



THE 1703 CENSUS OUR HERITAGE

Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES
OF ICELAND

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is published in honour of the decision of UNESCO to inscribe the 1703 Census on the Memory of the World Register.

Census records are the basic source of information about the individuals, the families and the social fabric of any nation, and they have long been sought after by the public and scholars. Interest in census records has always been extensive in Iceland, and they have to some extent been published in printed form. Information technology, however, has radically changed conditions for the dissemination and use of such records. As with national archives elsewhere, the National Archives of Iceland (Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands) has in recent years increased access to the census records, by digitizing them and publishing on the Internet.

Iceland was a part of the Danish state from the year 1383 until 1918, and thereafter a sovereign kingdom with the same king as Denmark until Iceland became an independent republic in 1944. Danish authorities initiated the registration of the censuses that were taken in Iceland from the years 1703 until 1901, 16 censuses in all, out of the 23 that have been taken. The Icelandic censuses are from the years 1703, 1729, 1762, 1769, 1785, 1801, 1835, 1840, 1845, 1850, 1855, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1901, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1983. The censuses in 1729, 1762 and 1870 are incomplete, and the 1785 one is lost. In addition, census information was collected in 1816 when priests were required to record all individuals in their parishes.

Icelanders have long known the uniqueness of the 1703 Census and consider it to be a milestone in the history of population studies. The National Archives published the first digital version of the census on its website in 2001. The records are now accessible on the Archives' census website www.manntal.is, together with many other census records. The plan is to publish all Icelandic census documents in this manner.

Warmest thanks to all those who assisted in producing this booklet.

Reykjavík, August 2015,



Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson
National Archivist



Árni Magnússon (1663–1730)

Source: The Royal Library of Denmark. Müllers Pinakotek 15, 86, III. fol.

The Commission

Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) became the curator of the Danish king's private archives in 1697, a professor of antiquities at the University of Copenhagen in 1701, and the director of the university library in 1721. Árni was a renowned scholar in his days, but he is best remembered today for his efforts to collect Icelandic medieval manuscripts. Many of the Icelandic sagas would undoubtedly have been lost but for his efforts. Árni Magnússon is not registered in the 1703 Census because his permanent residence was in Copenhagen.

Páll Vídalín Jónsson (1667–1727) was the principal of the school at Skálholt from 1690–96, became vice chancellor in 1697, and a chancellor in 1705. For some years he also was a county magistrate. As well as being one of the most learned men in Iceland in his day, he was also an excellent poet. Páll is well known for his work as a chancellor, his work in the Commission 1702–1714, and for his writings. No image of him exists. Páll Vídalín is described to have been of average height, with blue eyes that were as sharp and hard as those of a falcon.

THE 1703 CENSUS INTO UNESCO'S MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

One of the greatest treasures preserved in the National Archives of Iceland is a census that was carried out in Iceland in 1703, commonly referred to as the 1703 Census. During the summer of 2013, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) approved the Archives' application for the inclusion of the 1703 Census in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. This register lists documentary heritage that has world significance and outstanding universal value.

THE DECISION TO CARRY OUT A CENSUS

Iceland was a part of the Kingdom of Denmark and the highest authorities of the Danish state in Denmark were responsible for governing the country. The decision to carry out the first comprehensive census in Iceland was made in 1702, for the most part due to extremely harsh conditions in the country at the close of the 17th century.¹ Icelanders complained about these conditions to the authorities in Copenhagen. One of the two chancellors of Iceland, Lauritz Gottrup, met with King Frederick IV of Denmark and described the situation in Iceland. A commission was subsequently appointed to examine the circumstances of Icelanders in detail. The commission consisted of professor Árni Magnússon and vice chancellor Páll Vídalín. Their main task was to investigate the economic conditions of Icelanders by counting the inhabitants and their livestock, and to compile a register of estates, i.e. a detailed description of all farms and farmlands in Iceland.² The census was carried

¹ Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson and Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, "Inngangur", *Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára*. Articles on the occasion of the anniversary [hereinafter *Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára*] (Reykjavík 2005), p. 9–13.

² *Lovsamling for Island I, 1096–1720*. Samlet og udgivet af Oddgeir Stephensen and Jón Sigurðsson (Kjöbenhavn 1853), p. 584–592.



Source: The National Museum of Iceland. Sigurður Guðmundsson's collection.

The Gathering of Alþingi at Þingvellir

Alþingi, the supreme legislative body (parliament) for Icelanders, was established in the year 930. Alþingi met annually at Þingvellir by the river Öxará. Its role has varied over time. Around 1700, its main tasks revolved around court judgements. In addition, any notifications and legislative instructions from the King of Denmark were read out during these sessions. It was here that the order of the Commission to investigate and document the conditions in the country was announced in July 1702. This drawing from about 1780 shows Alþingi at Þingvellir and the placement of the main representatives.

out over a period of seven months from December 1702 to June 1703, with the livestock being counted for the most part in May and June 1703.³ The Register of Estates was compiled over a period of twelve years, from 1702–1714. That was by far the most extensive task the commission undertook. These unique records are preserved in the National Archives of Iceland and are unusually homogeneous economic and social history records about Icelandic society at the beginning of the 18th century.⁴ The entire census has been preserved, along with livestock records from 101 districts of 163, as well as registers of estates from all counties, with the exception of Múlasýslur and Skaftafellsýslur, i.e. from 18 of the 23 counties as they were then arranged. The missing registers from the above counties probably

burned in the big Copenhagen Fire in 1728.⁵ All this material is written in Icelandic.

The 1703 Census has been referred to as the first modern census.⁶ Both the 1703 Census and the Register of Estates were published in print in the first half of the 20th century, but the 1703 Livestock Register has not yet been published.⁷

3 ÞÍ. Rannsókn og útgáfa á kvikfjartali árið 1703. Project on the research and dissemination of cultural material organised by the National Archives of Iceland (2004). Website of the National Archives: www.skjalasafn.is/files/docs/Rannsokn-og-utgafa-a-kvikfjartali-arid-1703.pdf.

4 The registers of estates from the county of Barðastrandasýsla, however, are preserved in the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík (AM 469 fol.).

5 Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns I (Kaupmannahöfn 1913), p. v. See also Jón Eiríksson, "Forberedelse", Oeconomisk Reise igennem de nordvestlige, nordlige, og nordøstlige Kanter af Island I (Kjøbenhavn 1780), p. LXIX.

