Mosfell, bestowed upon him the office due to his voice becoming hoarse), was appreciated as a just ruler and a peace promoter: he created a Fifth Court for appeals against cases in which witnesses or where juries could not reach a decision, decreed that nobody could be pronounced guilty for a murder except the killer, exiled or outlawed chieftains and powerful men

[9] See the introductory study in S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. XLI-XLV.
[10] Íslendingabók, chapter VII.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. XXIV.

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who were guilty of violence or crime[13]. Justice represents a desirable attributes for kings too. It appears as one of the king's most important attributes in *Konungs skuggsjá*, together with wisdom[14]. Justice is part of the four cardinal virtues existent in medieval political thought, together with prudence, temperance and fortitude; in the medieval political ideology, a just ruler gives everyone his due (according to the famous dictum: *suum cuique tribuere*[15]), as detailed by Engelbert of Admont's *De regimine principium* and other 13th century works of ethics and philosophy[16].

Bishop Gizurr (in office 1082-1118) is likewise lauded for his achievement of having introduced the tithe. This is praised in *Íslendingabók* as an accomplishment that had been possible thanks to the popularity of Bishop Gizurr and the persuasion of Sæmundr[17]. Ari admits that convincing the population to correctly declare the value of their possession in order for it to be taxed required great political skill and obedience on behalf of the Icelanders towards Gizzur. Therefore it seems safe to assume that Bishop Gizzur possessed the qualities of a chief. Scholar Siân Grønlie, in one of the notes to his joint edition of *Íslendingabók* and *Kristni saga*[18], points out that in quite a few sagas Bishop Gizzur is presented as a possible chief, Viking chieftain and even king. Thus, in *Hungrvaka* (found in *Íslenzk fornrit*, Reykjavík, 1933, XV 16[19]) we are told that: "Everyone wished to sit or stand as he commanded, young and old, rich and poor, women and men, and it was right to say that he was both king and bishop over the land he lived"[20]. To this example, Siân Grønlie juxtaposes Haraldr Sigurðarson's praise of Gizzur: „He could be a viking chieftain, and has the makings for it.

[13] Íslendingabók, chapter VIII.
[14] See S. Bagge, 1987, pp. 94-95, 108-109.
[15] This Latin phrase comes from Aristotelian philosophy and has been made famous by Cicero in *De Natura Deorum* where he says "Iustitia suum cuique distribuit" (III, 38) and also by being included in Emperor Justinian's *Institutiones* „iuris praecepta sunt haec: honeste vivere, alterum non laedere, suum cuique tribuere" (1,1,3-4).
[16] I. P. Bejczy, 2011, p. 213.
[17] Íslendingabók, chapter X.
[18] S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. 71.
[19] Hið íslenzka fornritafélag (The Old Icelandic Text Society) founded in 1928 published many editions of Icelandic sagas with rich comments and introductions.
[20] S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. 71.

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Given his temperament, he could be a king, and that would be fitting. The third possibility is a bishop, and that is probably what he will become, and he will be a most outstanding man"[21] (from Morkinskinna[22]).

