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## THE PRINTED BOOK IN LITHUANIA AND ICELAND A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The history of the book is an international history. Not only is the printed book older than the national state, the printed book has never been bound to a certain geographical region, texts of books are translated into other languages, printing types and printing presses are sold from one country to another, in earlier times printers themselves travelled across borders, books are being printed in one country in a foreign language to be marketed in another and books printed for a certain market are bought by foreigners and transported abroad. However, most book-historians study their topic from the national point of view, instead of looking at the history of the book as an international field of study.

It ought to be clear that the history of the book is an excellent field for comparative studies. Not only can it be difficult to explain why things happened at a given time. Sometimes it is of great importance to discover things that ought to have happened but of some reasons did not. When the empirical material doesn't answer the researcher's question, he must seek the answer somewhere else.

In many – and perhaps most – cases, comparative studies deal with things that have something in common. In a small comparative study of German versus French history of the book professor Robert Darnton points out that it might have been better to compare German book history with the Italian one, and the French with the English because of the similarities between these two sets of countries<sup>1</sup>. But why compare two similar countries? Shouldn't one compare two countries that have as little in common if one really wants to make a comparative study?

As far as history of the past 500 years goes, Iceland and Lithuania do not have much in common. On the contrary, the differences between Iceland and

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<sup>1</sup> Darnton R. *Histoire de livre* // Publishing history. Vol. 22 (1987), p. 33–41.

Lithuania are in many ways huge. One cannot find many parallels in the history of Lithuania and Iceland. As an island far away in the middle of the Atlantic, surrounded by the great ocean, Iceland has no neighbours. Lithuania's borders, on the other hand, have changed often during the past centuries. All of Lithuania's neighbours have more or less under certain periods not only been neighbours, they have moved in, and sometimes not only wanted to live among Lithuanians but have wanted to be the master in the house as well. The isolation of Iceland preserved the Icelandic culture and the language, when Lithuanians were influenced by foreign cultural streams and languages. The features of the Lithuanian culture are determined by the fact of the existence of two parts of Lithuania: Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor. Lithuania Major was a Catholic country that had strong relations with Poland and was influenced by it. Lithuania Minor was a part of Prussia and German culture dominated in it. This influenced the repertoire, chronology and dissemination of the Lithuanian book.

It sure must be of the greatest interest to compare the Icelandic and the Lithuanian history of the book! In this comparative study I shall first and foremost focus upon the first editions of printed books within the following categories:

- First book printed in the country
- First book printed in the native language
- First printing of the Bible
- First law book
- First printed Sagas
- First secular book in the vernacular by a contemporary author
- First ABC-book
- First popular-literature
- First periodical/magazine
- First journal/newspaper

As professor Darnton has pointed out, the history of the printed book can be studied as a communication circuit<sup>2</sup>. From being written by some author, every book passes through the printing and publishing stage, to be passed on to

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<sup>2</sup> *Darnton Robert*. What is the History of Books? // *Dædalus*. Vol. 111, no. 3 (1982), p. 65–83.

distributors and booksellers, for in the end reach the buyer and the reader, who directly or indirectly will influence the author to write more books of the same kind or perhaps some books totally different. In this perspective the most important books are those that were read by the many. I will, however, focus only upon what was printed and published. It will make no difference in this study whether the books were spread out and read by many people, or if they were a flop that nobody was bothered about.

As my knowledge of the Lithuanian book history is most limited, and my ability to read Lithuanian is as yet none, I would like to thank dr. Ausra Navickienė at the Department of Book Research, Faculty of Communication, University of Vilnius, for the great support and help she has given me. Without her this article would not exist. I shall mostly concentrate on the Icelandic book history. As this article is primarily meant for people who are familiar with the outlines of the Lithuanian book history, I hope that it will be of interest.

### **First book printed in the country**

The first Lithuanian printing house was founded in Vilnius in 1522 by Francisc Skorina and the first book printed in Lithuania appeared in 1522 as well. This book (*A Small Travel Book*) was written in Old Slavonic language<sup>3</sup>.