6 Goyer, Doreen S and Draaijer, Gera E, The Handbook of National Population Censuses – Europe (New York, Connecticut, London 1992), p. 251. See also on censuses or population history in general MacEvedy, Colin and Jones, Richard, Atlas of world population history (London 1978).

7 Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, "Formáli", Manntal á Íslandi árið 1703 tekið að tilhlutun Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalín ásamt manntali 1729 í þrem sýslum [hereinafter Manntal á Íslandi árið 1703] (Reykjavík 1924–1947), p. VII–XVIII. Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns I–XI (Kaupmannahöfn 1913–1943).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CENSUS TAKING

The letter of commission issued to Árne Magnússon and Páll Vídalín on May 22nd, 1702 is long and detailed as they were commissioned to carry out numerous tasks in addition to those described above. The instructions for the census taking are contained in Article 8 in the letter of commission.⁸

On the basis of the letter of commission, Árne and Páll wrote to the county magistrates (sýslumenn), the highest authority in each county, informing them that they were to be responsible for registering the population, and instructing them to submit the results to the commission during Alþingi (parliamentary session at Þingvellir) in 1703. The county magistrates were to appoint local district administrators (hreppstjórar) to collect the information in each district. There were several districts in each county. The instructions issued by Árne and Páll in Icelandic clearly state that every person in the country was to be counted. More specifically, the district administrators were to count and

register the population into three groups: *families*, *paupers* and *vagrants*. Everyone was to be recorded by their given name, patronym and age, and their position or employment was to be specified. Those who were outside their own county, at sea or away for some other reason, were to be recorded in “their place of residency”.⁹ The timing of the count of the latter two groups was fundamental. Paupers were to be recorded the “following Lent”, and vagrants were to be recorded “the night before the following Easter 1703”.¹⁰ This was done to avoid counting people more than once, thereby increasing the accuracy of the census. At that time, a general rule of residency applied to all Icelanders, requiring everyone to have a fixed place of residence i.e. everyone was required to belong to a household. Changes in residency were only permitted during specific transfer days (fardagar), which were in the seventh week of summer (end of May – beginning of June).¹¹ This meant that all workers were required to be established in a fixed place of residence by the time of spring Roodmas (May 3rd).¹² This rule was intended to ensure a certain level of stability in the community. The risk of multiple registrations, therefore, was not very high even if the registration process lasted several months.



8 Lovsamling for Island I, p. 586–587.

9 Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, “Formáli”, p. XVII.

10 Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, “Formáli”, p. XVII.

11 Magnús Már Lárusson, “Fardag. Island”. Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk middelalder IV (Reykjavík 1959), c. 169.

12 See Article 7 of Bessastaðapóstar, i.e. “Anordning om Adskilligt Politivæsenet m.v. vedkommende. Bessastad April 2nd, 1685”, Lovsamling for Island I, p. 433.

THE CENSUS TAKING

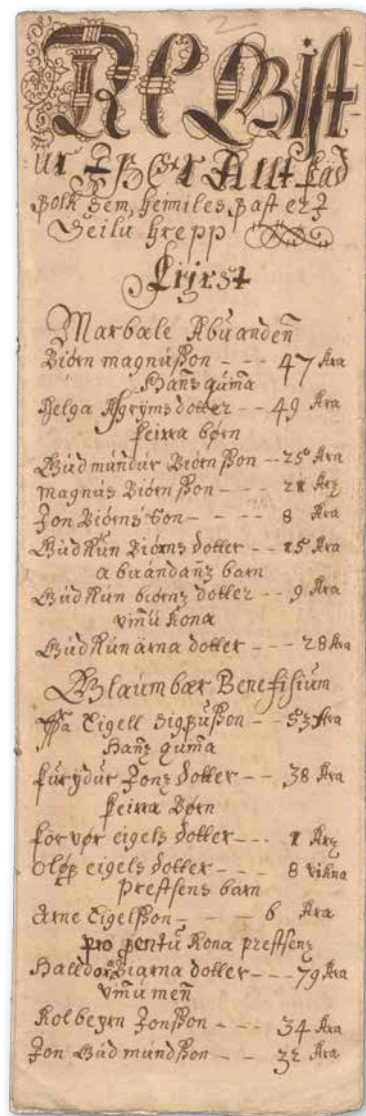
The first registrations began around mid-December 1702 in the county of Vestur-Ísafjarðasýsla, and final registrations were completed in the county of Snæfellsnessýsla in June 1703. Most districts performed their census in February, March or April. The effort was a success. One may, perhaps, say that it was an organisational, or an administrative achievement, considering the conditions at the time and taking into account how many people were involved.¹³ In addition to Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín, all the county magistrates and local administrators were involved in the execution. That year, there were 21 county magistrates in 23 counties, and, according to the census, the number of district administrators was 670. This means that almost 700 people joined forces in the project, or approximately 1.4% of the population. As far as is known, this group prepared the first comprehensive census of a population.

This gathering of information on people and their livestock was considered a remarkable and unique undertaking, and attracted a great deal of attention. Some referred to the winter of 1702–1703 as the “census winter”.¹⁴ All this registration required a lot of paper, which had an impact on its price. The author of the Grímsstaðaannáll (Grímsstaðir annals) stated in 1703: “At the time, paper was expensive in many places when all this had been completed.”¹⁵

Despite efforts to prevent double and multiple registrations, there proved to be quite a large number of them. Approximately 500 individuals were registered more than once. These errors have been corrected in the statistics issued by Statistics Iceland.

Approximately a third of these were paupers who were recorded both where they resided as well as in a separate list of paupers. Several students were recorded both at their place of study as well as in the home of their parents.¹⁶

¹⁶ Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, “Formáli”, p. XII.

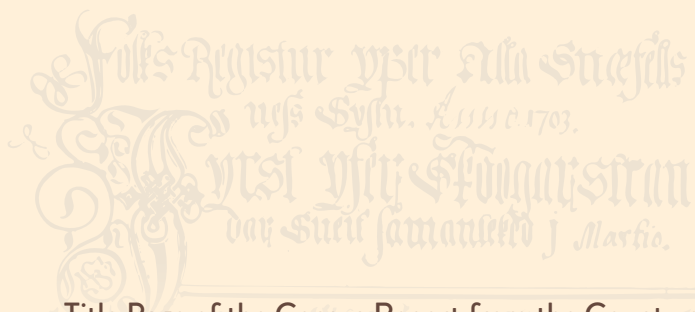


Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. Census in the district of Seiluhreppur in Skagafjarðarsýsla.