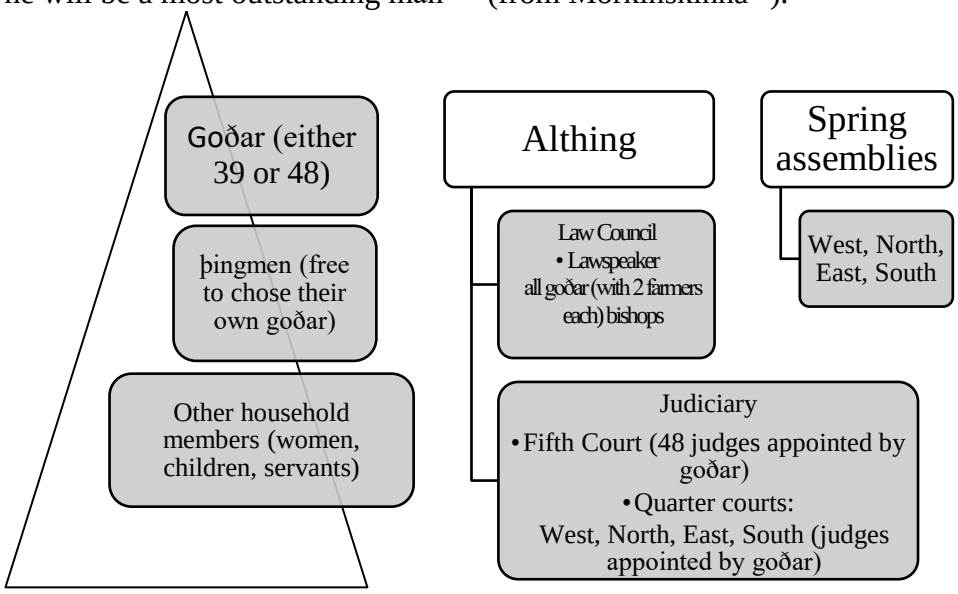


Figure 1. The Constitutional structure of the Icelandic Commonwealth after cca. 1030.

Ari also praises Gizzur's great administrative capabilities in establishing the first Icelandic episcopal see at Skálholt, endowing it with lands as well as other possessions and for giving up his land for the creation of a second Icelandic bishopric, according to the indications received from Norway. Another accomplishment and proof of good administration was the census held during Gizzur's time "and at that time there were a full 840 in the Eastern Fjords Quarter, and 1200 in the Rangá Quarter, and 1080 in the Breiðafjǫrðr Quarter, and 1440 in the Eyjafjǫrðr Quarter"[23]. Such examples of good governance that are found in *Íslendingabók* are comparable to descriptions of chieftains. For example, in *Sturlu saga* it is said that Oddi

[21] *Ibid*.
[22] T. M. Andersson, K. E. Gade (transl.), 2000, p. 255, quoted in S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. 71.
[23] Íslendingabók, chapter X.

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Þorgilsson was "better spoken than most other men" and *vitr*, "clever"[24]. Historian Jón Viðar Sigurðsson shows that most sagas only ascribe one quality to the Icelandic chieftains of renown, while the earls of the Orkneys are portrayed with two to four features and the kings of Norway with five to six characteristics[25]. Judging by these standards, Bishop Gizzur's description in *Íslendingabók* is similar to that of the early earls in *Orkneyinga saga*[26]. Perhaps this is explainable because he was a bishop whose power and scopes were greater than those of a chieftain, and whose lineage (genealogy) was nobler than that of a simple chief.

In regards to wisdom, culture and education as attributes of leader, *Íslendingabók* only refers to such qualities as belonging to certain notable men that spoke in the Althing – as seen above – and to bishops. Thus, Bishop Ísleifr of Skálholt (1056-1080), described as "far abler than other clerics"[27], and as having attracted the admiration of many chieftains who sent their sons to study with him (two of whom, the source tells us, later became bishops), therefore proving the value they ascribed to education. The fact that Bishop Ísleifr's three sons became chieftains is also presented as a merit of their father's renown[28], and Ari mentions – as an act of reverence – that he personally had been present at Bishop Ísleifr's death when he was only 12 years old and that it "was on a Sunday, six nights after the feast of Peter and Paul, eighty years after the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason"[29]. Discussing wisdom as an attribute in the sagas, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson observes that:

> „*The most common word for describing wisdom in the Old Norse sources is vitr, and in a few episodes a person is depicted as stórvitrir or allra manna vitrastr. None of these words were,*

[24] Sturlu saga, Sturlunga saga, Ch. 6, apud J. V. Sigurðsson, 2011, p. 73.
[25] J. V. Sigurðsson, 2011, pp. 73-74.
[26] Such as, for example, that of Earl Erlendr Haraldsson, who "went off on Vikings trips. He was an exceptional man, talented in almost every way, open-handed, gentle, always ready to take advice and much loved by his men, of whom he had a large following" H. Pálsson and P. Edwards (eds.), 1981, p. 184 apud J. V. Sigurðsson, 2011, p. 73.
[27] Íslendingabók, chapter IX.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid*.

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> *however, reserved for secular leaders only, not even the terms stórvitr or allra manna vitrastr. […] It is obvious that because of the king's superior position he had to be cleverer than other men. It is, however, more difficult to explain why the sagas attach such small importance on the earls' shrewdness. […] However, to be a good military leader one also had to be intelligent. Thus the sagas underline the earls' wisdom indirectly*."[30]

Bishop Ísleifr's position as wise church leader (officially he was a missionary bishop, *in partibus infidelibus*, not a see holder) means that he was learned man, so this trait was something that was expected of him as an ecclesiastical leader. This description of him could also be used as an example to argue that in Ari's time greater emphasis was laid on the role of bishops as state-builders in the earlier history of Iceland than on the role of chieftains, or, on the contrary, to prove Ari's bias in favour of the role of Christianity and the Church in earlier times in Iceland.