In Iceland the first printing press was established around 1530 at the bishop's seat Hólar in northern Iceland by the last catholic bishop, Jon Arason. As the case of Gutenberg and the invention of printing, there are some 'black holes' in the beginning of history of printing in Iceland because of very sparse documentation on this event. It is, however, generally believed that the printer, Matthiasson of Swedish origin, printed the first book, the catholic *Breviarium Holense* in Latin in quarto 1534, only twelve years after Skorina printed the first book in Vilnius. Being the only known book printed in Iceland in catholic times there existed at least 17 copies of the *Breviarium Holense*, when the Reformation took place in 1550. In the years to come they disappeared, and the last complete copy one knows of was destroyed in the great fire of Copenhagen 1728. Today the only known fragments of the Bre-

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<sup>3</sup> *Vladimirovas L. Knygos istorija*. Vilnius, 1979. P. 309–327; *Vladimirovas L. Pranciškus Skorina* : Pirmasis Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės spaustuvininkas. Vilnius, 1992. 80 p.

viarium Holense are two sheets, being preserved in the Royal Library in Stockholm, Sweden<sup>4</sup>.

### First book printed in the native language

In 1547 the first book in Lithuanian, Martynus Mosvidius (lith. Martynas Mažvydas) Catechismvs, was printed in lutheran Koenigsberg<sup>5</sup>, the book which 450th anniversary is celebrated today.

In Iceland, when protestant reformists arranged for the translation and publication of Hid Nyja Testamenti (The New Testament), they of obvious reasons didn't have access to the printing press of the catholic bishop Arason at Holar. The reformists had to have the book printed in abroad. Therefore it was printed in Roskilde, Denmark, in the year 1540, seven years prior to Mažvydas' Catechismvs, but Denmark had become lutherian in 1535. The Icelandic New Testament of 1540 is a small octavo volume of some 500 pages. It is the first book printed in Icelandic, and three complete copies have survived to the present, all being kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. The National Library in Reykjavik, Iceland, has some fragmental copies, the same missing pages lacking in all of them.

Although this was a small book, there can be no doubt that this printed edition of the New Testament in Icelandic played a big role in reformation camp, as did the several other printed books that the Icelandic reformists had got printed abroad in the next few years, both in Denmark and in Germany.

### First printing of the Bible

In Lithuania a lutheran version of the whole Bible was for the first time printed in Lithuanian in the year 1735. The whole Bible was translated into Lithuanian language and prepared for publishing by Jonas Bretkūnas in 1590,

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<sup>4</sup> *Collijn I. Två blad // Nordisk Tidskrift för Bok-och Biblioteksväsen. Vol. 1 (1914), p. 11-16.*

<sup>5</sup> *Mažvydas Martynas. Katekizmas ir kiti raštai = Catechismus und andere Schriften. Vilnius : Baltos lankos, 1993.*

however, it was not published because of financial difficulties. Fragments of the Lithuanian Bible were published from the end of sixteenth century. The first fragment was published by Baltramiejus Vilentas in 1579 with the title *Euangelijos bei epistolos*. The edition of David's psalms had appeared in 1625 (editor Johann Rhesa). The translation of the New Testament by Samuel Bitner was published in 1701<sup>6</sup>.

In Iceland, as printing started again after the reformation in 1550, only three books are known to have been published the next 25 years. In these years, however, a handful of books in Icelandic were printed abroad, in Denmark and Germany.

In 1570 Gudbrandur Thorlaksson became bishop at Holar. During his years in office the printing press had its golden age with approximately 100 published titles in the period 1575–1627. The printer most of these years was Jonsen, son of the first printer Matthiasson.

The most important single book printed these years was *Biblia*, the Bible 1584, – 151 year prior to the first Lithuanian Bible – over 1200 pages in folio format, with Luther's prologue. The number of copies was 500, and more than 30 are today known to have survived to the present time. This is also the oldest Icelandic book that can be found in several private collections in Iceland, most of the surviving copies belong, however, to the National Library and other official libraries in Iceland as well as abroad.

Besides being the biggest book printed in Iceland at the time, it was the first book with printed illustrations, the 29 woodcuts being of German origin. Without doubt the Bible played a major role in establishing the Lutheran church in Iceland.