¹³ See Helgi Skúli Kjartansson “Var Viðey í eyði 1703?”, Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 78.

¹⁴ Annálar 1400–1800 II (Reykjavík 1927–1932), p. 553 (Hestannáll); Annálar 1400–1800 III (Reykjavík 1933–1938), p. 522 (Grímsstaðaannáll).

¹⁵ Annálar 1400–1800 III, p. 523 (Grímsstaðaannáll).

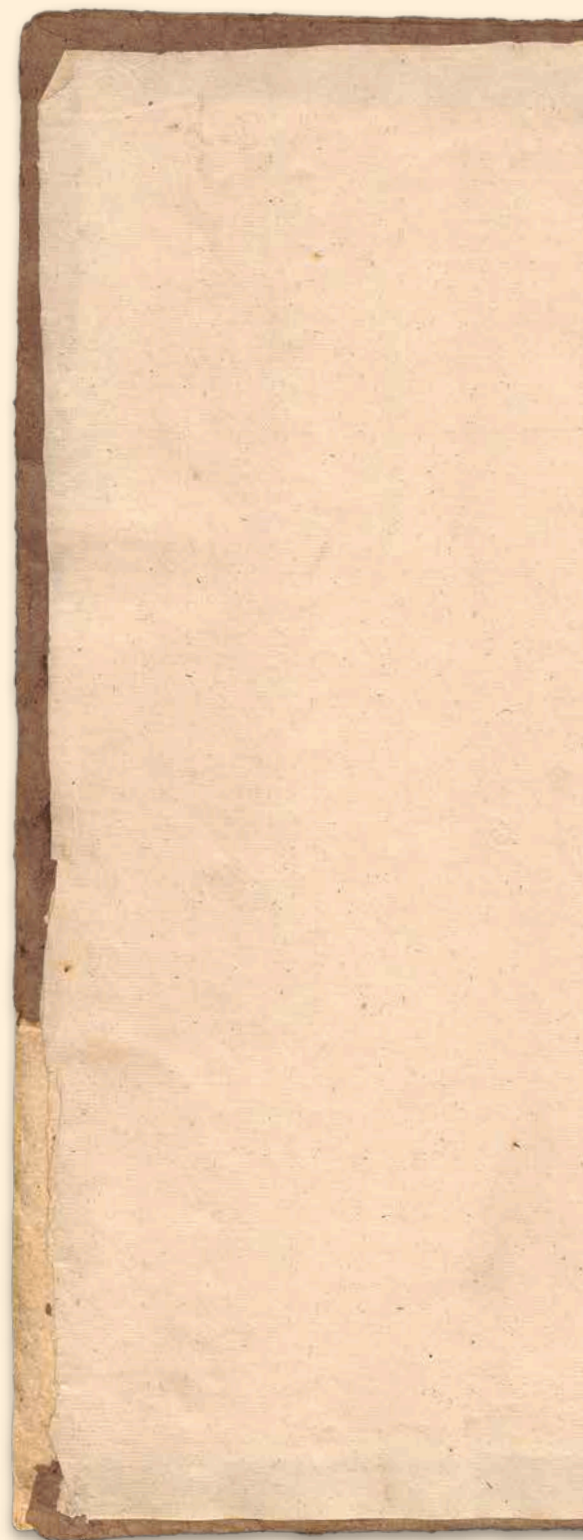


Title Page of the Census Report from the County of Snæfellsnessýsla

The 1703 Census is not a linear registry containing all the residents in Iceland during that year. It consists of numerous registries or reports from individual counties or districts. The image shows the title page of the census from the county of Snæfellsnessýsla. This report is among the largest and contains a total of 116 written folio pages. There are two dates on the margin on the left, March 12th and March 13th, which suggest that the census takers travelled between farms and recorded people in their homes. In some other counties, census meetings were held in churches.

The county magistrate, of Snæfellsnessýsla county, Magnús Björnsson, signed the report at Þingvellir by the Öxará river on July 18th, 1703.

When the members of the household of Magnús Björnsson were recorded on June 7th, 1703, he was 35 years old. His wife, Þórunn Einarsdóttir, was 28, and they had one son, Einar, aged 9. A total of 14 people were in the household, including one executioner.



Folks Registor yper Alla Snæfells
og nefs Sýslu, Á 1703.
Yrsl yfir Skogarstran
dar Sineit samantekid j Martio.