Wisdom as a character train stands out in *Hákon saga Hákonarsonar* where the king is presented not only as wise but also as well educated and having a culture that permitted him to read Latin as well as Old Norse, and as a patron of the letters who commissioned translations of *riddarasögur* into Old Norse[31]. In his study of *Konungs skuggsjá*, Sverre Bagge found that "the king's virtue above all was wisdom…. 'Fyrir þui at… gud hefir gefit þier spekt ok manuit. Þa gættu rikisstiornar med uitrligu rettdæmi…'"[32]. While Bishop Ísleifr in *Íslendingabók* is commended for his wisdom in a more practical manner (his intelligence having attracted high born students and having allowed him to consolidate the first bishopric of Iceland), the quality of wisdom described in *Konungs skuggsjá* is from the Old Testament and follows the model offered by the medieval philosophical model of the four virtues[33]. In *Konungs skuggsjá* an allegory of Wisdom describes all that wisdom helps in, including practical matters such as

[30] J. V. Sigurðsson, 2011, p. 73.
[31] See C. Coroban, 2016, pp. 139-156.
[32] "Because I find that God has given you wisdom and understanding, I charge you to govern wisely and justly" *Konungs skuggsjá* part III, apud S. Bagge, 1987, p. 90.
[33] I. P. Bejczy, 2011, p. 215.

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agriculture, trade, economic development, art, schools and education but also judgement and law, therefore both pragmatic as well as idealistic matters[34]. In *Íslendingabók*, Bishop Gizzur's wisdom and prestige is likewise praised when Ari points out that it was he who recommended the consecration of Þorlákr Þórhallsson as Bishop of Skálholt, despite being ill and not being able to attend the Althing: "…everyone acted in accordance with his instructions, and this was obtained because Gizurr himself had urged it so strongly; and Þorlákr went abroad that summer and returned out here the next, and had then been consecrated bishop"[35].

One very important point when discussing the ideology of power in *Íslendingabók* is the depiction of the Norwegian monarchy in this source. It is worthwhile to mention that there is little evidence, if any, of a contestation of any of the actions of the monarch. On the contrary, Ari seems to implicitly approve of the policy of the Norwegian monarch. A sign of reverence to Norwegian institution of kingship is the fact that dates are calculated according to the rule and lives of different Norwegian kings. There are many examples of this kind of devotion in *Íslendingabók*. For example, we are told from the beginning that "Ísland byggðist fyrst ór Norvegi á dögum Haralds ins hárfagra…"[36], that Ingólfr brought the law to Iceland "when Haraldr the Fine-Haired was sixteen years old"[37] and that the colonisation of the island was completed in six decades, when Hœngr from Rangá became lawspeaker "one or two years before Haraldr Hárfagri died, according to the reckoning of wise men"[38]. In the last example we find out that the wise men of Iceland awarded great importance to the rule of King Haraldr, therefore positioning the Norwegian monarch as the main authority they looked to. In *Íslendingabók* we are also told that the Christianisation of Iceland took place the year "Óláfr Tryggvason fell… fighting the king of the Danes, Sveinn Haraldsson, and the Swedish Óláfr, son of Eiríkr at Uppsala, king of the Swedes, and Eiríkr Hákonarson, who was later earl in

[34] S. Bagge, 1987, p. 91.
[35] Íslendingabók, chapter X.
[36] "Iceland was first settled from Norway in the days of Haraldr the Fine Haired…", Íslendingabók, chapter I.
[37] Íslendingabók, chapter I.
[38] Íslendingabók, chapter III.

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Norway"[39]. In this example we see not only a reference to the king of Norway, but also to the most important leaders of the time, which was probably aimed to emphasize the importance of the event of the adoption of the Cross in the country's history. The insinuation remains that this crucial event is also linked to the figure of the Norwegian king, the author implying that the success of the Christianization of Iceland could be seen as the crowning of King Óláfr Tryggvason's efforts at the end of his rule and life, completing the circle opened by Ari in the beginning of *Íslendingabók*'s chapter VII: "King Óláfr, son of Tryggvi, son of Óláfr, son of Haraldr the Fine-Haired, brought Christianity to Norway and to Iceland"[40].