The second printing of the Bible in Icelandic took place in 1644 at Holar, being a somewhat poorer reprint in folio of the 1584 edition, containing only 4 woodcuts. The third printing of the Bible was the 1728 Holar folio edition, which was a totally new translation that didn't turn out to be successful, so a new edition, a reprint of the 1644 edition's text was published in Copenhagen 1747 in quarto.

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<sup>6</sup> Kaunas D. Mažosios Lietuvos knyga : lietuviškos knygos raida 1547–1940. Vilnius : Baltos lankos, 1996. P. 146–156.

## First law book

Besides printed books of religious nature there was one secular book that everybody needed. This was the law book.

The first Code of Law in Lithuania was the Statute of Lithuania that was valid from 1529 and spread in the form of manuscripts for 50 years until it was published in 1588. It was written in Old Slavonic language<sup>7</sup>. The first printed books on law (collections of legal acts of Prussian government) had appeared at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Lithuania Minor<sup>8</sup>.

The Icelandic law book Jonsbok (John's book) had been passed at the Icelandic parliament Althingi at Thingvellir 1280. It existed in various handwritten copies around the country. The general problem with handwritten law books was that they were not always exactly correct. So after bishop Gudbrandur Thorlaksson took office at Holar, one of the first books to be printed was the Jonsbok, published 1578 in oktavo. Not only was it the first secular book printed in Iceland, it was the first book to be printed with title page in black and red ink.

A revised edition of the Jonsbok came 1580, some pages being reprinted while others were incorporated from the 1578 edition. A third completely reprinted edition of the lawbook was published without an impressum some years later.

## First printed Sagas

Iceland is quite unique when it comes to the inheritance of the national literature. The Sagas, written mostly in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, are not only the main source of our knowledge of the Icelandic history, they also tell us more of the Scandinavian history than anything other. Thanks to the Sagas, we now know many details of the Swedish, the Danish and the Norwegian history from the period 1000 years ago.

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<sup>7</sup> Pirmasis Lietuvos Statutas: paleografinė ir tekstologinė nuorašų analizė / S. Lazutka, E. Gudavičius. Vilnius, 1983. T. 1, d. 1, p. 11, 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Kaunas D.* Mažosios Lietuvos knyga : lietuviškos knygos raida 1547–1940. P. 118–132.

The interest of collecting the Icelandic sagas began in the seventeenth century, not in Iceland but in Sweden and Denmark. In these years these monarchies were increasing their territories around the Baltic sea and on the European mainland. To convince themselves and others they needed something that would confirm their historical greatness. The Sagas of the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish kings were all of a sudden requested and there occurred a rush after these old manuscripts in Iceland. Even new handwritten copies were made, and many of these sold to foreign collectors who took them abroad. However, there was no effort made to print the Sagas in Iceland. The first Saga to be printed was the Gautreks saga and the Hrolfs saga Gautrekssonar, both printed in one volume in Uppsala, Sweden, 1664.

During the years 1685–97 the Icelandic printwork was moved to the southern bishopsite at Skalholt. In these 13 years old Icelandic literature was for the first time printed in Iceland. In the year 1688 the Íslendingabok (Book of Icelanders), Landnamabok (Book of the Settlements), Kristnisaga (Book of Christianity in Iceland) and Groenlandia (Book of Greenland) were printed. The following year the first volume of the Olafs saga Tryggvasonar (The Saga of the Norse king Olaf Tryggvason) was printed and the second volume in 1890.

It wasn't until the year 1756 the first Family-sagas were printed in Iceland. Two volumes, one in quarto, the other in octavo, were published at Holar, in 1000 copies each, containing some of the shorter Sagas. Unfortunately, neither one of these publications sold successfully, mostly because of the extremely poor circumstances in the country.

### **First secular book in the vernacular by a contemporary author**

In Iceland a new printwork was established in the year 1773 at the Hrapsey-island on the westcoast of Iceland. It was the first printingpress in Iceland not to be under the bishops. The press was free to print whatever literature they wanted to publish with the exception of religious books that was preserved for the bishop's printing press.

During the next two decades many new and interesting books were printed at Hrapsey. Among them there were practical handbooks for farmers, there were Sagas, there was popular literature as the rhymes, there was history, the-

re was poetry, both contemporary originals and translations from foreign languages, and there was a monthly newsletter.

