There is More to Stjórn than Biblical Translation

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Konungs skuggsjá stands out in Old Norse literature as an example of the speculum genre. Views differ when it comes to who the primary audience for Konungs skuggsjá was: Was it the king’s son(s) or the hird, or was it directed towards a more general audience as a way of teaching a new royal ideology or how to move upwards in society? Even though we cannot know exactly what the person behind Konungs skuggsjá intended his work to do, we can be quite sure that the functions and the relevance of Konungs skuggsjá have changed through history and according to where it was copied and used. Its relevance for those copying it in Iceland in the fifteenth century was surely different than at the king’s court in last half of the thirteenth century. In the following, though, I will rather focus on aspects that were probably relevant when Konungs skuggsjá was composed, and the subsequent period, in order to shed new light on another Old Norse literary phenomenon: Stjórn.

In so far as the title of the Konungs skuggsjá is given in the prologue both in Old Norse and in Latin as Speculum regale, and as a large part of it also directly discusses the king, it must be safe to say that a relevant function may have been to “educate” the king and/or the king’s sons who might one day be king themselves. But the scope of Konungs skuggsjá is larger than a description of how a king should behave and what he should do in order to be a good king. It also contains a discussion as well as a description of learning and hǿverska, and taken together it describes for the hird, for the (greater and lesser) nobility, and for the king himself, what the king rightfully may expect from his people, and also what they may expect from him: Both the people’s obligations towards the king and the king’s obligations towards his people and God are discussed and exemplified.

As a speculum regale of this sort, the Konungs skuggsjá stands out as the only example we have in Old Norse of this kind of text. Or does it? I will argue that there is at least one text that equals Konungs skuggsjá as a mirror for kings and for their subjects on their obligations towards each other, and that is what is generally referred to as Stjórn 3. The main point in this article is to argue the possibility that Stjórn 3 is the result of a translation and adaptation project that is independent of a postulated older or contemporary translation of the Pentateuch. An important element to support this suggestion is the evident textual connections that exist between parts of Stjórn 3 and the section of Konungs skuggsjá that discusses the king.

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1 See Johansson & Kleivane in this volume for more on the discussion about the prologue.
2 For a general introduction to Konungs skuggsjá, see Johansson & Kleivane in this volume, and also the bibliography. For a discussion of various views on the overall topic of Konungs skuggsjá, see Bauer, Orning, Boyle... in this volume.
3 I will refer to Stjórn 3, Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 2, and keep them distinct from each other. And when I refer to the collective of texts which Unger’s edition (1862) established, I will use the term Stjórn collection and not just Stjórn as is often done. This is in order to underline that the text Unger and later Astås (2009) edited under the title Stjórn is indeed a collection of different translations from the Bible, not found in this form in any manuscript. More will be said about this further on.
4 Storm (1886a) addresses this, seeing Konungs skuggsjá as borrowing from Stjórn 3. Later especially Hofmann (1973), Bagge (1974, 1990) Kirby (1986) and Astås (1987) have discussed this, Hofmann and Bagge arguing that Stjórn 3 has borrowed from Konungs skuggsjá, Kirby argues the opposite or that both have a common source. Astås’s discussion is broader and concerns the use of biblical material in Konungs skuggsjá more generally, not just the parts that correspond to Stjórn 3.
"Stjórn" is often described as an Old Norse translation of the Bible. But this is not a fitting description. It is rather a collection of translations and adaptations of the first half of the Old Testament, where the different parts are compiled together with excerpts from the works of scholars' works such as St Augustine (c. 354–430), Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), Honorius Augustodunensis (c. 1080–1154), Richard of St Victor (d. 1173), Petrus Comestor (d. c. 1178). The various parts of "Stjórn" are also written at different times and for different purposes. It is only with the edition by Unger (1862) that all of these parts are merged into the form that generally lies behind the title “Stjórn” in scholarly literature. The parts of the Stjórn collection as they are found in medieval manuscripts present three units of translation and adaptation. The one referred to as Stjórn 3 covers the biblical books from Joshua to 2 Kings. The translation is quite close to the Vulgate, and additions to the Vulgate text as well as abridgements of it are modest. This is compared to Stjórn 1 which has much material added from both learned commentaries and also material (probably) penned by translator himself, and Stjórn 2 which has virtually no additions and several abridgements compared to the Vulgate. Stjórn 1 covers the Bible from Genesis to Exodus 18, whereas Stjórn 2 relates mainly the narrative parts of Exodus 19 and the rest of the Pentateuch. So all in all, what we have here are translations into Old Norse covering Genesis to 2 Kings. But as far as the preserved manuscripts are concerned, it is only in the last half of the fifteenth century that they all occur together, and that is in the manuscript AM 226 fol. The main part of this manuscript is dated to c. 1350–70 and consists of Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 3 followed by Rómverja saga, Alexanders saga and Gyðinga saga. But this manuscript has a different Joshua than the other Stjórn 3 witnesses since the Joshua in AM 226 fol – and its copy AM 225 fol – is a translation of the Joshua material found in Historia scholastica and not in the Vulgate. This Joshua is often referred to as Stjórn 4, but is actually an alternative to the Joshua part in Stjórn 3, and not a continuation of the bible narrative after Stjórn 3 as the numbering suggests. The Stjórn 2 part is only found in AM 226 fol and is a text written on a separate quire added to the manuscript some hundred years after the main part was written. Stjórn 2 has been inserted between what is now folio 61 where Stjórn 1 ends and folio 70 where Stjórn 3 (or actually Stjórn 4) begins. The manuscript AM 225 fol (c. 1400) which is a copy of AM 226 fol, does not have Stjórn 2 because AM 225 fol was written before the quire with Stjórn 2 was added to its exemplar AM 226 fol.

Stjórn 3 was probably written around the middle of the thirteenth century or a few decades later. The earlier and later dating relies much on how one sees the relationship between Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá. Of all the parts of the Stjórn collection, Stjórn 3 has the oldest manuscript preservation: AM 228 fol (c. 1300–1325) and it contains only Stjórn 3. The beginning and ending are missing due to lacunae in the manuscript, but judging from the remaining quire structure, the manuscript need not have contained any other texts.

That there is a relationship between Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá has been noted long ago. This is particularly obvious in chapters 62–66 in Konungs skuggsjá where several examples are given from the lives of the Old Testament kings Saul, David and Solomon. Several of these passages in Konungs skuggsjá show a great resemblance with passages in Stjórn 3, with respect to phrasing, how the Vulgate text has been edited, and the addition of

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5 Or 4 Reges in accordance with the Vulgate where 1 and 2 Samuel is called 1 and 2 Reges, and 1 and 2 Kings hence 3 and 4 Reges. Here the Vulgate takes up the tradition from the Septuagint. I will name these biblical books in line with what is common practice nowadays: 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

6 The dating of this and all other manuscripts is from Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog (ONP) unless otherwise specified.
material not taken from the Vulgate. There are examples of a word-for-word correspondence also in passages that are not “direct” translations from the Vulgate but paraphrases. That there is a connection between Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá is thus quite clear. The manner of the connection is however disputed. Storm (1886a) had concluded that it was Konungs skuggsjá (and Barlaams saga ok Jósaftats which also has corresponding passages) that had borrowed from Stjórn 3, but later both Hofmann (1973) and Bagge (1974) reached the conclusion, independently of each another, that the relationship between Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá must be the other way around. Kirby (1986: 169–181) has argued against Hofmann and Bagge, and prefers Storm’s view that Konungs skuggsjá has borrowed from Stjórn 3. This debate has naturally been connected to the question of the dating of the respective texts’ production, but is possibly also based on preferences connected to which is the more “original” text. The possibility that the relevant passages have been borrowed from a third text has been mentioned in the discussion, as well as the possibility that the two have the same author. Still, all seem to prefer either Stjórn 3 or Konungs skuggsjá as borrowing from the other.

The original nature of the relationship between Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá, in other words which text has borrowed from the other, will not be discussed here. For my argumentation in this article it suffices to conclude that there is a relationship. Additionally since it has been impossible for other scholars to agree on which text is at the lending end, I will take that as a strong indication that the question cannot be resolved, and that the two texts were written in related (or the same) milieu, and at approximately the same time.