Other examples of using the reign of Norwegian kings as reference points appear when we are told that the revered lawspeaker Skapti Þóroddsson, nephew of lawspeaker Grímr Svertingsson, "died in the same year that Óláfr the Stout fell, son of Haraldr, son of Goðrøðr, son of Bjǫrn, son of Haraldr the Fine-Haired, thirty years after Óláfr Tryggvason fell"[41]. Just like in the previous example, the reference does not simply allude to one Norwegian king, but to an entire lineage of rulers, eventually as far back as Haraldr Hárfagri's time, when Iceland was colonised. In another example, it is told in *Íslendingabók* that Bishop Ísleifr was consecrated "in the days of King Haraldr of Norway, son of Sigurðr, son of Hálfdan, son of Sigurðr Bastard, son of Haraldr the Fine-Haired"[42]. From reading the same source we are also informed that Kolbeinn Flosason became lawspeaker the year "King Haraldr fell in England"[43], i.e. 1066, and that Bishop Ísleifr passed away "eighty years after the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason"[44], that Bishop

[39] Íslendingabók, chapter VII.
[40] "Óláfr konungr Tryggvasonr, Óláfssonar, Haraldssonar ins hárfagra, kom kristni í Norveg ok á Ísland", Íslendingabók, chapter VII..
[41] "En hann andaðist á inu sama ári ok Óláfr inn digri fell Haraldssonr, Goðröðarsonar, Bjarnarsonar, Haraldssonar ins hárfagra, þremr tigum vetra síðar en Óláfr felli Tryggvasonr" Íslendingabók, chapter VIII.
[42] "…á dögum Haralds Norvegskonungs Sigurðarsonar, Hálfdanarsonar, Sigurðarsonar hrísa, Haraldssonar ins hárfagra." Íslendingabók, chapter IX.
[43] Íslendingabók, chapter IX.
[44] *Ibid*.

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Gizzur "was consecrated bishop at the request of his countrymen in the days of King Óláfr Haraldsson"[45].

Such examples prove how important it was for Ari to establish a connection back to one of the most venerated Norwegian kings, the unifier of Norway, Haraldr Hárfagri, during the time of which the kingdom was formed simultaneously with the colonisation. Therefore, the author does not seem to share the idea that the colonists came to Iceland as a result of the Norwegian king's tyranny, otherwise less reference would have been made to royal dynasty. It might seem obvious that a population of colonists should refer to the leaders of the country their ancestors were born in, but in the Middle Ages the reference to the ruling years of other monarchs were always done as part of a political recognition of their authority and never without carrying a political message. For example, the early Popes of Rome that came from Greece (in the period roughly from 678 to 752) sometimes dated their letters using the regnal years of the Emperor in Constantinople,[46] whose approval they required in order to be ordained, much like various Icelandic goði or bishops, who received the mandate to Christianize their country or the approval of their ordination from the Norwegian king, in a similar relation of dependence. Possible counter-arguments might include the fact that Ari refers not only to Norwegian kings but also to Popes and to English monarchs like King Edmund (the Martyr, ca. 855-869) as well as to the Emperors of Constantinople, Alexios I Komnenos (1056-1118) and Phocas (602-610), and to the first King of Jerusalem, Baldwin I (1100-1118) and Patriarch Arnulf of Jerusalem (1099, 1112-1118), too. For example, at the end of chapter VII it is stated that:

> „*Bishop Gizurr died thirty nights later in Skálaholt on the third day of the week, the fifth [day] before the calends of June.*
>
> *In the same year Pope Paschal II died before Bishop Gizurr, as did Baldwin king of Jerusalem and Arnulf patriarch in Jerusalem, and Philip king of the Swedes and, later the same summer, Alexius king of the Greeks; he had then sat on the throne in Miklagarðr for thirty-eight years. And two years later a new lunar cycle began.*

[45] *Ibid*., chapter X.

[46] A. J. Ekonomou, 2007, p. 218. Also see R. McKitterick, 2016, pp. 241-273.