The first printed collection of poems by a contemporary poet was the Nokkur liodmaeli (Some poems) 1783 by rev. Thorlaksson, who at the time had been suspended from his priesthood for fathering two illegitimate children. In 1774 Thorlaksson had even published some of his original poems together with his translations of the Norse Tullins kvaedi (Tullin's poems).

In the years and decennia to come, Icelandic contemporary authors published their poetry mostly in annually published periodicals and it was first after the author's death that a collection of their poetry was printed in a separate publication. Around the middle of the 19th century this began to change, and in 1850 the first Icelandic novel since the Sagas, Piltur og stulka (A Boy and a Girl) by Jon Thoroddsen, was published in Copenhagen.

The first original secular work published in Lithuanian language were the poems by Strazdas Giesmies swietiszkas ir szwintas (Secular and saint songs). They were printed in Vilnius in 1814. They had appeared a hundred years later than the first translation of the secular work into Lithuanian language – The Tales of Esop (translated by Johann Schultz in 1706)<sup>9</sup>.

### First ABC-book

The knowledge of reading ought to be of interest for everyone connected with book production. However, reading was not common – and was not meant to be common – until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Prior to that there were few persons that read for the illiterate masses. Reading the Bible for example was not something the common people should do. It was the priest who was supposed to read the Bible and explain the paradoxes to the public.

In the eighteenth century more people began to learn to read. Why this happened is a big question. The answer is most likely to be both complicated and include different factors. One of these might be the increasing book production that demanded more readers so more books could be sold. The question is, however, what came first: the egg or the hen? Whatever the answer is,

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<sup>9</sup> Lietuviškoji knyga: istorijos metmenys / A. Glosienė, D. Kaunas, A. Navickienė, V. Stonienė. Vilnius, 1996. P. 91





*Hellman*

The Icelandic Bible in folio, printed 1584 at Holar



Landnama. The Book of the Settlements, printed 1688 at Skalholt

N O C K U R

# Liodmaeli,

Sem það

Heidurlega og Velgæfada

Skald

## Son Þorláksson

Æveded þesur;

Og nú i eitt eru samantekn, til Brú-  
kunar og Stóðleiks, þeim  
slíkt gyrnast.

Utgefen eftir Sanns eigen Hand-  
ar-Rite.

✻ ✻

Seist Dinnbunded 2 Sk. Arked.

✻ ✻

Prentub ad Hrappsey, f. þvi

Konungl. privilegerada Bókpryðkerie,

Alf Gudmunde Söns Synes.

1783.

*Seim*

**NY**  
**FELAGSRIT,**

GEFIN ÚT

AF

**NOKKRUM ÍSLENDINGUM.**

**Fyrsta ár.**

FORSTÖÐUNEFND:

BJARNI SÍVERTSEN, JÓN HJALTALÍN, JÓN SIGURÐSSON,  
ODDGEIRR STEPHENSEN, ÓLAFUR PÁLSSON.

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**Kostar 56 skildinga.**

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**KAUPMANNAHÖFN, 1841.**

Í PRENTSMÍÐJU S. L. MÖLLERS.

it is a fact that this was the century when the process of changing the reading habits started. From when the few read aloud for the many, now the many started reading in silence for themselves<sup>10</sup>. This is the dawn of the ABC-books.

The first ABC book in Lithuanian language (*Skaitytines* – Readings) was published in Lithuania Minor in 1708. In Lithuania Major a similar teaching aid had appeared only in 1759–1761<sup>11</sup>. However, the very first educational book in Lithuanian language in fact is the *Catechismus*.. by Martynas Mažvydas as it included an independent part for reading teaching.

The first Icelandic ABC-book was published at the Hrappsey printworks. Under the title *Litid ungt stoefunar barn* (Small young spelling child) by rev. Palsson this small octavo volume was printed 1782, without any illustrations. Palsson, who worked on his ABC-book for more than ten years, was a devoted teacher of children. Statistics from Palson's parish in Western Iceland show that in the year 1745, eight years before Palsson came to office, 52.5% of the people were literate, in the year 1758, when Palsson had served five years, the literacy had increased to 62.5%.

