

2 Overview of AM 589a-f 4to

589a-f, which is now split into six parts, was most likely originally one large book, possibly two. After Árni Magnússon received it at the end of the seventeenth century, it was separated into six parts labelled a-f (Loth 1977, 7 and 9). They are now comprised of 141 leaves and have 12 lacunæ across them.

2.1 Texts and Editions

The extant contents of the six parts, along with their current folio numbers and (in the footnotes) corresponding editions, are:

- a. *Kirialax saga* (1^r–21^v)²¹
- b. *Samsons saga fagra* (1^r–4^v)²²
- c. *Valdimars saga* (1^r–8^v)²³
- d. *Klári saga* (1^r–17^r)²⁴
Ektors saga (17^v–49^v)²⁵
Stúfs þátr hinn meiri (49^v–50^v)²⁶
- e. *Þorsteins þátr bæjarmagns* (1^r–5^v)²⁷
Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana (5^v–13^v)²⁸
Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra (14^r–19^v)²⁹

²¹ *Kirialax saga*, 1917. Kálund uses 589a as his base text and fills the lacunæ with AM 532 4to and AM 489 I–II 4to (1440–1460).

²² *Samsons saga fagra*, 1953. Wilson uses AM 343a 4to as his base text and provides some variants from 589b as the B-text.

²³ *Valdimars saga*, 1962. Loth uses 589c as her base text.

²⁴ *Clarus saga*, 1879. Cederschiöld uses AM 657a–b 4to (1340–1360) as his base text and gives some variants from 589d as the C-text.

²⁵ *Ectors saga*, 1962. Loth uses AM 152 fol as her base text and provides some variant readings from 589d.

²⁶ *Stúfs saga*, 1912. Björn Magnússon Ólsen uses AM 533 4to (1450–1499) as his base text and provides variant readings from 589d.

²⁷ *Saga af Þorsteini Bæarmagni*, 1825–1837. This edition uses AM 510 4to (1510–1560) as the base text with variants from some other witnesses, although not 589e.

²⁸ *Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana*, 1927. Lagerholm uses AM 343a 4to as his base text and provides some variants from 589e as the C-text.

²⁹ *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra*, 1830. Rafn uses AM 152 fol as his base text and provides some variants from 589e labelled as his C-text.

Ála fletks saga (20^r–23^r)³⁰
 Hákonar þátr Hárekssonar (23^v)³¹
 f. Sturlaug's saga starfsama (1^r–13^r)³²
 Göngu-Hrólfs saga (13^r–36^v)³³

2.2 Codicology and Palaeography

The leaves of all six parts are roughly the same size, measuring between 187–200mm x 157–166mm. They are thick and dark (particularly so around the edges) and have not been trimmed. In addition to the many missing individual leaves and whole gatherings, there are holes in numerous pages: some pre-existed the addition of the text while others clearly resulted from centuries of being kept in poor conditions where they were probably read by firelight (for example, see 589f, fol. 16). The text is written in one column throughout, and although spaces were left for initials and rubrics, they were (for the most part) never filled in.³⁴

There is very occasional ornamentation; for example, in the space between the end of *Þorsteins þátr bæjarmagns* and beginning of *Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana* on 589e, fol. 5^v and the first word of *Hálfdanar saga Brönumfóstra* (589e, fol. 14^r, l. 1). There are many places where the text is no longer legible, which mostly seem to have resulted from general wear and tear. There are, however, two places where the text seems to have been intentionally erased. The first is the beginning of *Stúfs þátr* (see Fig. 1). The text begins after the erasure with “stufr uar mikill madr” (Stúfr was a great man). In other witnesses, this line is preceded by: “Madur het Stvfur, hann var sonur Þordar kattar, en hann var sonur Þordar Jngvnnar sonar ok Gvdrvnr Osvivvs dottur” (A man is named Stúfr, he was the son of Þórðr köttr, and he was the son of Þórðr Ingunnarson

³⁰ Ála fletks saga, 1927. Lagerholm uses 589e as his base text and fills the lacuna with AM 181k fol.

³¹ Hákonar saga Hárekssonar, 2009. Overgaard and Lanjala provide side-by-side editions of the text's three medieval fragments (with 589e labelled the B-text), and use AM 347 4to (1690–1710) to fill the gaps.

³² Sturlaug's saga starfsama. Version A, 1969. Zitzelsberger uses AM 335 4to as his base text and provides extensive variant readings from 589f in the apparatus on pp. 48–303.

³³ Gaungu-Hrólfs saga, 1830. Rafn uses AM 152 fol as his base text and provides some variant readings from 589f as the C-text.

³⁴ In a few places, initials and chapter numbers in Roman numerals have been added (for example 589d, fol. 20^v, l. 15), but this is rare.

and Guðrún Ósvírbsdóttir) (*Stúfs saga*, 1912, p. 1).³⁵ The second erasure in 589a-f is of the last few words of *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* (see Fig. 2). The text prior to the erasure reads “huat er huer uann edr giordi [med] frægd edr uizku” (what each person won or did through fame or wisdom). In other witnesses, the text which follows is “fjólkýngi eðr svikum, eðr hvar höfðingjarnir ríktu” (magic or treachery or where chieftains ruled) (*Gaungu-Hrólfs saga*, 1830, ch. 38, p. 363). The most significant marginalia in 589a-f will be discussed in Chapter 8, but, in addition to the usual pen trials, the main types are personal names, hymns, and text titles.³⁶

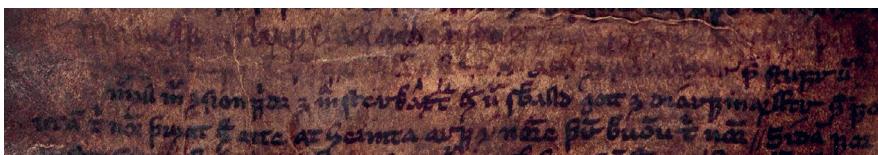


Fig. 1: AM 589d 4to, fol. 48^v; erasure at the beginning of *Stúfs þátr*. Source: handrit.is. Printed with permission. Copyright © of the Árni Magnússon Institute, Iceland.

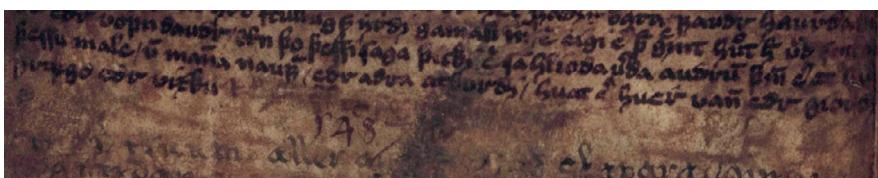


Fig. 2: AM 589f 4to, fol. 36^v; erasure at the end of *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*. Source: handrit.is. Printed with permission. Copyright © of the Árni Magnússon Institute, Iceland.

According to Loth (1977, 17), the two scribes who wrote the manuscript are closely related in their orthographic and linguistic habits and, judging by the places where they shared the writing of lines, they must have been working in close quarters. She describes Hand I as having a “soft, round character, with broad curled downstrokes”, whereas Hand II is “rather angular” and “distinctly stiff and print-like” (Loth 1977, 17). Other than in 586, no examples of the two hands have been identified in other manuscripts or charters, making it impossible to identify the scribes (Loth 1977, 23).

³⁵ I would like to thank Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson for his help with trying to determine what text was originally written where these two erasures now are; unfortunately, we were not able to come to any conclusions.

³⁶ A full overview is provided by Loth 1977, 19–22.