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> *Eysteinn and Sigurðr had then been kings in Norway for seventeen years after their father Magnús, son of Óláfr Haraldsson. That was 120 years after the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason, and 250 years after the killing of Edmund, king of the Angles, and 516 years after the death of Pope Gregory, who brought Christianity to England, according to what has been reckoned. And he died in the second year of the reign of the Emperor Phocas, 604 years after the birth of Christ by the common method of reckoning. That makes 1120 years altogether*."[47]

This probably stems from the ecclesiastical character of *Íslendingabók* or possibly from the desire of Ari to write a portentous ending to his book, an expression of his sagacity, as he would later be titled *fróði*. Probably the first reason is the one that bears the greater weight. Looking at this gallery of leaders mentioned in *Íslendingabók*, Historian Poul Skårup suspects that the writer's inspiration came from a version of Fulcher of Chartres's *Historia Hierosolymitana*[48], which contains references to Alexios I, Baldwin I and Patriarch Arnulf of Jerusalem[49] (this chronicle is one of the most appreciated chronicles of the First Crusade, written by Fulcher of Chartres, who was a participant in the event, it is considered rather accurate and it is thought that it remains one of the most important sources for contemporaries as well). The reference to King Edmund the Martyr – who ruled East Anglia but little is known about his reign from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle other than he fell victim to Viking raids, suggesting he might have been mentioned as an ecclesiastical figure who was greatly venerated in church tradition in the North[50] – may be considered surprising,

[47] Íslendingabók, chapter VII.
[48] See E. Peters (ed.), 1971.
[49] P.Skårup, 1979, pp. 18-23 apud S. Grønlie, 2006, p. 30.
[50] Also known as St. Edmund, he was King of East Anglia from circa 855 to his death on 20 November 869 (when the king was allegedly slain by Ivar the Boneless and his brother Ubba after refusing to give up his faith in Christ). The cult of St. Edmund was revived after the 10th century with hagiographies such as *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* by Abbo of Fleury or legends like *De Infantia Sancti Edmundi* by Geoffrey of Wells greatly contributing to St. Edmund being worshipped as a martyr and to the creation of his image as a sacral king through his example of faith, sacrifice and sense of duty at the early age of 29 when he was martyred (M. Taylor, 2013, pp. 27-43).

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while, for instance, Emperor Alexios I Comnenos is well-known in Old Norse literature as *Kirjalax* (Gr. kyrios, κύριος = Lord), has a saga dedicated to him (*Kirjalax saga*[51]) and is remembered for having received King Eiríkr the Good (of Denmark) and King Sigurðr Jórsalafari in Miklagarðr (Constantinople).

These references to illustrious personalities, as stated before, invite to a discussion of a common occurrence in medieval Old Norse genealogies of the type of *Langfeðgatal*, such as maybe be found in the Prologue to the Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*[52]. The purpose of genealogies is to legitimate and confirm the power of the kings, as well as to earn more prestige and recognition for ruling monarchs[53]. A genealogy may be defined as: "a written or oral expression of the descent of a person or persons from a common ancestor or ancestors"[54]. Genealogies constitute an essential part of the most ancient sources such as the Bible or Homer's Iliad. Reciting the lists of kings, gods, rulers or - in the case of *Íslendingabók* - chieftains and bishops, is essential in preserving a live memory of those listed and in establishing, with great subtlety, a relationship between those named and the spatial (*topos)* and temporal situation *(chronos*) of those who reminisce it. Some have pointed that genealogies have a propagandistic role and that they are used by those in power "to achieve a propagandistic role of social control"[55]. The Biblical scholar Alan Millard significantly points out that in ancient societies, where the concept of ethnic identity cannot be considered as understood in the same manner as today, lineage ties were rather understood as declarations of political unity[56]. This argument supports the interpretation that Ari's genealogies are declarations of political loyalty towards the kings of Norway.

In *Íslendingabók*, Ari does not miss the occasion to detail who the illustrious ancestors of the Ynglings were, albeit he does this at the end of his work. These genealogies take the line of legendary Norwegian kings back into an inaccessible mythological or historical past, aiming to connect

[51] See R. McTurk, 2005, pp. 198-199.
[52] A. Faulkes, 2005, pp. 115-119.
[53] See D. Brégaint, 2016, p. 102 (who focuses more on the Church as a mediator of these forms of royal legitimation).
[54] R. Wilson, 1977, p. 9 quoted in A. R. Millard, J. K. Hoffmeier, D. W. Baker, 1994, p. 108.
[55] J. Plumb, 1969, p. 2, quoted in A. R. Millard, et al., 1994, p. 107.
[56] A. R. Millard, et al., 1994, p. 108.

