



Sagnagrunnur: Background

Terry Gunnell,
University of Iceland





- *Sagnagrunnur*: Based on Icelandic words for database (*Gagnagrunnur*) and for legends/ (*Sagnir*: poss. Form: *sagna*)





Situation: Iceland 1998

- Numerous collections of folk legends in Iceland
- No shared index of motifs
- No use of any type index in most cases
- No shared form of ordering of material
- No annotation with comparisons to foreign material (little knowledge or interest in foreign material)
- No annotation with comparison with legends in other collections
- -> Carrying out comparative research near impossible





Dream (first legend related)

- Inspired in part by Bo Almqvist (Professor of Folkloristics in Dublin)
- To make it possible to carry out swifter, more effective research into themes, motifs, repertoires, regional distribution, adaption of international types, development over time, gender aspects...
- For someone to be able to stand in the countryside with a mobile phone and get summaries of the stories told around them
- Idea not to replace books but to make them more usable
- Hope: In future to join this database to a similar database of the further c. 10,000 legends in the sound archive





File Maker Pro Database: 1998-2001 (mainly)

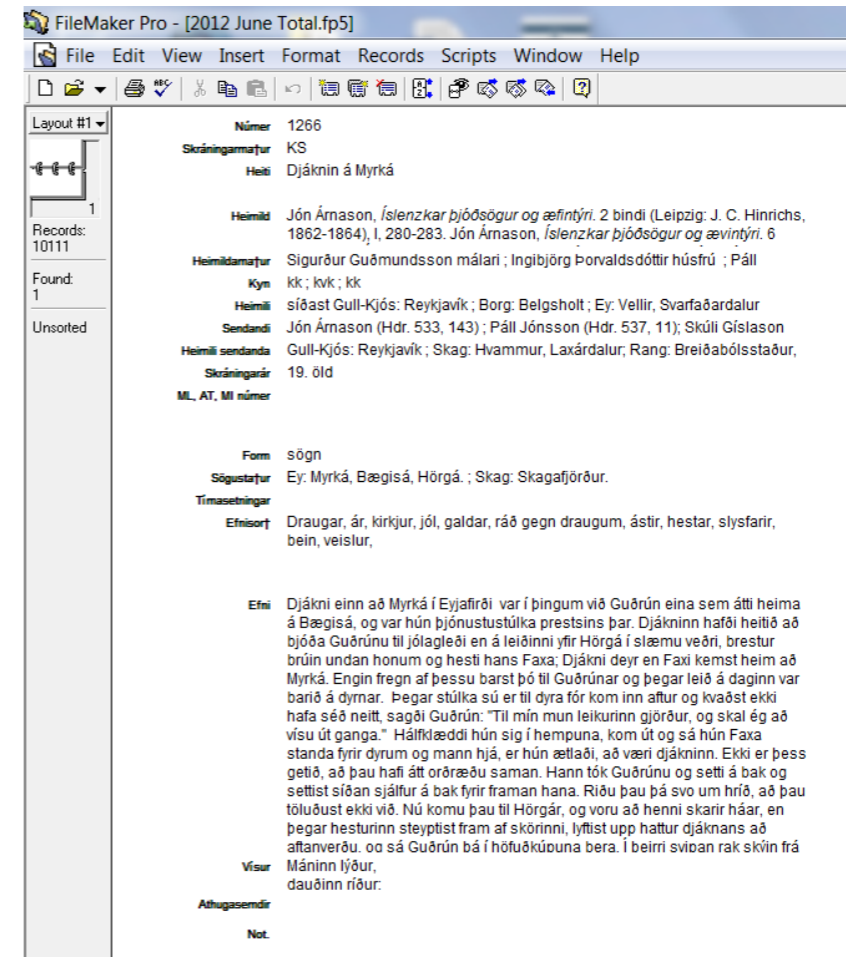
- Information on 10,000 legends in all available printed collections in Iceland
- Initially carried out by students as part of a course on legends
- Followed up by summer work by other students funded by Icelandic Science Council
- - and a supportive mother in law with time on her hands.
- Placed informally on web in c. 2001