Among other works of Palsson it may be of special interest for bookhistorians to mention that he in 1756 wrote the first history of the book in Iceland, *Typographia Islandica*, in Latin, covering more than 200 years from the beginning 1530. Although used by other Icelandic bookhistorians in their studies, Palssons book history has for some reasons not yet been published as a whole, neither in the original Latin language nor in an Icelandic translation.

## First popular-literature

For centuries a type of popular-literature called *rimur* was favoured by many Icelanders. The rimur is rhymed, epic poetry based upon European stories as e. g. Tristram and Isolde. The rhymes were full of love and passion, wars and battles. The church and the authorities disliked the people's interest in the rhymes and tried to fight them by not printing the rhymes. When the rhymes

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<sup>10</sup> Chartier R. Ist eine Geschichte des Lesens möglich? // Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik. Vol. 57/58 (1985), S. 250–273; Darnton R. First Steps toward a History of Reading // Australian Journal of French Studies. Vol. 23, no. 1 (1986), p. 5–30.

<sup>11</sup> Kaunas D. Mažosios Lietuvos knyga : lietuviškos knygos raida 1547–1940. P. 143, 144.

instead were spread around in handwritten copies, the church tried to compete with the rhymes by getting poets to write Christian rhymes, that is rhymes based upon stories from the Bible. The Ny visnabok (The New Book of Songs) was printed at Holar in 1612, but it had no success.

During the period of the private printing press at Hrappsey original rhymes were for the first time printed in Iceland. They became very popular, but as the printing at Hrappsey ended, there were no rhymes printed in Iceland until after mid 19th century. All these years the rhymes, however, spread around the country in handwritten copies.

The first popular book in Lithuania was a translation of novel Genovaitė by Christoph von Schmid. The first edition had appeared in Tilsit in 1838. Later the repeated editions were published in both parts of Lithuania many times<sup>12</sup>.

### First periodical/magazine

The first periodical published in Lithuanian language may be considered Nusidawimai Dievo karalysteje (The events in God's Kingdom) that was published in 1823 in Lithuania Minor<sup>13</sup>. One of the first periodicals in Lithuania Major is considered to be Ausra (Dawn) published in 1883–1886. This publication had a special significance for the national renaissance of Lithuania and became a symbol of it. The periodicals in foreign languages were published in Vilnius from the eighteenth century.

The earliest periodical publication printed in Iceland is Althingibokin, the protocol of the parliament Althingi, printed in Skalholt 1696 and 1697. Three quarters of a century passed until the next periodical was published. It was the monthly newsletter Islandske Maanedstidender (Icelandic Monthly News) 1773–76, printed in the Danish language in Hrappsey and the last year in Copenhagen. The first modern Icelandic periodical, however, was the Rit thess islenska laerdomslistafelags (Papers of the Icelandic Learned Society), published in Copenhagen 1781–98, inspired by the enlightenment.

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<sup>12</sup> Kaunas D. Mažosios Lietuvos knyga : lietuviškos knygos raida 1547–1940. P. 356–375.

<sup>13</sup> Kaunas D. Lietuvių periodikos pirmtakas. Vilnius, 1991. 66 p.

During the nineteenth century many Icelandic periodicals were begun. Most of these were printed in Denmark. Some only lasted few years. This was the case with Fjoelmir (a male name from the Northern mythology) 1835–47, an annual which published some of the finest Icelandic patriotic poetry at the dawn of the fight for independence from Denmark. Another annual was Ny felagsrit (The New Papers of the Society, the name refers to the already mentioned Rit thess islenska laerdomslistafelags (Papers of the Icelandic Learned Society) 1781–98 that in the nineteenth century were nicknamed Felagsritin goemlu (The Old Papers of the Society) 1841–73. Even though the Ny felagsrit was published by an editorial board it was first and foremost the voice of Jon Sigurdsson, the leader of the campaign for the independence of Iceland. A third annual printed in Denmark in the nineteenth century was Skirnir (a male name from the Northern mythology) which started 1827 by The Icelandic Literature Society, containing overviews of foreign news.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century more and more periodicals were printed in Iceland. In the last quarter of the century, when the establishing of printworks was given free 1886, many new printing houses were started, all around the country. This meant more printed books, periodicals and newspapers.