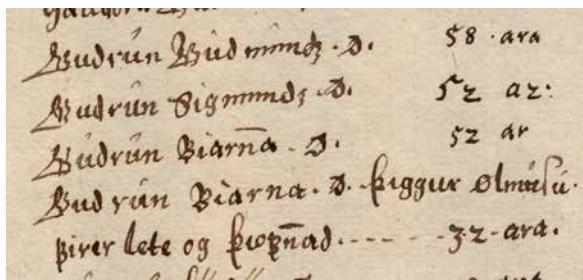
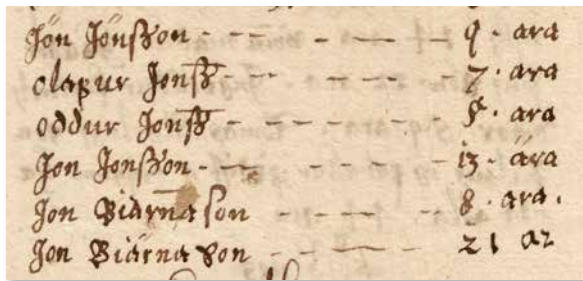
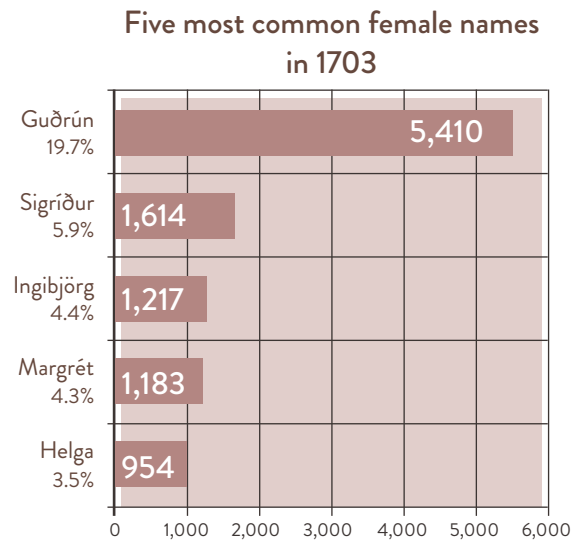
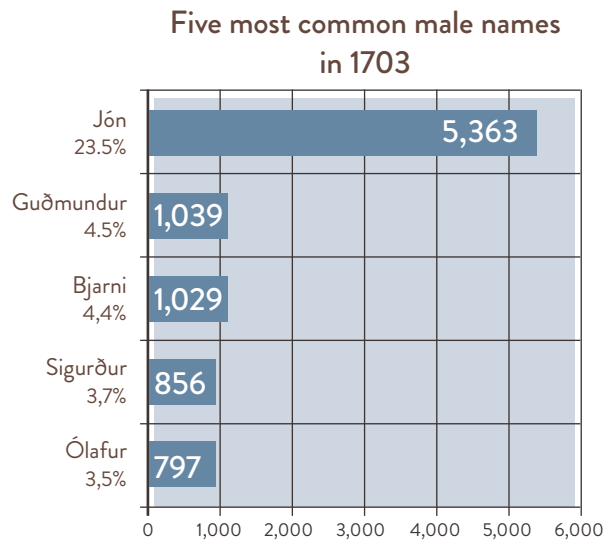
17. Mars	Nafn.	Höfnatur.	árgæðmælagæð.	allvæð.	Tal.
	Þorsteinn Þingurðsson.	Abuande	Þreppthöfve Þingur.	61 ára	
	Þudorinn Þiarna dötter.	Þans Áuma		63 ára	
	Þiarna Þorsteinsson.	Þeirra Þorur Ákopar Þingur.		53 ára	
	Þarbara Þorstein dötter.	Þeirra dötter til Þorur.		29 ára	
	Þorinn Þorstein dötter.	Þeirra dötter Ámon til Vm.		22 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þar Vmáðona		58 ára	
	Þorlufs Þorstein dötter.	Þorinn dötter Þorstein til Vm.		21 ára	7
	Arnaþing.				
	Þorsteinn Álaugason.	Abuande		55 ára	
	Þorlufs Þor dötter.	Þans Ámon		58 ára	
	Þor Þorsteinsson.	Þeirra Þorur til Vm.		29 ára	
	Þalga Þorsteinsson.	Þeirra Þorur		23 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þeirra dötter Ámon til Vm.		20 ára	
	Þorlufs Þorstein dötter.	Þeirra dötter.		11 ára	
	Þorinn Þorstein dötter.	Þorur Þorstein Ábuandans.		80 ára	7
	Þinguberg.				
17. Áto	Þorstein Álaugson.	Abuande þar		58 ára	
	Þorlufs Þor dötter.	Þans Ámon		44 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þorur Þorstein Ábuandans.		72 ára	
	Þorlufs Þorstein dötter.	Þorur Þorstein Ábuandans.		22 ára	
	Þorinn Þorsteinsson.	Þorur Þorstein		20 ára	5
	Þorurðalir.				
	Þorgerður Álaug dötter.	Abuande þar Ákía Skríkja ap.		53 ára	
	Þorinn Þorsteinsson.	Þorur Þorstein Ámon til Vm.		20 ára	
	Þor Þorsteinsson.	Þorur Þorstein Ámon		10 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þorur dötter Ámon til Vm.		18 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þorur Þorstein Ámon til Vm.		52 ára	5
	Þorger.				
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Abuande mids Vm. ap Þorgerður.		48 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þans Ámon		48 ára	
	Þorgerður Þorstein dötter.	Þorur Þorstein Ámon til Vm.		17 ára	

Handwritten list of names and ages, including entries like "Björnur sonur", "Pállur sonur", and "Pjetur sonur".

Þellervæller. **Ósnarlielloa 6^{ta} ad Þyrleika.**
Björnur sonur - - - - - 67 ára
Pállur sonur - - - - - 48 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 43 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 20 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 12 ára

Brasgia Leigur sonur Þuðver. Þands Þuð.
Björnur sonur - - - - - 64 ára
Pállur sonur - - - - - 52 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 22 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 12 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 6 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 15 ára
Pjetur sonur - - - - - 9 ára

Þuðver Þuð og so med Þræfe.
Björnur sonur - - - - - 27 ára



Parts of pages in the census of the district of Gnúpverjahreppur in the county of Árnessýsla.

Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. From the report from Gnúpverjahreppur in Árnessýsla.

Icelandic Given Names in 1703

The 1703 Census is the oldest record of all given names in Iceland. In addition to containing all the names, the census shows the naming tradition, which was the continuous use of a particular name within a family. Thus, children were often given their parents' or their grandparents' names.

There were a total of 725 given names in use in Iceland, namely 387 men's names and 338 women's names. The most common given names were Guðrún and Jón. Almost every fifth woman was named Guðrún, and just under a quarter of the men were named Jón.

Source: Ólafur Lárusson, "Nöfn Íslendinga árið 1703", Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenskra bókmennta. Annar flokkur, II, 2 (Reykjavík 1960).

INFORMATIVE DOCUMENTATION

The 1703 Census contains a diverse range of information. The goal was to record all families and individuals. The records, however, reveal a wealth of other information about the society. The census is also a list of farms and a record of households and community districts. It shows, thereby, the areas in which most people were situated, where the population was most dense and most spare. The census also provides information on family types, gender proportions, the age distribution of the Icelandic society, along with the names and status of those recorded. In 1703, for example, there were 670 district administrators, 245 priests, 76 students, 38 child minders, 7 executioners and 6 falcon catchers.¹⁷ There were a total of 725 different given names, 387 men's names and 338 women's names.¹⁸ Various other statistics have been collected based on the census.¹⁹

Heß az fuciti Ditrui z Ro-
lla lix dci gafa vij laus-
angaz az neinij nein stad
az noß stad dci veri diti
terna laugaz dazs payk
a lätidaz ein az noß. c. 2

Foolk-registur i Eyafialla Sveit. i östra Döggaz		Rangarfingur 1705	
Einur Eldingsson aðfangandi	54	Stro Eldingsson aðfangandi	52
Dagfinnur Friemarsson þingmaður	48	Olafur Þingdottir þingmaður	53
Dagfinnur Friemarsson	43	Hannur Friemarsson	26
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	10	Dagfinnur Friemarsson	16
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	24	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	20
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	10	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	10
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	24	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	56	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	47
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	22	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	7	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	46
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	3	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	16
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	7	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	76
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	43
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	22
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	28	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	16
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	74	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	31	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	14
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	46	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	8
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	24	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	6
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	8	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	3
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	58	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	43
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	24	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	50
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	7	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	75
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	4	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	2	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	53
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	74	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	30
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	23	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	30
Þorvaldur Friemarsson	40	Þorvaldur Friemarsson	13
		Þorvaldur Friemarsson	26

Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census].
The first page of the census register in Rangárvallasýsla.