For the purpose of arguing my views in this article, it suffices to conclude that there is a close relationship between the two texts, but the question of who borrowed from whom or if they both had a common source, is of less importance. The main point is that the authors behind the respective texts found the same material useful for the purpose of their text production. Also, what these corresponding parts do is to draw our attention to what the texts are about: good and bad kings.

The name “Stjórn”, as far as we know, is not a medieval name for this collection of translations. It is attested in connection to AM 228 fol and AM 226 fol, which were called lítila Stjórn (‘little Stjórn’) and stærri Stjórn (‘larger Stjórn’) respectively when they were “rediscovered” at Hlíðarendi c. 1670 (Storm 1886b: 244). It is not known how far back in time these names go, or even if “Stjórn” was used as a reference to translations and adaptations of biblical material. But there are other references that may indicate that also the manuscript AM 227 fol was called “Stjórn” in the sixteenth century (Jakob Benediktsson 2004: 12). The word stjórn (‘steering, rule, government’) has generally been taken to refer to God’s rule over the world or over the Jews, or God’s rule over world history. As such it fits very well the Stjórn collection as a whole. But if the name goes as far back as the mid-thirteenth century and the composition of Stjórn 3, it would even fit nicely to this specific part as a reference to the various ways of earthly government and the good and bad kings discussed there. This was also suggested by Storm (1886b: 245), who sees stjórn as a possible translation of regnum, as in royal government or royal history. In Stjórn 3 the Latin liber regnorum is given as a translation of Paralimpomenon (i.e. the Books of Chronicles) twice (Astås/Stjórn 2009: 1052 and 1072). But if stjórn may be seen as a reference to the discussion of earthly government, God’s supreme rule over all of this would also be implied. That the rulers obey God’s laws and his will, is a prerequisite for a good king and prosperous rule. The opposite, breaking God’s laws and not doing his bidding, leads to disaster as is seen on several occasions in this part of the Bible.

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7 See Storm (1886a) and Hofmann (1973: 2–3) with a list of the corresponding passages and an indication of the nature of the correspondences.
**Stjórn** 3: Can it be seen as a logical unit on its own?

When Storm describes the different parts of the *Stjórn* collection, he begins with *Stjórn 3* (his C-recension\(^8\)), which he judges to be the oldest one and from c. 1250. He notes that the *Stjórn 3* in AM 228 fol (dated to c. 1300–1325) *ikke kjender de senere Tillæg* (Storm 1886b: 247, ‘knows nothing of the later additions’).\(^9\) By this he means either that the other parts of the *Stjórn* collection are younger than the manuscript AM 228 fol, or that the writer did not know they existed or had no access to them. He is in other words concerned about why there is no Pentateuch part included, and the manuscript begins with Joshua. He claims that: *Imidlertid kan dette ikke ansees for en naturlig Begyndelse, da jo, som enhver bibelkjender ved, Josva Bog er den direkte Fortsættelse af Mosebøgerne og ikke kan skilles fra disse* (Storm 1886b: 247, ‘However this cannot be seen as a natural beginning because, as all who are familiar with the Bible know, Joshua is the direct continuation of the Pentateuch and cannot be separated from it’). This is a view shared by later scholars working with the *Stjórn* collection, cf. Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 35): “It can be considered virtually certain that the version represented by *Stjórn* III originally included the Pentateuch: there is nothing to be said in favour of the notion that such a work began with Joshua.”

The question of whether or not the Pentateuch already existed in (adapted) translation when *Stjórn 3* was written, is closely linked to two other questions: One is if there is any manuscript indication of a Pentateuch existing earlier than *Stjórn 3* (or translated as part of the same project), another is if it really is necessary to postulate the existence of a Pentateuch in (some kind of) translation to accept that Joshua and the following biblical books were translated. I will address the question of possible manuscript witnesses to an earlier Pentateuch first. There are a few text witnesses that have been discussed as possible remnants of an Old Norse Pentateuch. The manuscripts in which they are preserved were, like the manuscripts of the *Stjórn* collection, written between c. 1300 and c. 1550. All of these text witnesses have been parts of longer texts, and are now preserved in fragments of manuscripts. This means that we cannot know how much of the Pentateuch these covered. But it is noteworthy that none of these fragments contain text that corresponds to *Stjórn 2* (Exodus 19–Deuteronomy). The reason these text witnesses have been discussed as potential remnants of an older Pentateuch translation is that they contain material from (the first part of) the Pentateuch, but compared to the Vulgate and to *Stjórn 1*, these text witnesses have much less additional material and their “manner of translation” is thus closer to that found in *Stjórn 3* and *Stjórn 2*. Also, they seem to be independent of the *Stjórn 1* text.

The fragments discussed are AM 1056 IV 4°, AM 238 XIX fol and Holm perg 12 IV fol. The first of these, AM 1056 IV 4°, is a Norwegian fragment that is dated to c. 1300. It consists of two parts of the same leaf. It has text where the narrative corresponds to the Vulgate 1 Samuel 22–28, but Kirby has demonstrated that it is not a translation from the Vulgate, but from the corresponding parts of *Historia scholastica* (Kirby 1986: 69 and 104–105).\(^10\) It is thus not a “Stjórn text” and cannot be used as an argument for a Pentateuch translation older than *Stjórn 1*.

AM 238 XIX fol consists of two separate leaves from the same quire of an otherwise lost manuscript. It is dated to c. 1400–1450, and it is Icelandic. The text on the first leaf is from Genesis 1:31–3:10 and the second leaf from Genesis 19:11–21:18. The biblical text is

\(^8\) Storm (1886b: 245) refers to the C, B and A recensions of *Stjórn* as they are found in the manuscripts AM 228 fol, AM 227 fol and AM 226 fol respectively. This is parallel to Unger in his 1862 (pp. X–XV) edition, but Unger names the manuscripts, not the recensions or versions, A, B and C.

\(^9\) This and all other translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.

\(^10\) Jakob Benediktsson accepted this conclusion (2004: 36). Astås (1970) treats this fragment as a translation and reworking of the biblical text. He does not mention or comment on Kirby’s opinion that *Historia scholastica* is behind the text in AM 1056 IV 4° in his later work either (2009: lvii).
shortened and edited, and there are additions from Honorius Augustodunensis’ *Imago mundi* and *Elucidarius* and perhaps also from his *De philosophia mundi*. Astás also mentions that parts of this text are also close to *Historia scholastica* (2009: liv–lv). Storm (1886b: 249), Kirby (1986: 69–71) and Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 25) argue that this is a remnant of a translation of “the same kind” as the translation which is Stjórn 3. By “the same kind” they are referring to the amount of additions to and omissions from, and also the degree of rewriting of the Vulgate text. In Stjórn 3 as in AM 238 XIX fol it seems from what is preserved that the additions are mainly limited to excerpts from Honorius’ *Imago mundi* and *Elucidarius*, and the translated parts from the Vulgate are close and “straightforward”. The abundance of commentaries as found in the corresponding parts in Stjórn 1 is not there in the AM 238 XIX fol. Finnur Jónsson saw it differently, and claimed that the text in this fragment was not remnants of an older translation, but that it might be depending on one: [...] de to ikke sammenhængende blade, der findes i AM 238, XIX, foll., og som kladen Biflúsaga – indholdet er af Genesis – er åbenbart ikke af denne oversættelse [i.e. the version of Genesis–Exodus 18 older than Stjórn 1], men de indeholder en tekst, der mulig beror på den. (Finnur Jónsson 1920–1924, vol. 2: 976).

The last fragment, Holm perg 12 IV fol, is one leaf with text that corresponds to Exodus 4:19–7:16. It is Icelandic and dated to c. 1500–1550. Seip (1956: 13) does not think this has any direct connections to the Stjórn text, whereas others have argued it is a translation of the kind found in Stjórn 2 (Unger 1862: v–vi), or to Stjórn 3 (Storm 1886b: 248 and Kirby 1986: 72–73).