Most of the periodicals were annuals, because distribution in Iceland was very hard as transportation on land was based upon horses, many roads passed over high mountains, and down in the valleys rivers and floods had not been bridged.

In 1880 the literature periodical Timarit Hins islenska bokmenntafelags (The Magazin of the Icelandic Literature Society) was begun in Reykjavik, coming out with 4 issues every year. This was the first modern magazine to survive, published several times per year, without being some sort of a news-bulletin. After 25 years, the Timarit in 1905 merged with Skirnir, and under the name of Skirnir, it at present published twice a year, being far the oldest Icelandic periodical, now coming out with the 171st year in 1997.

It may be worth notifying that there are only three years between the beginning of Timarit Hins islenska bokmenntafelags in 1880 and of Auszra in 1883.

## First journal/newspaper

The first Lithuanian newspaper was *Lietuvininkų prietelis* (The Friend of Lithuanians) published in Klaipėda in 1849<sup>14</sup>.

In Iceland the above mentioned monthly newsletter *Íslandske Maanedstíðender* 1773–76, printed in Hrappsey and Copenhagen, is the first newspaper covering Icelandic news. Followed by three monthly newsletters, *Klausturposturinn* (The Monastery Post) 1818–27, *Sunnanposturinn* (The Southern Post) 1835–36 and 1838, and *Reykjavíkursturinn* (The Reykjavík Post) 1846–49, the first modern newspaper however started in november 1848. It was *Thjóðdólfur* (a male name, actually meaning the people's wolf), published twice a month and became a very important tool in the Icelandic struggle for independence from the Danish. Thjóðdólfur was challenged by several newspapers in the coming years but none of them were successful until *Ísafold* (a poetic name for Iceland) was begun in 1874. Thjóðdólfur lasted until 1920 while Ísafold after being merged several times with other newspapers lived into the 1960-ies.

First experiment with a daily newspaper was made in 1897 with the *Dagskra* (Agenda) but failed. The first successful daily started as *Viðir* (Pointer) in 1910. It merged with *Dagbladið* (The Daily News) in 1981 and became *Dagbladið – Viðir* and lives today as the *DV* being Iceland's only after-noon daily newspaper. The *Morgunblaðið* (The Morning Newspaper) started in 1913 and is now Iceland's biggest newspaper, read by around 90% of Icelanders. Both the DV and Morgunblaðið are owned by companies and support liberal conservative politics. The *Alþýðublaðið* (The People's Newspaper) was founded in 1919 by the Icelandic Socialdemocratic Party and supports it's politics. The Alþýðublaðið had it's golden age period in the 1930-ies when it became the country's biggest and most modern newspaper. In the latest decades the paper, however, has declined greatly and owes it's existence today to the financial support from state funds.

The thirties not only saw the Alþýðublaðið's golden period, two other newspapers were started as well. In 1933 the *Nýja dagbladið* (The New Daily) was begun, owned by the political Center party with mutual support. The Nýja dagbladið merged in 1938 with the weekly *Tíminn* (The Time), that had been the

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<sup>14</sup> Kaunas D. Pirmasis lietuvių laikraštis // Žurnalisto žinyas. Kaunas, 1992. P. 69–76.



main voice of the Center party since the Timinn started in 1917, and is since then published as the daily Timinn. In 1936 the Thodviljinn (The People's will), the daily newspaper supported by the Icelandic Communist Party, was begun, based on the former Verkalydsbladid (The Worker's newspaper) that started 1930. During the World War II, the Thjodviljinn was forbidden from spring 1941 to spring 1942 by the foreing forces that had occupied Iceland in 1940. During that period the Communist party, which by now had changed it's name to The Socialist Parti, published the daily Nytt dagblad (A New Daily). When the Western countries became allies with the Soviet Union during the War, the ban on the Thjodviljinn was lifted and it started again and lived until 1993 when it suffered from bancruptcy and ceased.

## Conclusions

In spite of the differences between Lithuania and Iceland, there are some obvious similaries in the history of the book that can easily be seen. I shall not draw any deeper conclusions from the overview above. I will only point out some few things.