17 Manntalið 1703. Hagskýrslur Íslands II, 21 (Reykjavík 1960), p. 54–57.

18 Ólafur Lárusson, "Nöfn Íslendinga árið 1703", *Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenskra bókmennta*. Annar flokkur, II, 2 (Reykjavík 1960), p. 3, 18 and 34.

19 Hagskýrslur Íslands II, 21.

ÖS Högbyl			
Gion	forþiorn Högbylson	---	44 ára
	Galldora Jones dóttir	---	34 ára
Hans son	forþiorn forþiornson	---	16 ára
Jón far Duanda			
Eðia	Christin Olafsson dóttir	---	54 ára
Genar	Olafson Arnarson	---	29 ára
Born	forþiorn Arnarson dóttir	---	22 ára
Kellyng	Galldora Olafsson dóttir	---	42 ára
ÖS Kot			
	Magnus Magnússon	---	61 ára
Jóns born	Olafson Magnússon dóttir	---	20 ára
	Ósþia Magnússon dóttir	---	6 ára
Ólafurkona	Christin Magnússon dóttir	---	48 ára
Hvítanes			
Eðia	Olafson Magnússon dóttir	---	74 ára
Genar born	Ólafur Magnússon forþiorn	---	45 ára
	Katrin forþiorn dóttir	---	33 ára
Katlag	Ólga forþiorn dóttir	---	48 ára

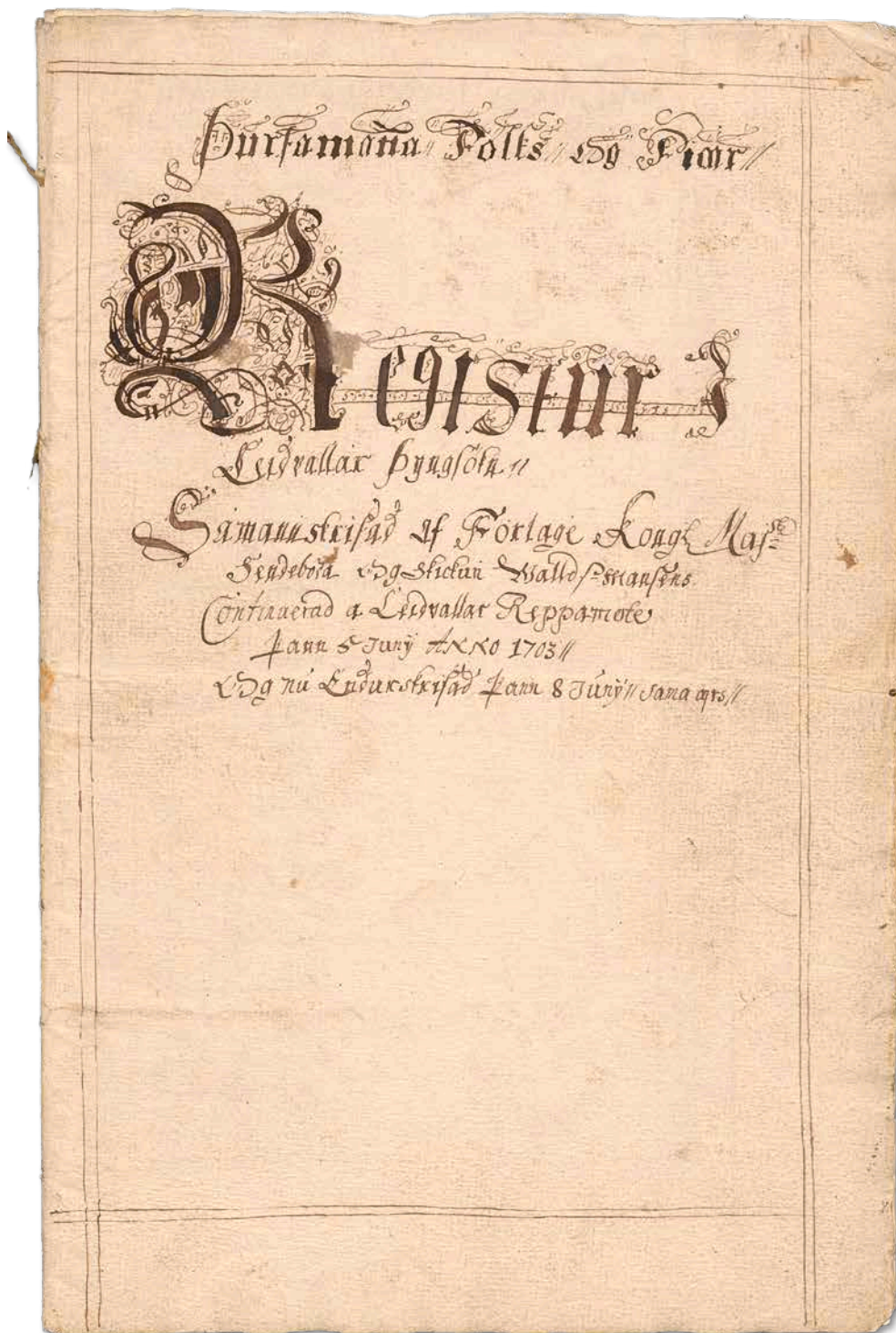
Source: Þl. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census].
Census from Skilmannahreppur in Borgarfjarðarsýsla.

The Completion of the Census and Executions at 1703 Alþingi

In 1703, Alþingi was in session from July 9th to July 20th. During the session the county magistrates delivered the census reports from their counties to the Commissioners, Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín.

Included in the tasks of Alþingi was rendering judgements and executing them. On April 2nd, 1703, a young woman, Katrín Þorvarðsdóttir, was recorded in her home, Hvítanes, in Skilmannahreppur in Borgarfjörður, and listed as being 33 years old. Her registration is seen on the image above, the line second to last.

Katrín was sentenced to death for murdering her child and executed by drowning at Þingvellir on July 12th. Katrín said in her defence that the baby had been stillborn and, as she had not been in her right mind, she had kept the birth a secret for a month. She said that Auðunn Sigurðsson, the father of the baby, had not known about this (Alþingisbækur Íslands IX, Reykjavík 1957–1964, p. 221–222).