In my opinion none of these three texts in their fragmentary status can vouch for the existence of a translated Pentateuch earlier than Stjórn 1. Seip (1956: 12) also holds that these fragments of texts have no direct connection to the Stjórn collection. A comparison on a lexical or phraseological basis is unfortunately not possible, because these snippets would need to be compared to a “Stjórn 3 type Stjórn 1 text” – which we do not have, and in my opinion has probably not existed. These fragments may well be remains of short and targeted parts translated in order to be elements in a context other than the Pentateuch. Also, I find that the inability within Old Norse scholarship to agree on the “manner of translation” in question suggests that it cannot be decided. What these fragments do vouch for is on the other hand the relevance for matter found in the Pentateuch – more precisely the first part of it. Also I believe that methodologically the most reasonable way of approaching these texts is by assuming that parts of the Bible were translated *ad hoc* for specific purposes other than as a project of bible translation as such. And I find it unlikely that if a smaller or larger part of the Vulgate was translated from Latin to Old Norse sometime in Scandinavia in the medieval period, then no one else would translate the same part again independently, since it already existed in translation. That is not just unlikely considering the geographical region in question – Norway and Iceland – and that this is a manuscript culture where communication and dissemination of texts was less quick than now, but it is also a gross underestimation of the Latin competence of educated and text-producing medieval Scandinavians. I also find that the fragments discussed are evidence of biblical matter being used for its (historical) content, and not for its theological meaning, and whether a translation was based directly on a Vulgate text or on *Historia scholastica* or on another similar recasting of the Vulgate was of less importance. And I do not think they can be seen as representing a desire for a complete Pentateuch translated into Old Norse. Therefore I will not take the existence of an older translation of the Pentateuch for granted, nor discuss in much detail the evidence and arguments for and against such a translation. Rather, I argue that whether or not a translation into Old Norse of the Pentateuch existed before c. 1250, it will not alter the hypothesis I propose for the origin and purpose of Stjórn 3 (and Stjórn 1). Whether these were based on a pre-existing translation or were new translation, should not be decisive for why the need was felt for what we know as Stjórn 3 and Stjórn 1.
I will now turn to the question of whether it is necessary to presuppose the existence of an Old Norse Pentateuch for the production of Stjórn 3 to make any sense. In my opinion the answer is that it is not necessary. When we consider the time of the translation, c. 1250–1280, it is more or less contemporaneous with Konungs skuggsjá. Konungs skuggsjá demonstrates an interest in and a need for a discussion of the king and his role and his relationship with his subjects as well as towards God. And this is exactly what is discussed in this part of the Bible.

In Joshua the Israelites are conquering Canaan, the Promised Land, and they are successful as long as they follow God’s instructions. Judges take over where Joshua ends, and describes how the Israelites turn away from God. When God punishes them, they cry for mercy, he helps them and establishes a form of government through judges. The Israelites and their judges are constantly threatened by surrounding peoples and their kings. The story in the book of Ruth is set in the time of the judges. Ruth is the widow descending from a foreign people, the Moabites, and she follows her mother-in-law back to the Israelites, where she displays her virtues and is “restored” through her marriage to Boaz. According to the explanation following the translation in Stjórn 3 Ruth is a symbol of helga kristni frá leidda heidni (Astås 2009: 693, ‘the holy Christendom, lead away from heathendom’). The two books of Samuel recount the life of Samuel, the last of the judges. After his death Samuel is replaced by a king who God agrees to appoint after the Israelites demanded that they have a king. This king is Saul, who first succeeds in defeating the enemies of the Israelites, but later turns against God’s will, and is succeeded by David. King David is presented as mainly a good king, but one who fails sometimes due to his weaknesses. In David’s time, there was also a discussion on the succession to the throne: is the oldest son or the most able supposed to become king? This is one of the parts of the Vulgate that have parallel treatments in both Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá. The topic of succession was also part of the contemporary discourse in Norway at the time when Stjórn 3 and Konungs skuggsjá were written. After David has died, the books of Kings begin and Solomon becomes king. He is described as a good king, bringing peace and prosperity, he builds the first Temple and he follows God’s will. However, at the end of his reign he turns and starts to worship other gods. This causes division within his realm and after him the Israelites are divided in two, each with their own king. The kingdom in the north, Israel, worships several gods and are ruled by bad kings. This kingdom is wiped out by its enemies. The southern kingdom of Judah, centred in Jerusalem, is more successful, but good and bad kings alternate, and in the end King Nebuchadnezzar II of the Babylonians destroys Jerusalem and captures the people of Judah, and this is the end of the kingdom of David, and also of Stjórn 3.

When we take the contents of Stjórn 3 into consideration, it fits well with the interest in discussions about the king and his power and role as judge which is also attested in Konungs skuggsjá. The relevance of the subject matter in Stjórn 3 is obvious considering the time and the most likely context for the translation. The king’s court is near at hand because of the connections to Konungs skuggsjá mentioned earlier, which suggests one text being available at the time of the composition of the other. Now, it is not impossible for a text to move from one place and one context to another, so this is not a decisive argument for the two texts being composed in the same context. But it makes it likely. A tantalising thought, but one that requires a larger and more detailed study, is that Stjórn 3 could have been written as king’s mirror from another point of view than the king’s court, or that the Konungs skuggsjá was written as a response to such an enterprise. Within the church in Norway and Iceland at the time, there were several milieus that were more than literate enough for such an enterprise, and that might also have had an interest in “educating” both king and retainers in how a kingdom of God’s grace works best and what brings about its fall. This is merely a suggested thought, but one that comes from some of the arguments Bagge (1974, 1990) puts forward in the discussion of the relationship between Konungs skuggsjá and Stjórn 3. Some of the arguments he has in favour of Stjórn 3 borrowing from Konungs skuggsjá are concerned with the ideological adjustments he finds in Konungs skuggsjá, compared to the Vulgate, and
which – in his view – Stjörn 3 has not adopted. Among the ideological adjustments of the biblical text in Konungs skuggsjá that Bagge mentions are the underlining in Konungs skuggsjá of the obligation of the subjects to be faithful to their master (Bagge 1974: 166, 185), and another point that one must judge according to the perpetrator’s nature (Bagge 1974: 171). Without going into more detail on this here, suffice it to say that Stjörn 3 with its specific content parallels much of the interest of the Konungs skuggsjá, something which is highlighted by the parallel passages in the two works. They may well have been written with much of the same intended function.

Regarding the “impossibility” to begin a translation with Joshua without already having an Old Norse Pentateuch, that is a claim coloured by modern views of the Bible as a fixed, one-volume work with a fixed set of books in an ordained order. The medieval use of the Bible was more fragmentary, something the manuscripts also attest to. Pandects were not common until the so-called Paris Bibles spread in the thirteenth century. Multi-volume Bibles have been the most common form, and were still common after the Paris Bibles had been widely spread. Such part-Bibles would more often than not consist of a set of biblical books following in a sequence as found in the Vulgate, which is not unexpected since the biblical books are ordered according to both tradition – for the Old Testament the tradition harks back to old Jewish traditions – and to logic as they are ordered roughly according to chronology and genre. In Hebrew tradition the Torah (“the law”) – the Pentateuch – was considered one unit, and Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings belonged to Nevi’im (“the prophets”) together with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 minor prophets. Also in Christian tradition since St Jerome, the five books associated with Moses, the Pentateuch, were considered one order, and Joshua, Judges, Ruth – which St Jerome places here, not with the Hebrew Ketuvim (“the scriptures”) – 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets another unit (Light 1994: 160). This modern view also focuses on the Bible as a holy text, and less on its other functions, such as universal history or the one suggested here for the books adapted into Stjörn 3: a speculum regale.