It is quite interesting to notify that the first printing houses in Lithuania and in Iceland are established almost simultaneously. Vilnius' 1522 would normally be compared with Riga's 1588, Tartu's (Dorpat) 1632, Tallin's 1634 and Turku's (Abo) 1642. In the same manner Iceland's 1534 would normally be compared with Denmark's 1882, Sweden's 1883 and Norway's 1643. But, surprisingly, it is Lithuania and Iceland that are closest in time. This raises the question: what causes the spread of printing? A quick answer according to Lithuania and Iceland might be that it is the campaign against the lutherian reformation. But, if so, why weren't there established printing houses in Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Norway untill around 100 years later? I shall leave that question to the reader.

We can see other similarities as well as differences. The technical development of the printing houses in the two countries is an interesting thing to look at. In Iceland printers in the mid 19th century were practically printing in the same way as in the 16th century. Woodcuts entered Iceland in the 1580-ies, the copperplates on the other hand never did. Neither did the lithographic period in the 19th century reach Iceland.

I am in no doubt that by working together we can receive a new understanding and a new knowledge on the processes behind the history of the book. I hope that Icelandic and Lithuanian book historians in the near future will be able to cooperate and exchange experiences and knowledge. Together we can do things that we cannot even think of as individuals.

STEINGRÍMUR JÓNSSON  
SPAUSDINTA KNYGA LIETUVOJE IR ISLANDIJOJE.  
PALYGINAMOJI STUDIJA

Santrauka

Knygos istorija yra tarptautinė istorija. Knygos gyvavimas visuomenėje, jos kūrimo, gamybos, platinimo bei panaudojimo procesai peržengia atskirų valstybių, tautų istorijos ribas. Nors iki šiolei knygos istorikų tyrimų centre tebėra nacionalinės knygos problematika, palyginamosios studijos padeda išplėsti tyrinėjimus.

Dažniausiai yra lyginami panašūs dalykai, tačiau egzistuoja ir visai skirtingų objektų palyginimo galimybė. Tokie skirtingi objektai yra Islandija ir Lietuva, taip pat Islandijos ir Lietuvos spausdinta knyga.

Aptariant islandų ir lietuvių spausdintas knygas, lyginami tokios tematikos ir tipologijos spaudiniai: pirmoji šalyje išspausdinta knyga, pirmoji liaudies kalba išspausdinta knyga, pirmasis Biblijos leidimas, pirmoji teisės tematikos knyga, pirmoji spausdinta saga, pirmoji gimtąja kalba parašyta originali grožinės literatūros knyga, pirmasis elementorius, pirmoji masinė knyga, pirmasis periodinis leidinys ir pirmasis laikraštis. Faktografijos požiūriu straipsnyje dominuoja islandų knygos istorijos medžiaga.

Pirmosios spausdintos knygos Lietuvoje ir Islandijoje pasirodė panašiu laiku: Vilniuje apie 1522 metus, o šiaurės Islandijos mieste Holar 1534 m. Taip pat mažai skiriasi ir pirmųjų knygų liaudies kalba išspausdinimo datos. Pirmoji islandiška knyga – Naujasis Testamentas – buvo išleista septyneriais metais anksčiau nei pirmoji lietuviška M. Mažvydo knyga. Ženkliu skiriasi leidimo datos tokių spaudinių kaip Biblija (islandiška Biblija pasirodė 1584 m., o lietuviška – 1735 m.), elementorius (pirmasis savarankiškas lietuviškas elementorius buvo išspausdintas 1708 m., o islandiškas – 1782 m.). Spausdinta periodika tautinėmis kalbomis tiek Lietuvoje, tiek Islandijoje atsirado XIX a. trečiajame ir ketvirtajame dešimtmetyje.

Islandijos ir Lietuvos istorija labai skirtinga ir nelygiavertė. Tai lemia ir minėtų šalių knygų repertuaro bei chronologijos ypatumus. Juos lyginant nustatyti panašumai ir skirtumai suteikia duomenų, leidžiančių spręsti globalius (tokius kaip spaudos paplitimas chronologiniu aspektu) knygos istorijos klausimus.