Decorative and Informative Front Page

This front page of Leiðavallar district report from Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla county shows the effort made to decorate the report with impressive writing in the title. The title states the content of the report when it was compiled in 1703 as a register of paupers, people, and livestock. The unusual thing is the writing of paupers first, before people and livestock.

A direct translation of the inscription is:

Paupers, people and livestock

Register

Leiðavallar district,

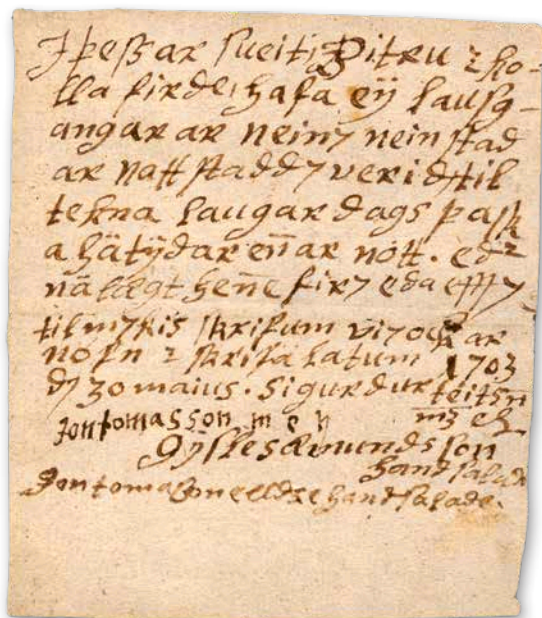
*Compiled by the initiation of the Royal
Majestic*

*Commissioners and the order of the
magistrate*

*Processed at a Leiðavallar district
gathering*

on the 5th of June, Anno 1703

*and now rewritten on the 8th of June
the same year*



Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census].
The report, on vagrants in the district of Bitruhreppur in Strandasýsla.

The Smallest Document

The smallest document from the census is this note from Bitruhreppur in Strandasýsla county. It is approximately 9 by 9 cm. There are around 41 single notes among the 1709 pages on which the census is written. Most of the single notes contain information on paupers and vagrants. The uniqueness of this note is that it does not contain any names of people. It is, instead, confirmation that there were no vagrants in the district on the Saturday evening before Easter. This document shows that an investigation of whether there were any vagrants in the area took place and bears witness to the accuracy or diligence of the local administrators. Four district administrators signed the document, two in their own hand and two by proxy signatures. The latter two district administrators were probably illiterate.

These are the signed names, written according to modern spelling:

Sigurður Teitsson, Jón Tómasson, Gísli Sæmundsson and Jón Tómasson senior.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION TO UNESCO

The foundation for the application to UNESCO to inscribe the 1703 Census on the Memory of the World Register was laid in 2002, with research of the original documents. The number of the census reports was recorded along with the number and sizes of all the pages. Records were made of whether the signatures of the district administrators were on the census reports, and whether the registering of the census or the signature was dated, as well as other information of this nature. The census is 1709 pages in length, recorded in journals or books and on loose notes. In total, there are 75 booklets with records from individual districts. The shortest are only a few pages. There are 14 county reports, which are reports compiled by the county magistrates on the basis of the records handed in by the district administrators. In addition, there are 41 loose notes, most of which contain information on paupers and vagrants. The results of the research were presented at a seminar held on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the census.²⁰

Early in 2003, the idea of applying for the 1703 Census to be inscribed on the Memory of the World Register began to form.²¹ Over the next few years, work on the application continued by further research and analysis of the original documents. On the Archives' 130th anniversary in 2012, the application was sent to UNESCO. It was met with approval, and the 1703 Census was inscribed on the international register on June 18th, 2013.²²

20 Björk Ingimundardóttir and Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson, "Manntalið 1703 – skuggsjá samfélags", Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 51–72.

21 ÞÍ. The Archives of the National Archives of Iceland. Fileno. 022-6. Memo from the Director of the National Archives to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on the publication of the census on a CD, dated April 30th, 2003.

22 ÞÍ. The Archives of the National Archives of Iceland. Fileno. 1301045. Letter from the National Archives to Joie Springer, Knowledge Societies Division UNESCO, dated April 2nd, 2012; Document of endorsement from UNESCO, signed by the Director-General of the organisation, Irina Bokova, June 18th, 2013.

Overview of counties and the number of districts in each county in 1703, types of census reports and the population in each county in 1703.

Counties	Number of districts	Types of census reports	Population
Gullbringusýsla	6	District reports	2,607
Kjósarsýsla	3	District reports	1,286
Borgarfjarðarsýsla	9	District reports	2,070
Mýrasýsla	7	District reports	1,783
Hnappadalssýsla	3	County report	640
Snæfellsnessýsla	6	County report	3,903
Dalasýsla	8	County report	1,943
Barðastrandarsýsla	10	District reports	2,687
Vestur-Ísafjarðarsýsla	7	County report	2,375
Norður-Ísafjarðarsýsla	7	County report and one district report	1,403
Strandasýsla	6	County report	1,035
Húnavatnssýsla	12	County report and 4 district reports	2,657
Skagafjarðarsýsla	12	District reports	3,117
Eyjafjarðarsýsla	10	County report	3,061
Þingeyjarsýsla	12	County report	2,942
Norður-Múlasýsla	4	County report	1,190
Mið-Múlasýsla	6	County report	1,333
Suður-Múlasýsla	7	District reports	1,566
Austur-Skaftafellssýsla	3	County report	1,097
Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla	3	District reports	1,879
Vestmannaeyjar	1	County report	325
Rangárvallasýsla	8	County report	4,251
Árnessýsla	13	District reports	5,216
Total	163		50,366

Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1 and D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census].

fólks Registur i Borgar
hrepp. Anno 1703.

I. Öskholtt þingstadir.

abuande	Þjórn Eifla son	- - - 43	ára
vínunni	Þórdur Eifla son	- - 48	
	Eifla Brynólfs son	- - 18	
vínukon	Valgerður Jónsdóttir	- 43	
	Þórunn Jónsdóttir	- 40	
	Þórunn Eifla dóttir	- 59	
omagar	Þórey Jónsdóttir	- - 15	
	Eigill Sveins son	- - 85	
abuande	Jón Ketils son	- - 43	
vínukon	Ólafur Niculafson	- - 17	
mod abuands	Þórunn Magnúsdóttir	- 73	
vínukon	Þórunn Ketils dóttir	- - 31	
	Þórunn Þorvarðsdóttir	- 39	

II ferubacke.

hion	Eifla Jónson	- - 58	
	Óddni Vilghjalms dóttir	- 60	
vínukon	Þórunn Eifla son	- - 29	
	Þórunn Jónsdóttir	- 59	
	Þórunn Þórunns d.	- 21	
	Þórunn Þórunns d.	- 23	
	Þórunn Þórunns dóttir	- 13	
hion	Þórunn Þórunns son	- - 54	
	Þórunn Jónsdóttir	- - 44	

Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census].
Census in the district of Borgarhreppur in Borgarfjarðarsýsla.

SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE OF DANES AND ICELANDERS

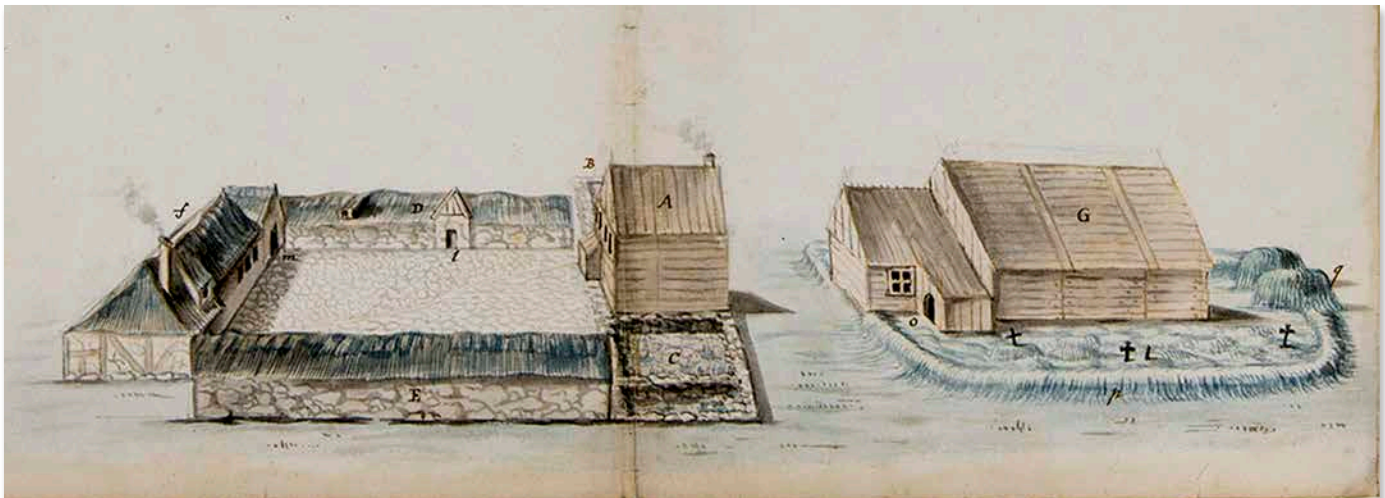
Due to wars in the Nordic countries at the beginning of the 18th century, travel over the Atlantic Ocean was extremely risky. For this reason, as well as others, the transportation of the census documentation from Iceland to Denmark was delayed to 1720.²³ After being preserved in Denmark for 201 years, in 1921 the documents were loaned to Iceland to be published in print. The 1703 Census then became a part of the extensive return of documents by the Danes to Iceland in 1928, on the basis of an agreement reached the previous year.²⁴

The gathering of information by Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín in Iceland between 1702–1714 was ordered by the Danish government because of difficult circumstances in Iceland. These actions are an example of the execution of Danish administration in Iceland, performed by its Icelandic employees in Iceland. The records document and describe the Icelandic society. The census and other documents generated by the Commission are therefore a shared cultural heritage of Danes and Icelanders.

The Danish administration naturally preserved these documents in their archives in Copenhagen. Now they are placed in Iceland which has the responsibility of preserving this shared cultural heritage.

23 See Már Jónsson, Árni Magnússon. *Ævisaga* (Reykjavík 1998), p. 292-293.

24 Samningar Íslands við erlend ríki sem taldir eru í gildi í árslok 1961, að undanskýldum tæknilegum samningum og lánsamningum II. Samningar við einstök ríki (Reykjavík 1963), p. 1072. (A mutual agreement on a delivery of collections of books and documents October 15th, 1927).



Source: ÞÍ. Teikingasafn. C. I. 1. Teikningar af Bessastöðum 1720.

Seat of the Highest Administrative Officials in Iceland

This partial image from 1720 shows Bessastaðir, His Royal Majesty's farm. Located at Álfarnes, not far from Reykjavík, it was the seat of Denmark's highest administrative officials in Iceland. It was the home of Jørgen Christian Møller, who held the highest office as the Governor of Iceland, and of the Royal Treasurer, Paul Beyer. Notes accompanying the drawing reveal that the governor lived in the part of the buildings labelled with an (A), and the Royal Treasurer lived directly opposite in the building labelled (f).

In these buildings, which were fairly grand by Icelandic standards, lived a total of 24 residents. Although the houses were built in the Danish style, the church on the right (G), which was consecrated to Saint Nicholas, appears to be closer to the Icelandic way of building churches.

Home of a High Official

These two pages are the record of the household members of Þingeyrarklaustur prepared by Lauritz Christensen Gottrup. Besides being one of the two chancellors in Iceland, he was also the county magistrate for the county of Húnavatnssýsla, and thereby was responsible for the registration. Lauritz was Danish and wrote the report in his language.

Þingeyrarklaustur, or Þingeyrar, was a large and a rich estate, and, with a total of 39 inhabitants, it had one of the most populous households in Iceland. In addition to the family of Lauritz Gottrup, members included a priest and a deacon, 12 male workers, 9 female workers, two stable boys, one maid from Copenhagen, a nurse and a housekeeper. The final entry relates to a poor girl admitted to the household for the grace of God.

Lauritz Gottrup is connected with the census in a special way. In 1701, he went to Denmark to speak with the king on behalf of Icelanders about the harsh and difficult conditions in which they were living. Gottrup's journey led to the decision of the Danish authorities to gather detailed information about the conditions in Iceland. One means by which they sought to learn about the situation was the 1703 Census.