We must also be correct in assuming that the “prehistory” of the historical books (Joshua–2 Kings as well as the Paralipomenon) of the Bible was well known among medieval Scandinavians, even without a translated Pentateuch. A written version in Old Norse is neither a prerequisite for the dissemination of this matter to medieval Scandinavians, nor would it be decisive for this dissemination had one such text existed (cf. Morey 1993: 6). It is not a prerequisite because the dissemination would have been mainly oral anyway. The main bulk of biblical and theological knowledge was disseminated through sermons and stories retold. It can be assumed that most medieval people had general biblical knowledge and thereby also general knowledge about universal history. The existence of a translated Pentateuch is not decisive for the dissemination of this matter because the main elements were available in translations already, not as a unified and “complete” work, but incorporated into various works on cosmology, history and geography. Also it is not decisive because those who could read and make use of advanced texts most likely were not (all) dependent on the texts being in the vernacular. They could make use of the many Latin sources. It is not as if without a translated Pentateuch, Scandinavians would be ignorantly facing the beginning of Joshua in medias res.

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11 See e.g. Marsden 1994, Light 1994, and de Hamel 2001 on the medieval Bible in its various forms.
12 Some variation will be found in the order of the books of the Vulgate, at least until the “breakthrough” of the Paris Bible, which went a long way in standardising the order of the books of the Bible (Light 1994: 159–63).
13 Earlier in Hebrew tradition, the Tetrateuch (Genesis–Numbers) was considered one unit and the Deuteronomic history (Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1–2 Samuel, and 1–2 Kings) another unit, as Deuteronomy is a recapitulation of the Tetrateuch, of sorts, and functions as a résumé of the laws that are the foundation on which the following builds (Hvalvik & Stordalen 1999: 77–92).
14 Schumacher (1991: 26–27) is thinking along the same lines.
What the manuscripts can tell us about the autonomy of Stjórn 3

I will now turn to the manuscripts that do have text belonging to the Stjórn collection, to see if there is any support for an “independent” Stjórn 3. I will leave out the three manuscript fragments discussed above (AM 1056 IV 4°, AM 238 XIX fol, and Holm perg 12 IV fol), since one of them (AM 1056 IV 4°) is not a Stjórn text, but a translation from Historia scholastica and for the two others it cannot be decided whether they are remnants of a translation older than Stjórn 1, of the Stjórn 2 or Stjórn 3 type or not. But we will keep in mind that these fragments only consist of text from the part of the Bible that Stjórn 1 corresponds to.

AM 228 fol, which is the oldest manuscript with Stjórn text to survive, contains only Stjórn 3. However, both the beginning and the end are lost in lacunae, so we cannot be positive that the manuscript did not contain more. But since there is one leaf missing at the beginning, and the text that is lost from Joshua corresponds to two pages (71v and 72r) in AM 227 fol, there are no codicological arguments to indicate that AM 228 fol had more text before Joshua. This manuscript is dated to c. 1300–25. Astås (2009: xliii) claims that the scribe of AM 226 fol began with Joshua 1 because he probably did not have access to the preceding part of the Stjórn text, and from this it seems that he implies that there was a preceding part in existence. But in my opinion, we cannot be sure of that. If AM 228 fol was written in the early part of the timespan it has been dated within, it is a possibility that Stjórn 1 was not yet written. So what would then remain for the scribe/commissioner to “not have access to” is the uncertain older Pentateuch of which Stjórn 2 is the only possible remaining part. And judging from the preserved manuscript evidence, which is only one exemplar, this was not a widespread text. The existence of a Pentateuch of Stjórn 3 type to “not have access to” is even more uncertain.

In my opinion, AM 228 fol shows rather that the Stjórn 3 text was a relevant one to copy in itself in the beginning of the fourteenth century in Iceland, even without the Pentateuch. The scribe or the commissioner was interested in precisely this part. If this was a relevant text to have in the last half of the thirteenth century, then it was probably just as relevant in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Icelanders were a part of the realm of the Norwegian king, and they would be just as interested in learning about the obligations they had towards the king as well as the demands they could direct at him, illustrated by examples of good and bad kings.

A little later in the fourteenth century, manuscripts which contain both Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 3 were produced in Iceland: AM 226 fol, AM 227 fol, and (most likely) AM 229 I fol. The manuscript AM 227 fol (c. 1350) is written by two hands and the inhabited illuminations are decorated by one illuminator (with the exception of the one on 96r which is younger). Between folios 70 and 71 there is a caesura, dividing the manuscript in two parts. A new quire begins with folio 71, this is also where Stjórn 3 takes over after Stjórn 1. On folio 70, half of the second column on the verso side is left empty, as well as folio 71r. One folio after folio 70 is lost or has been cut off, but was presumably empty (Seip 1956: 7). Both hands are found in both parts of the manuscript (Astås 2009: xxxvii), so we can see this is a collaborative project. It is in all likelihood the product of a professional scriptorium. This is strengthened by the fact that the hands are found in several other manuscripts, just like the hand in AM 226 fol.15 One of the hands in AM 227 fol is found in NRA 60 A, a fragment with Stjórn 1 text, but without the prologue. AM 227 fol was bound in its present binding in the seventeenth century, probably at Skálholt (Seip 1956: 8). There are also several lacunae in the manuscript.

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15 See e.g. Johansson 1997.
suggesting a period of use in unbound state, or in a damaged binding. The folios have also been trimmed quite a bit, so much that the illuminations are damaged in several places. This, together with the caesura between folios 70 and 71, and the fact that this probably is the production of a rather large and prolific scriptorium, I would not see it as impossible that the two parts of AM 227 fol may have been assembled as one at a later stage than the original production, and that each part may have been produced without being planned as a unit. However, this cannot be proved, and will remain no more than a suggestion. I mention it only to help put forward a more medieval view of the Stjórn collection as a much more detached unity than it is seen as today. Both Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 3 were also put together in the now fragmentary manuscript AM 229 I fol (c. 1350, 16 leaves preserved). AM 227 fol and AM 229 I fol are written by the same hands, and are most likely sister manuscripts (Astås 2009: xliv–xlv, see also Johansson 1997: 70–72).

AM 226 fol consists of three production units. Folios 1ra–61vb have Stjórn 1, folios 62ra–69vb Stjórn 2, and folios 70ra–158rb has Stjórn 3, Rómverja saga, Alexanders saga, and Gyðinga saga. With the exception of folios 62–69 which are a later addition to the manuscript, AM 226 fol is written by one hand. This hand is also found in several other manuscripts and these can be ordered more or less chronologically in relation to each other. One feature that is used to get this chronology is the use of ‘ǿ’ in the younger group of manuscripts (cf. Wolf 1995: xv–xix, also quoting Stefán Karlsson’s work on this scribe). Wolf notes that this graphotype is used only in the first part of AM 226 fol, and never in the last part, and she thus dates the part consisting of folios 70–158 somewhat earlier, possibly 1350–1360, than the folios 1–61, then a younger part, to the 1360–1370. Exactly which decade these were written in does not matter for my argumentation here, but it is highly interesting that there seems to be this chronological difference within the main part of AM 226 fol. Unfortunately the original quire structure in this part of the manuscript is not clear. The quire containing Stjórn 2 has been inserted between folios 61 and 70, but the question remains unanswered whether a new quire began with folio 70 (Wolf 1995: xvii) or if Stjórn 2 has been inserted between folios 5 and 6 of an original quire (Stefán Karlsson in personal communication with Selma Jónsdóttir 1971: 60).\footnote{In April 2017 Anne Mette Hansen and Natascha Fazlić at the Arnamagnæan Collection, Department of Nordic Research, Copenhagen, examined this part of the manuscript on my behalf, but reported that the binding is such that it cannot be decided how the original structure was. I am very grateful for their assistance.} If the introduction of ‘ǿ’ in the first part of AM 226 fol is the result of a development of the scribe’s hand and not dependent on his exemplar, and this part thus was written later than the last part, it seems that this scribe first made a manuscript consisting of Stjórn 3 and continued with further historical narratives Rómverja saga, Alexanders saga and Gyðinga saga into the post-Fall of Jerusalem period and onwards until c. 44 AD.\footnote{There are no caesurae between Stjórn 3, Römverja saga, Alexanders saga or Gyðinga saga.} Later he wrote the part containing Stjórn 1 which was appended to the rest of what is now AM 226 fol. Then even later, the part with Stjórn 2 was added. However, if Stefán Karlsson is right and folio 70 originally was folio 6 of a quire, it seems unlikely that the first five folios of that quire were left empty. Then it would be more probable that the part with Stjórn 1 is not younger than the rest, unless Wolf is correct and there is indeed a caesura between folios 61 and 70. This must for now remain undecided until an autopsy can be done on the manuscript.