Filemaker Pro database

- Title
- Storyteller
- Sex
- Home of storyteller
- Collector
- Home of collector
- Date
- ML/AT/MI number
- Type of story (Legend/ wonder tale)
- Setting of legend
- Key words
- Summary of story
- Verses
- Notes





Key words

- Compiled in association with Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir (Arnarnaganean Institute Sound Archive in Iceland) where a similar archive was being constructed (with help from students). Plan being to make joining the databases possible at some point
- Translated into English and passed on to Timothy Tangherlini. Idea being that at some point there would be a way to make the Danish and Icelandic databases be able to communicate

All Hallows/
allraheilagramessa

Alþingi (Icelandic
Parliament)

[belief in spirits/](#) andatrú

[spirit warmth/](#) andhiti

[employment/](#) atvinna

[oath or promise/](#) áheit

*magical poetry/ ákvæði

[enchantments/](#) álög

[rivers/](#) ár

New Year's Eve/ áramót

[elven love/](#) ástaleit
huldufólks

[love affairs/](#) ástir

[nursery rhymes/](#) barnagælur

[children's work/](#) barnastörf

[upbringing/](#) barnauppleidi

[boats and ships/](#) bátar og
skip

[\(human\) bones/](#) bein

[car ghosts/](#) bíldraugar

[farming ways/](#)
búskaparhættir

[elven farming ways/](#)
búskaparhættir huldufólks

[farms/](#) bæir

[books and manuscripts/](#)
bækur og handrit

[prayers/](#) bænir

Danes/ Danir

[dance/](#) dans

[dance gatherings/](#) dansleikir

[ghostly smells/](#) draugalykt

[ghosts/](#) draugar (something
that comes again and again)

[ghost belief/](#) draugatrú

[dreams/](#) draumar

[dream-men/](#) draummenn
(figures that regularly give
information in dreams)

[down-collecting/](#) dúntekja

[dwarves/](#) dvergar

[shallow graves \(dysjar\) ->](#)
graves/ leiði

[clothing/](#) fatnaður

[fated/](#) feigð (special
Scandinavian concept)

[journeys/](#) ferðalög

[elven on the move/](#) ferðir
huldufólks

[confirmations/](#) fermingar

[societies/](#) félag

[fiddles/](#) fiöla

[fish/](#) fiskar

[fishing/](#) fiskveiðar

[fish processing/](#) fiskverkun

[beach creeps/](#) fjörolallar
(specially Icelandic)

[beaches/](#) fjörur

[tramps/](#) flakkarar -> social
outsiders/ utangarðsmenn

[belief in fate/](#) forlagatrú

[boat foremen/](#) formenn

[ancient poems/](#) fornkvæði

[archaeological remains/](#)
fomleifar



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

FÉLAGSFRÆÐI-, MANNFRÆÐI-
OG ÞJÓÐFRÆÐIDEILD



Original Sagnagrunnur: 2001



On-line database:
Garðar Guðgeirsson

Front page: Olga
Holownia

See: Gunnell,
Sagnagrunnur: A New
Database of Icelandic
Legends in Print,
*Folklore: Electronic
Journal of Folklore*, 45,
151-162:

<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol45/gunnell.pdf>



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS
FÉLAGSFRÆÐI-, MANNFRÆÐI-
OG ÞJÓÐFRÆÐIDEILD

Introduced at ISFNR conference in Estonia in 2005



Dream 2:

- To add a visual mapping aspect to the database (cf. maps in our *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area: 2007*)
- Initially impossible because access to detailed maps of Iceland was restricted and costly (not even given to Google Earth/ Maps). This eventually changed
- (c. 2007??)





Dream 3

- From an early point: To add material from the islands in the North Sea (the Faroes, Shetland, Orkney)
- To connect with similar databases in Ireland, and Scotland...
- To connect with similar databases in other Nordic countries





On database 2015

- Terry Gunnell, *Sagnagrunnur*. En kartlagt database over de islandske folkesagn. *Saga och sed* (2015), 15-40.





Enter Trausti Dagsson...

