

## Master Class at the Summer School in Icelandic and Scandinavian Manuscripts 2024



The Summer School in Icelandic and Scandinavian Manuscripts takes place every year, alternating between the Árni Magnússon Institutes in Copenhagen and Reykjavík. There are three levels: Basic, Advanced, and the Master Class; the latter involves applying the skills learnt in the first two courses to a small-group research project with the manuscript collection. This year, generously supported by the Viking Society, I attended the Master Class in Reykjavík.

After the introductory talks, the master class students gathered in a small room in Edda, the new building that now homes the Árni Magnússon Institute. There, we were given our project by Dr Tiffany Nicole White and Dr Beeke Stegmann, the two academics overseeing the master

class. Normally, the master class students work to prepare an edition of a previously unedited text in the institute's collections. We were assigned *Markús saga postula*, the saga of Saint Mark. This text had not been edited by Unger alongside the other *Postular sögur* since the only medieval manuscript known to contain the saga was not acquired by Árnastofnun until 1994. A transcription of this text has been published by Kirsten Wolf (2015), but there had thus far been no exploration of the manuscript transmission of the saga of Mark.

We spent much of our time searching for Mark across manuscripts and their catalogues. We quickly realised that the cataloguing of the saga of Mark was somewhat lacking in both detail and accuracy. Some texts about mark were labelled using the same title when, upon closer inspection, they are clearly very different texts. Meanwhile, there were also shockingly few texts about Mark recorded in the manuscript catalogues, widening our search and considering different options, we managed to find a few additional sagas/stories of Mark in postmedieval manuscripts.

Our working conditions grew more and more unusual as the course went on. Unfortunately, while the course was taking place, Covid was spreading through Reykjavík, and the summer school was not immune. The master class was hit quite hard, as two out of our group of nine caught Covid, and two more came down with other illnesses during the ten-day summer school. We therefore had people dropping in and out of work projects and adapted to hybrid working so those sick and isolating could continue working on the project.



Despite these difficulties, we were able to make several discoveries about the saga of Mark and the written and religious traditions surrounding the saint in medieval and postmedieval Iceland and Scandinavia. We presented the findings we made during the course to the whole summer school and academics at Árnastofnun on the final day. While our project started off as a study of *Markús saga postula*, it ended up as a study of Mark in Iceland and Scandinavia. We intend to continue our work on Mark remotely for an eventual publication.

I am very grateful to the Viking Society for helping to fund my attendance at the Summer School. I learnt a lot about working with manuscripts and catalogues, teamwork, and the worship of saints in Iceland and Scandinavia, while making memories to last a lifetime. It was truly a *remarkable* experience.