As mentioned earlier, AM 226 fol has Stjórn 4, a translation and adaptation of the Joshua material in Historia scholastica and not the Vulgate Joshua which is the version of Joshua that is part of Stjórn 3 in AM 227 fol and AM 228 fol. This may be a result of the exemplar for AM 226 fol having been defective at the beginning. And that could be an indication that the exemplar was a manuscript starting with Joshua, since the beginning and end of manuscripts are most exposed to damage. Another explanation for AM 226 fol having Stjórn 4 could be that the scribe of AM 226 fol (or its exemplar) preferred a shorter, more concise version of the
Joshua story, and found this in Historia scholastica’s version. However, the allegorical explanations given about Joshua which we find in the Stjórn 3 version in AM 227 fol and AM 228 fol, is there also in AM 226 fol (Astás/Stjórn 2009: 584–588). This I believe is an indication that Stjórn 4 is the substitution of a Joshua where the beginning or the larger part was defective in AM 226 fol’s exemplar (or its exemplar). Whether this version of Joshua in AM 226 fol is the result of a defective exemplar or of preference, either way it illustrates well that the existence of a translated “story” does not exclude the same “story” being translated again if needed. Someone else might translate it on one’s own or find that the same contents might be found in a more suitable form in another source.

Another important aspect of AM 226 fol is that this is the only place we find Stjórn 2. It was inserted between Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 3 some hundred years or more after the main part of the manuscript was written. Due to the widespread notion that Stjórn 2 represents a very old translation of the Pentateuch, several scholars have suggested that the scribes of AM 226 fol and AM 227 fol left space to have Stjórn 2 inserted whenever they could get hold of a copy (Kirby 1980: 52; Jakob Benediktsson 2004: 9 and 24; Astás 2009: xxxviii and xli). But depending on the original quire structure of AM 226 fol, it seems that the scribe here either began with Stjórn 3, and continued with Rómverja saga, Alexanders saga and Gyðinga saga to form a continuous world history, and shortly after wrote and added Stjórn 1 to expand this world history back in time to include the beginning of the world. Or he started with Stjórn 1 and jumped from Exodus 18 to Joshua without concern for the “missing” part of the Pentateuch. Stefán Karlsson does not believe that the half column left empty on fol. 61v was made in anticipation of getting hold of an exemplar of Stjórn 2. Rather that the scribe began on a new folio because he started a new book – perhaps writing from a new exemplar (Stefán Karlsson in personal communication with Selma Jónsdóttir 1971: 60). I agree that there is nothing to suggest that this space was made in AM 226 fol for adding Stjórn 2. Stefán Karlsson accept this as possible when it comes to AM 227 fol, though (personal communication with Selma Jónsdóttir 1971: 60–61). But the quire structure of AM 227 fol opens for the possibility of separate production for the two units. With Stjórn 1 ending on folio 70v, half way down the second column on the seventh folio of an original eight-folio quire – the eighth folio probably left blank and later lost or removed, and Stjórn 3 beginning on the verso side of the first folio of a new quire, possibly in order to protect the illumination from wearing in case this would remain the beginning of a codex.

Fragments of other manuscripts with Stjórn text exist, with text from either Stjórn 1 or Stjórn 3. But these fragments as they are preserved have only text from one of these parts. NRA 60 A (c. 1350, 1 folio, beginning of Stjórn 1 without the prologue) has already been mentioned. Its provenance is uncertain, but it was written in Iceland by one of the hands also found in AM 227 fol and several other manuscripts, and it was probably not in Norway until the sixteenth century. NRA 60 A is the earliest preserved trace of Stjórn 1 in Norway, except for the statement in the prologue that the translation was made at the behest of King Hákon V Magnusson (reigned 1299–1319). So if Stjórn 1 did have a medieval dissemination in Norway, it does not seem to have been particularly widespread.

The remaining manuscript evidence of Stjórn text all contains parts of Stjórn 3, mainly in what are now fragments where it cannot be decided how much a complete manuscript once contained. AM 229 II fol (c. 1350) consists now of four folios with text from the end of Ruth and parts of 1 and 2 Samuel. AM 229 III fol (c. 1350–1400) is a fragment of one folio with text from 1 Samuel. NRA 60 B (c. 1350) is two parts of one folio with text from 2 Kings.

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18 See e.g. Fell 1971 and Astás 1992 for a description of Stjórn 4 and a comparison to Joshua in Historia scholastica, Stjórn 3 and the Vulgate.

19 The “complete” Joshua of Stjórn 3, including the allegorical explanation, in AM 227 fol and AM 228 fol fills approximately eight folios – in AM 228 fol a bit more, in AM 227 a bit less – so it could be that AM 226 fol’s exemplar lacked a whole quire.

NRA 60 C (c. 1300–1350) is also two parts of one folio with text from 2 Samuel. Thott 2099 I 4° (c. 1400–1500) is one folio containing a part of 1 Samuel. And finally there is Holm perg 36 I 4° (c. 1500–1600) which consists of one bifolium and a small fragment containing parts from 1 Samuel. In the context of discussing Stjórn 3 as a speculum regale such as Konungs skuggsjá, the high frequency of preserved parts from 1 and 2 Samuel is noteworthy, considering the discourse found there on how the Israelites got a king, and on good and bad kings. It could also be mentioned that the fragments in Riksarkivet, Oslo, NRA 60 B and NRA 60 C have been found in the binding of account books from southern Hordaland, Norway, and from the silver mines in Kongsberg, Norway respectively (Astås 2009: xlix–li).22

Some Stjórn 3 text is also found in other contexts. AM 335 4° (c. 1400) has a narrative about the biblical Samson together with other entertaining and educating stories.23 This Samson story is the Stjórn 3 version of Judges 13–16 (Astås 2009: xlvii), cut out of its Stjórn 3 context and disseminated on its own. Another manuscript with Stjórn 3 text used in another context is AM 764 4° (c. 1360–1380, Reynistadarbók). The first part of this manuscript is what Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2000 and 2007) calls a universal history project. It gives the world’s history from the Creation onwards – but in a very much condensed version. At the time AM 764 4° was written, both Stjórn 3 and 1 were available in Iceland. The sources for the universal history are a Stjórn 3 text, and a Daniel and Judith in the vernacular. But for the first part of the universal history a vernacular version of Genesis and Exodus was used, more precisely the part also covered by Stjórn 1, but Stjórn 1 was most likely not the source (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2007: 110–111). The scribes of AM 764 4° probably had other versions (in Latin or Old Norse) that were better suited for such a condensed version as the one we find in AM 764 4°. This could also be another example of Stjórn 3 circulating independently of Stjórn 1 in the last half of the fourteenth century. The parts from Judith and Daniel in this manuscript are translated and considerably reworked compared to the Vulgate, and they illustrate that translation of biblical material was possible and was done independently of Stjórn. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir compares the universal history presented in AM 764 4° with the scope of AM 226 fol, where the Stjórn texts are followed by Alexanders saga, Gyðinga saga and Rómverja saga (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2007: 109–110). AM 226 fol thus forms a world history from the creation to c. 44 AD. So around the middle of the fourteenth century, Stjórn 3 is used in contexts where its function as a source for world history is more prominent than its function as speculum regale.

Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir also draws a parallel between the contexts in which we find the Creation story in AM 764 4°, and in which we find the same story in AM 238 XIX fol, and that is the combination of the Creation and cosmology. She sees these two as reworkings of the biblical material that is different from what we find in Stjórn 1 (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2007: 111). And she makes a point out of the fact that in AM 764 4°’s version of the world history, the part covered in Stjórn 2 is skipped. She credits Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 32–4) with the best arguments for the high age of the Stjórn 2 translation. But she finds it noteworthy that the content of Exodus 19–Deuteronomy is absent from all manuscripts containing Stjórn text – except for the inserted quire in AM 226 fol – and it is also absent from AM 764 4°. She argues that this is well explained when the contents of this part are

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21 This fragment was used as a flyleaf for a manuscript (Thott 2099 4°) written in 1581 containing Icelandic law texts (Kálund 1900: 352–353).