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contemporary monarchs from the medieval period to the Odin-Yngvi (Freyr) couple, the "bipartite model of sovereignty"[57] in Norse mythology. Thus, in the second appendix to *Íslendingabók*, Ari begins the line of the ancestors of the Ynglings and the people of Breiðafjǫrðr by coining a mythological genealogy of this dynasty, beginning with "Yngvi king of the Turks", where Turks is actually a reference to Thrace, the location of ancient Troy. The existence of a legendary ancestor of the Norse is of little surprise, the Franks, for example, liked to believe that King Merovech was the descendant of a sea god or monster ("bestea Neptuni Quinotauri similis"[58]). The scholar Anthony Faulkes believes that, in fact, Ari had been influenced by the story of the ancestry of the Franks by Pseudo-Fredegar[59], who mentioned both Turks and Franks as descendants of Trojan refugees[60]. A reference to Troy is of little surprise, given that the tradition of tracing royal genealogies back to the Trojan War is as old as Rome (the hero Aeneas flees Troy to travel to Central Italy where his son Iulius established the line of Romans giving his name to the Iulio-Claudian dynasty[61]). Examples of such genealogies are well known to the antiquarian, yet they have rarely been considered in comparison to the genealogies of the Norwegian kings, except the frequent comparison to the Old English lineage of the Scylfings (Skilfingar)[62]. One notable exception is Kirsten Hastrup's work in which she compares the founding of the country in *Íslendingabók* to examples of founding myths from the folklore of some South American native peoples[63].

After mentioning Yngvi Tyrkjakonungr, Ari continues the genealogy by mentioning the entire repertoire of legendary kings identifiable in other sources (such as *Ynglingatal*[64], *Historia Norvegiæ*[65],

[57] G. Dumézil, 1988, p. 17.
[58] Pseudo-Fredegar, 1888.
[59] See W. Goffart, 1963, pp. 206-241.
[60] A. Faulkes, 2005, p. 115-119.
[61] T. Livius (Livy), 1823, Book I-III.
[62] Well-known bibliographical indications are E. Sievers, 1892, pp. 361–363; K. Sisam, 1953, p. 290.
[63] K. Hastrup, 1987, pp. 257-269.
[64] A skaldic poem written by Snorri Sturluson in the first saga of *Heimskringla*, the eponimous *Ynglinga saga*.

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Ynglinga saga[66], *Hversu Noregr byggðist*[67], and *Beowulf*[68]), starting with "…Njǫrðr king of the Swedes, Freyr, Fjǫlnir, Svegðir, Vanlandi, Visburr, Dómaldr, Dyggvi, Dagr, Alrekr, Agni, Yngvi, Jǫrundr, Aun the Old, Egill Crow of Vendill, Óttar, Aðils at Uppsala, Eysteinn, Yngvarr, Braut-Ǫnundr, Ingjaldir the Evil…", and so on until reaching "…Gellir, father of Þorkell – father of Brandr – and of Þorgils, my father; and I am called Ari"[69].

Conclusion

Ari's genealogy attests a dual purpose which resides in a major difference that exists between this genealogy and other "mythological" genealogies previously mentioned: in Ari's case we are offered a direct lineage from the legendary couple Odin-Yngvi not only to esteemed rulers of his own country, but to the historian recording the genealogy himself. Ari thus consecrates his role as a genealogist, a family historian, directly reasserting the lineage and rights of his family to their chieftainship as well as indirectly promoting the agenda of the Norwegian monarchy by reaffirming the Norwegian origin of the Icelandic chieftains.

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[65] A Norwegian syniptic history written around 1160 to 1175 by an anonimous monk which was preserved in a manuscript in the posession of the Earl of Dalhousie, Brechin Castle, Scotland. See C. Phelpstead (ed.), D. Kunin (transl.), 2001.

[66] See *supra*.

[67] Old Norse for „How Norway was inhabited", probably one of the most detailed mythological lineage of the ancient kings of Norway that may be found in Flateyjarbók (Codex Flateyensis). Unlike other Norwegian genealogies, it lists Burr and Burri as the forefathers of Óðinn Ásakonungr (King of the Aesir) after which it resumes the list of kings found in the other mentioned sources.

[68] See M. Alexander, 2003, p. LIX.

[69] S. Grønlie (ed.), 2006, p. 14.

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