22 This as it seems “decentralised” distribution of manuscripts with Stjórn 3 text does not necessarily mean that exemplars were available in these places in the medieval period, and it might be possible that manuscripts were dismembered and distributed as book-binding materials in the post-medieval period (cf. Pettersen 2013).

23 The other stories are Sturlaugs saga starfsana, “Um Samson”, Af þrímm kampánum, Af þrímm þjóðum i Danmark, four avintyur, Gibbons saga, a (later) text on how prayers to Sancta Dorothea will help you, Draumaf-Jóns saga and Afrómverska dårnamn. The manuscript was longer, but the next text is broken off in a lacuna after its first line (Kálund 1889–1894, vol. 1: 574–5).
taken into account and measured against what seems to be the purpose the various texts have had in their individual manuscripts. The original compilers of AM 226 fol had no problems with moving directly from Exodus 18 to Joshua, neither did the scribes of AM 764 4°. The subject matter of Exodus 19–Deuteronomy was not relevant in the context of medieval Icelandic universal histories. And in the light of this, she finds that a re-examination of the arguments for dating Stjórn 2 is needed (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2007: 112–115).

One final manuscript must be mentioned here, and that is AM 617 4°. This manuscript was written by Gísli Jónsson who was bishop at Skálholt 1558–1587. The manuscript was probably written c. 1560–1570, and the first 85 folios contain Stjórn 3 text: 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings followed by the story about Samson that corresponds to Judges 13–16 (Astås 2009: lii). The rest of the manuscript contains Gissur Einarsson’s (bishop at Skálholt 1540–1548) translation of Job, Sirach and Proverbs. This is a post-Reformation manuscript that illustrates that parts of the Bible were still possible and relevant units. The Samson story, which in this manuscript is placed outside of its chronological order as found in the Bible, can be seen as underlining the “independent” status of the individual parts of the Bible even as late as this.

**Stjórn 1**

In the prologue to Stjórn 1 we are told that what follows is a work done at the behest of king Hákon Magnússon, because he wanted something to entertain and educate those wise men (skynsomum monnum) that do not know Latin (Astås/Stjórn 2009: 4). This Hákon must be the one who reigned 1299–1319. The prologue states that it will begin where the scripture commences and with Genesis, but it does not say how far it will go. Compared to the Vulgate, the biblical text in Stjórn 1 is much expanded. The additions are taken from a wide range of learned sources. I agree with Astås (2009: xix–xx) who believes that Stjórn 1 cannot be an expansion of an older, and less expanded, translation of the Vulgate, but must be the result of a particular project of translation and adaptation.

No manuscript evidence survives to attest Stjórn 1 in Norway in the medieval period. Conclusions drawn from missing manuscript evidence cannot be decisive, but comparing the relatively rich (both in numbers and in the manuscripts’ physical appearances) transmission of Stjórn 1 in Iceland to the total lack of manuscripts in medieval Norway, the contrast is striking. This contrast is strengthened by Stjórn 3 fragments with a (possible) Norwegian medieval provenance: NRA 60 B and NRA 60 C. Both NRA 60 B and NRA 60 C are written by Icelandic hands and are dated to c. 1350 and c. 1300–50 respectively. That the manuscripts seem to have been written by Icelandic scribes does not go against the manuscripts having been produced for use in Norway. Stefán Karlsson (2000 [1979]) has argued convincingly that there must have been a market for manuscripts in Norway that was supplied by Icelandic scribes working either in Norway or in Iceland. In his list of surviving manuscripts that were or might have been in Norway in the medieval period, he includes also NRA 60 A, but with the reservation that the “soren norby” whose name is written in a margin, is the historical Søren Nordby who had Iceland as len and came to Iceland in 1515 (Stefán Karlsson 2000 [1979]: 196). In that case, the NRA 60 A probably only arrived in Norway with him. Two manuscripts with Stjórn 3 text is admittedly not much, but still more than none as with Stjórn 1 text. But as it seems, the prologue places the origin of Stjórn 1 at the Norwegian king’s hird. The work was put together in either Norway or Iceland, but for some reason it seems it was only disseminated in Iceland. Perhaps the translation and compilation were done in Iceland.

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24 The authenticity of the prologue is debated, but if authentic, it must have been written for Stjórn 1 specifically.
and the lack of dissemination in Norway is due to the death of the King Hákon V Magnússon in 1319, the last king of the Sverrir line, who had ordered the translation. The following slightly chaotic period of royal succession in mainland Scandinavia saw the royal court move away from Norway, first to Sweden and then alternately between the Scandinavian kingdoms. The relevance for an entertaining and educating text in Old Norse first at the Swedish court, later at the Danish, must have been less than for its original audience.

This connection to the royal court draws the attention for possible sources of literary inspiration to the French vernacular texts and literary traditions in the same period. The influences from French and Anglo-Norman literature on the Norwegian court during the reign of Hákon Hákonarson (reigned 1217–1263) are well known, with translations such as Tristrams saga and Strengleikar as prominent examples. Also during the reign of his son Magnús Hákonarson (reigned 1263–1280) and his grandsons Eiríkr Magnússon (reigned 1280–1299) and Hákon Magnússon the king from Stjórn 1’s prologue (reigned 1280/99–1319) the influences from French literary traditions continued with the Eufemiavisorona as one example. The translation and compilation of Stjórn 1 are done in the same vein as Guyiart Desmoulins’ Bible historiale, which is a mixture of Bible text and commentary in French. The Bible historiale is in a way a continuation of Petrus Comestor and his Historia scholastica. Comestor only gives paraphrases and commentaries, but Guyiart Desmoulins adds the biblical text to the commentary, most likely from the Bible du XIIIe siècle (Sneddon 1979 and McGerr 1983). Thirteenth-century France saw a translation of the Bible into French, known as “La bible française du XIIIe siècle” (XIIIe). This translation has glosses in a varying degree in the different parts, and Genesis has not surprisingly more commentary than other parts (Sneddon 1979: 132). A translation such as XIIIe may have inspired the translation of Stjórn 3, not least because the XIIIe was a translation that circulated in the French royal and courtly milieu. The comparison between Stjórn 1 and Guiyart’s Bible historiale has limits. The compiler of Stjórn 1 uses many more sources for his commentaries than does Guyiart, and the Bible historiale covers more of the Bible than does Stjórn 1. The main point of this comparison is the mixture of biblical text and commentaries in translation, and the well-known French literary influence on the Norwegian royal milieu.

The reasoning that Stjórn 1 is a new translation project and the comparison with Bible historiale that covers more of the Bible call for a discussion of why Stjórn 1 ends after Exodus 18. The question is whether this is an unfinished work or if it was meant to end here. Stjórn 1 is often said to end abruptly and in an illogical place, Storm (1886b: 252) is one example of this claim. One thing is that it ends in the middle of the biblical book Exodus. Another thing is the mention of the first three of the seven world ages as a structural setup in Stjórn 1, a structure that is not followed through since it ends as it is in the third age. The structural division is seen when the progression in the biblical history is paused after the age from Adam to the Flood by the sermon/expositio missa of Lent. Then after this pause, there is a meta-comment that now comes the second part of what King Hákon ordered, which sets the part of the part of the biblical history that covers the period from the Flood to Abraham. This second part/age is ended by another pause in the progression, this time a section of geographical material derived from Vincent of Beauvais. The third age of the world, from Abraham to David, is not ended within the part of the biblical history Stjórn 1 covers. This structuring element has been noted by e.g. Kirby (1986: 53 fn. 7) and Astás who adds the ecclesiastical year as another structural feature (2009 1: xix and 1987a: 249–250). Neither of these structuring principles is followed through, Astás says, but again he seems to have forgotten to treat Stjórn 1 as a unit of its own when he says: Men etter at tre verdensaldre er omtalt, får vi

25 Wollin (2015) has pointed to the courtly milieu in Norway and Sweden in connection with the Eufemiavisor, Stjórn (1 and 2) and the Pentateuch paraphrase. Both here and earlier (2001) he also argues a Dominican project behind the biblical paraphrases. I have left the possible Dominican influence or project out of my discussion here. I find it an interesting thought to follow up on, but nevertheless a very difficult task and one that I do not consider my discussion here dependent on.
ihuore mer om inndelingen av tidslopet (Astås 2009: xix, ‘But after the world ages have been mentioned, we do not hear more about the division of time.’) But this is only as expected since Stjörn 1 does not go beyond the third age of the world. Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 30–1) claims that “It must be counted unlikely that it was originally intended to stop there [i.e. Exodus 18], and more likely that the work was left unfinished, though for reasons we can only surmise.” He suggests that the death of King Hákon put an end to the project, and as from this he presents the thought that this is the reason why no Norwegian evidence of Stjörn 1 survives: The parts that were prepared when the king died travelled to Iceland, possibly together with the compiler himself, and were never finished in Norway.26

Svanhildur Öskarsdóttir also notes that Stjörn 1 sets out with references to the aetates mundi, and that this seems to be a structuring feature, but that references to the ages of the world stop after the second age (2007: 111), even though the contents of Stjörn 1 go into the third age but not beyond. But in her analysis of the universal history section of AM 764 4°, Svanhildur Öskarsdóttir (2000: 63–68) underlines the unique (for Icelandic sources) division of the aetates mundi into six where Moses is included as the one by whom the fourth age is introduced. In the Augustinian tradition the fourth age is otherwise introduced by David.27 The inclusion of Moses could perhaps be a reflex of a conflation of the six aetates with the tripartite division of history: before the Law, under the Law and under grace (ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia). Moses received the Ten Commandments, as well as the other laws given to the Israelites in the Sinai desert, and is thus strongly associated with the law. This tripartite division of history is also, as I will argue, present in the delimitation of Stjörn 1, and thus provides an argument for why we need not necessarily consider the ending of Stjörn 1 as abrupt and the project as unfinished. In my opinion it may well be seen as ending naturally with Exodus 18 because it is the last chapter before God speaks to Moses at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19 and Moses receives the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, introducing the next world age: sub lege. Stjörn 1 is a well-commented account of the world’s history ante legem.

Another argument for why Exodus 18 can be seen as an obvious endpoint for Stjörn 1 is that the rest of the Pentateuch – with the exception of the Ten Commandments and some entertaining and instructing narrative episodes, is mainly concerned with laws given to the Israelites from God through Moses when they live in the Sinai desert, and these laws must have been felt to be of less relevance for medieval Scandinavians. They lived in the age sub gratia, under other conditions than the specific ones in the Sinai desert, and these Hebrew laws (or rather regulations) had been replaced by Canon Law. The king – if we take the prologue to Stjörn 1 at its face value – would probably not be interested in commissioning a translation of a law that would partly go against the Law of the Realm or Canon Law.28

A relevant parallel to Stjörn 1 – and Stjörn 2 – is the Swedish Pentateuch paraphrase. It was composed most likely at the beginning of the fourteenth century Wollin (2001: 235 and 238), and it is preserved in two manuscripts: Copenhagen, Royal Library Cod. Thott 4 4° (c. 1430–1450) and Stockholm, Royal Library Cod. Holm. A 1 (1526). The Pentateuch paraphrase is, as the name indicates, a paraphrase of the first five books of the Bible. Just like Stjörn 1 it has added learned commentaries, but executed in a different way. Whereas the text in Stjörn 1 is a mix of biblical and extra-biblical material in a manner that makes it difficult to differentiate between the two in many places, the Pentateuch paraphrase has put the extra-

26 Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 30) seems to state that there is no mention of the world ages after the geographical description which ends on page 100 in Unger’s edition (1862), but the second age is “rounded up” on pages 102–103 (in Astås/Stjörn 2009: 152 and 155–156). All the world ages are also presented and compared to the six days of Creation and the ages of Man earlier in Stjörn 1 in connection with the explanation of why God rested on the seventh day (Astås/Stjörn 2009: 38–44).

27 The Augustinian scheme has Adam–Noah–Abraham–David–Babylon–Christ, whereas AM 764 4° has Adam–Noah–Abraham–Moses–David–Christ. This is the only instance of this division in Icelandic sources, but it – and other variants as well – is known from other medieval sources (Svanhildur Öskarsdóttir 2000: 66).

28 I am indebted to Professor Terje Stordalen for this note.
biblical material mainly before and after the biblical paraphrase itself. A comparison between Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 2 on one hand and the Pentateuch paraphrase on the other, like the one Wollin (2001) has made, reveals a similar approach to the material in the Old Norse and the Swedish versions. They both have much more text in the part covering Genesis—Exodus 18, compared to the Vulgate, and much less in the rest of the Pentateuch. It must be mentioned that in the Swedish text the paraphrase goes on uninterruptedly throughout the Pentateuch, and does not mark a distinction between two parts such as is very much the case with Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 2. But in Wollin’s study, he examines what happens before and after Exodus 18, and chose this place because this is where Stjórn 1 ends. And the difference is as striking in the Pentateuch paraphrase as it is in the Old Norse text. This is in my opinion hardly surprising, and Wollin (2001: esp. 252–258) sees it the same way. Genesis, and in particular the Hexaemeron which is one of the parts of the Bible that has attracted most learned commentary, there was much to draw from and much to say about this. Regarding the part of the Pentateuch which is Exodus 19–Deuteronomy, there is less to draw from, and in addition the contents of this part were less relevant for a medieval Scandinavian audience.

*Stjórn 2: very old or late medieval?*

So if Stjórn 3 was written as a *speculum regale* of sorts and Stjórn 1 is a heavily commented presentation of world history *ante legem*, what then about Stjórn 2? The Stjórn 2 is found in only one exemplar: on the quire inserted into AM 226 fol some 100 years after the main part of the manuscript was written. There is no other text witness to this work, and as discussed above, Stjórn 2 treats a part of the Pentateuch that was passed over in other contexts as well, or heavily abridged as in the Swedish Pentateuch paraphrase. As we have it preserved, the most straightforward conclusion must be that it was a translation done to fill the gap between Exodus 18 and Joshua, possibly made specifically to be inserted in AM 226 fol in the last half of the fifteenth century. This would be an indication that an idea of the Bible as a whole had become more prominent than earlier in the medieval period, when the Bible was seen and used more fragmentarily – as indeed is seen in the history of the Stjórn collection.

Still, a more complicated history for Stjórn 2 has been argued. Even though it is the youngest part of the Stjórn collection when it comes to its manuscript preservation, most scholars argue that it represents a very old translation. Astås (1989: 49) refers to Kirby and agrees that Stjórn 2 must be the remains of a very old translation, in Astås’ opinion by the end of the twelfth century or even earlier. Later Astås revised his views, due to the parts in Stjórn 2 that derive from *Historia scholastica*, and therefore indicated a somewhat younger date, but still as old as the thirteenth century (Astås 2009: xxii). Kirby (1986: 57–58) argues a dating to the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The arguments for such a high age are partly based on mistakes in AM 226 fol that seem to be the results of misreading of an exemplar with early palaeographic traits. Jakob Benediktsson (2004: 32–33) finds that the arguments based on such misreading are less convincing, but that the style and phraseology firmly place Stjórn 2 in the thirteenth century. This argumentation is also found among the others arguing for a high age, and narrows down to a comparison between Stjórn 2 and the Vulgate where Stjórn 2 is characterised by being a close translation, with some parts left out and very little added. This is seen as an older mode of translation. But this is based on an assumption that texts first are translated or composed in a condensed style and then later expanded on. In the case of Stjórn 2 this “manner of translation” could rather be a result of the contents of the text translated: The close, not glossed, translation could be a result of there not being so many (relevant) comments in the tradition to expand the translation with. The abridged text compared to the Vulgate could likewise be the result of the translator having focused on the
parts relevant for his audience. And indeed it is the most narrative parts relating things that happened during the forty years the Israelites wandered about in the Sinai desert that have been translated and included in Stjórn 2. Astás finds that the person behind Stjórn 2 has omitted contents he found uninteresting and irrelevant for his audience, and excluded sections concerning laws and sections which describe relations that are specific for the Israelites (Astás 1989: 56–57). Storm (1886b: 253) seems to believe Stjórn 2 was written to fill the gap between Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 3. It is not the remains of an older Stjórn translation. He dates the quire to the early fourteenth century, earlier than the now accepted dating, but argues that there is little foundation for claiming a higher age than the manuscript allows for, the Icelandic language could be this free from foreign influences as late as the middle or the end of the fourteenth century, so he believes one can date the translation/redaction to this period.29

The different approach to the biblical material in Stjórn 1 and Stjórn 2 is paralleled in the corresponding parts of the Swedish Pentateuch paraphrase as mentioned above. This is not to suggest a direct influence from one to the other, but to emphasise that the different approaches to the two parts of the Pentateuch most likely are the result of the contents and the relevance they had for their (late) medieval audiences. The different parts of the Bible have also attracted varying amounts of commentary, and this is also reflected in the Stjórn collection as such, as well as the Pentateuch paraphrase.

Another relevant parallel is the Old Danish Bible which is more or less contemporary with the expanded AM 226 fol. The Old Danish text begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Kings 23:18. This is approximately where Stjórn 3 ends, but it also covers the rest of 2 Kings until 2 Kings 25:30. The Old Danish text is found in only one manuscript, Copenhagen, Royal Library Cod. Thott. 8 2vo (c. end of the fifteenth century), and it has a lacuna of at least four folios at the beginning (Haastrup 1999: 175–177). The translation is very faithful to the Vulgate with practically no additions; actually the manner of translation is such that it is almost impossible to read without also having the Latin text at hand, and it is possible that this text should be considered a “complete gloss” rather than a translation of the biblical text (see Haastrup 1999). So unlike the Old Norse and Swedish translations, no differentiation is made with respect to the importance or relevance of the biblical text for a Scandinavian audience. This could be a reflection of a changing view of the biblical text towards a more unified and set text, more like our modern view. As we have it, however, it is not a translation of the complete Vulgate. Haastrup sees the translation as an unfinished project and the ending as abrupt (1999: 173 and 177). This is only the part from Creation until the fall of Jerusalem which is the same part that Stjórn 1, 2 and 3 together consist of. So if one applies the world ages as a structuring pattern also for this translation, it presents the world’s history as rendered in the Bible from Creation until the end of the fourth age – whereas Stjórn 3 and also 2 Kings actually go on a bit into the fifth.

I believe that adding Stjórn 2 to AM 226 fol is not so much a result of a wish to complete the world history account the manuscript presents as it is the result of a late medieval tendency towards a new idea of the Bible as a more fixed text, one that from our point of view points towards (a modern idea of) the Reformation and of printed vernacular complete Bibles. If my hypothesis about the insertion of Stjórn 2 in the manuscript AM 226 fol is valid, AM 226 fol – after this insertion – can be comparable to a late medieval trend of vernacular bibles, as exemplified by German bibles both printed and in manuscript from the fifteenth century and even earlier (cf. Gow 2009, French bibles from the early thirteenth century onwards (cf. Sneddon 1979 and McGerr 1983), and also the late fourteenth century Wycliffite English translations (Dove 2007).  

29 "Men er dette saa [that it is made to fill the gap between the biblical commentary (Stjórn 1) and the Bible translation (Stjórn 3), and it is an Icelandic translation] har vi ingen Grund til at hævde en stort højere Alder end Haandskriftet tilsiger: det islandske Sprog kunde endu i Midten eller Slutningen af 14de Aarhundrede skrives saa rent for fremmede Tilsætninger i Ordførrad og Tankegang, at Bearbeidelsen af de senere Mosebøger kan henføres til denne Tid" (Storm 1886b: 253).
Three stages, three functions

In her article *Heroes or Holy People? The Context of Old Norse Bible Translations* (2007: 107), Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir says that “there is more to Stjórn than the Stjòrn printed by Unger”, and also that “there is certainly more to Old Norse bible translation than Stjórn”. She calls for a move away from an evolutionistic view on the transmission of “the Old Norse Bible”, which is reflected in the scholarly literature which argues that the oldest translations were condensed versions close to the Vulgate text, which were then gradually expanded on. Likewise, she stresses the need to look beyond the impression that Unger’s edition (1862) has imposed on us of Stjórn as a continuous translation of Genesis through to 2 Kings. The same impression can also be the result of Astås’ edition (2009), since they both print texts resulting from different processes of translation and adaptation, done at various times, in various milieus and most likely also for various reasons, and present them under one title and in a continuous order that is not found in any medieval manuscript. However, this is the problem of editions in general, but a problem that it is possible to get around and still appreciate the value of the editions. What one may see when not led on by the “coherent” text in an edition – in our case here also by the reference text of the Vulgate and its order – is how the conception of the Bible itself was different from what it is now, when at least in the Protestant or Lutheran part of the world we see the Bible as one (main) text from Genesis to Revelations, translated into our vernacular languages as closely to the original text as possible and with the biblical text presented “alone”, without learned exposition.

Moreover, when Stjórn is seen without the filter of the editions, we see biblical translation adapted to specific functions and cultural contexts that illustrate the many ways the Bible and its contents were used in the medieval period. Seen this way, the various parts of Stjórn are not much different from all the other Old Norse bible translation that we find intertwined with and quoted in other texts, such as we find it in *Konungs skuggsjá* as well as in e.g. Old Norse sermons, in sagas about the apostles and as Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2000, 2007) points out, in universal histories such as AM 764 4°.30

With this in mind, I will present a third statement about Stjórn: There is more to Stjórn than biblical translation. When the Latin Vulgate – or parts of it – was translated into a vernacular, it became something other than Scripture. The church did not generally prohibit translations of the Bible, and did not oppose lay reading of the Bible in either Latin or the vernacular. Those prohibitions that were issued are directed at translations associated with specific cultural contexts where the danger of heresy was imminent – or already proven (e.g. Sneddon 1979: 139–140; McGerr 1983: 215). If translations were accompanied by translations of orthodox commentaries or did not give reason for heretical concerns, vernacular Bible text did not pose a threat. Scripture – in Latin – was the basis for learned and theological interpretation and exposition, and the Latin version was the text for the readings from Scripture in the churches. When translated it became interpretation. These interpretations, which often were accompanied by translations of learned exposition, could be used to comment on and aid the understanding of most aspects of human life. This opens up for an understanding of the impact and importance the Bible and its contents had in the medieval period. The translation and adaptation of Stjórn 3 can be seen in connection with the discourse on kingship in the contemporary *Konungs skuggsjá* and the relevance this must have had at the king’s court itself, among the nobility, and within the church around the middle of the thirteenth century in Norway. Stjórn 3 may be seen as a speculum regale more

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30 See Kirby (1976) for a good overview of biblical quotations in Old Norse literature.
than a translation of the Bible as such. It was an edifying text for the aristocracy and the royal administration on how to establish a well-functioning state, and a discussion of good and bad kings and the consequences this has for the realm. Also, the emphasis in this part of the Bible, and then also in Stjórn 3, is on how a well-functioning state must be ruled in compliance with God’s will.

My main aim with this article has been to argue by comparison to Konungs skuggsjá the probability that Stjórn 3 functioned as a speculum regale when it was composed in the thirteenth century. In extension a “defragmenting” of the Stjórn collection would shed light on the medieval views on and use of the Bible. Seeing the various parts of Stjórn in their chronological and cultural contexts, as well as a consideration of their differing adaptation strategies, has shown that not only can biblical texts have various functions: Joshua–2 Kings as speculum regale, Genesis–Exodus 18 as world history ante legem and as combined education and entertainment. Not only do we see this variation in function, but also how a part of the Bible may change function when the cultural context has changed: Around the middle of the fourteenth century, it seems that Stjórn 3 becomes less of a speculum regale, and more a part of the world history. Parts of the bible can also have less relevance in specific cultural contexts, such as Exodus 19–Deuteronomy, which seems to have been left out or heavily condensed until it was included seemingly because it is part of the Vulgate. In this we can see an indication of a changing view of the Bible from a medieval and towards a more modern view.