*Specification, Saa alt Eingørst Kloster
Gimms Pol, og offor de Kongl: Commissariers
skriftlig order, antagend som offor følger*

Nüm:

1.	Lauritz Christensen Gottrup	54
2.	Catharina Christens daatter Peters, min kone Dorff Børn	37
3.	Johan Christensen Lauritzens dimiteret fra skolen	12
4.	Nette Maria Lauritz daatter, m. i Danmark	13
5.	Magdalena Lauritz daatter	11
6.	Ann Sophie Lauritz daatter	5
7.	Br. Christensen Christensen Kloster port	27
8.	Bojne Christensen Kloster dygn	27
9.	Diakon Christensen Studiosus Altestatus	23
10.	Kansler Christensen Christensen fra Danmark	31
11.	Jorn Christensen Christensen	44
12.	Jorn Christensen Christensen	37
13.	Anders Christensen Jhm:	29
14.	Christensen Christensen Jhm:	63
15.	Christensen Christensen Jhm:	52
16.	Christensen Christensen Jhm:	33
17.	Jorn Christensen Jhm:	30
18.	Magnus Christensen Jhm:	54
19.	Jorn Christensen Jhm:	42
20.	Olaf Christensen Jhm:	26
21.	Christensen Christensen Jhm:	26

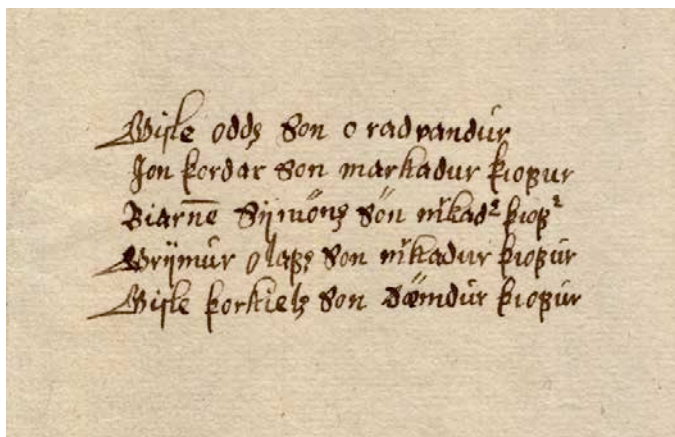
*alder
aar*

Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. Record of household members of Þingeyrarklaustur in Húnavatnssýsla.

N ^o		alders aar
22	Jorn Jorntzen Windeman	26
23	Steen Jorntzen Windeman	32
24	Jorn Corleijzen Gestrung	20
25	Dirck Galdsen Gestrung	19
26	Anne Jorntzdaatter fra Kiöbingsen Trimmst pige . . .	27
27	Eist Jorntzdaatter fra Kiöbingsen Gestrupige . . .	24
28	Maegirder Jorntzdaatter Garm Røster	62
29	Briglotte Brimoesdatter Raads Kone	64
30	Oluf Corleijdsdaatter vinder vore arbejds pige . . .	33
31	Endron Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm	33
32	Lagnsilder Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm:	33
33	Endron Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm:	36
34	Endron Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm:	32
35	Corleij Arntsdatter . . . Jhm	30
36	Endron Corleijdsdatter . . . Jhm	29
37	Jandrijs Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm:	21
38	Corleijder Jorntzdaatter . . . Jhm:	18
39	Steen Jorntzdaatter, fattig barn antaget for Jndstige .	15

Det Paaløys som forfarfuit, ligelig befindis
 Testerer sig Jnders Jorntzen, Actum Enig,
 over Røster d: 2 Aprilis Anno 1703. ~

J. E. J. Jorntzen
 Jndstige



Part of a page in the census of the district of Gnúpverjahreppur in the county of Árnessýsla.

Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. The report from Gnúpverjahreppur in Árnessýsla.

A Dishonest Man and Four Thieves

In the census, the inhabitants are registered according to their degree of respectability in their households and within their district. The head of the household is listed first, then the housewife, children, relatives, other members of the household, and lastly paupers. Paupers and vagrants are generally listed as a separate group at the end of the list in each district. Above, there are names of five dishonest men in Gnúpverjahreppur in Árnessýsla in South Iceland, entered at the bottom of the last page of the census, after the paupers. Direct translation with names written according to modern spelling:

“Gísli Oddsson dis honest / Jón Þórðarson branded a thief / Bjarni Símónsson branded a thief / Grímur Ólafsson branded a thief / Gísli Þorkelsson judged a thief.”

Two of these men were punished in Alþingi in 1703. Jón Þórðarson was hanged for burglary and repeated thefts, while Gísli Oddsson was whipped nearly to death. (Alþingisbækur Íslands IX, Reykjavík 1957–1964, p. 225–226).

THE FIRST COUNTS

There are two documents from the 18th century that show the statistical results of the 1703 Census. One states the population was 50,681 and the other says it numbered 50,682.²⁵ These documents both originate from the same source, which almost certainly held information derived from a count done in the period 1703 to 1709. This was the first count from the 1703 Census records.²⁶ These results did not become a general knowledge.

In Copenhagen, the Census was stored in the archives of the Exchequer, together with the Register of Estates documents and the 1703 Livestock Register. It appears that these documents simply lay there unused by the administration and unused for decades. That situation changed in the latter half of the 18th century when Skúli Magnússon, treasurer of Iceland, researched the documents and used the data as supporting material in preparation of a register of estates. This register of estates consisted of 5 books and was referred to as the 1760 Register of Estates. In 1777–1778, Skúli also collected statistics from the census and livestock records of 1703, which he recorded in the sixth book, referred to as the Addendum to the Register of Estates.²⁷ This contains statistics on the number of people and livestock.²⁸

25 The sources in question are two tables with the number of people in 1703 (both genders) in each county. Hannes Finnsson, „Um mannfækkun af hallærum á Íslandi“, Rit þess konungliga íslenska Lærdómslistafélags XIV (Kaupmannahöfn 1796), p. 183; Þí. Skjalasafn Landfógeta, XXVIII, 1. A book of various documents, p. 304–305.

26 In 1709 Árni Magnússon knew that about 25% of Icelanders died of smallpox 1707–1709. Arne Magnussons Embedsskrivelser og andre offentlige aktsytkker (København og Kristiania 1916), p. 324. See Jón Steffensen, „Árni Magnússon og manntalið 1703“, p. 100–101. See also Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson and Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, „Inngangur“, Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 21–22.

27 Þí. Rentukammer. 1928–11, E/45. Viðbætur við Jarðabók Skúla Magnússonar saminn af Skúla Magnússyni 1778 [The Addendum].

28 Jón Eiríksson, „Forberedelse“, Oeconomisk Reise igiennem de nordvestlige, nordlige, og nordostlige Kanter af Island II (København 1780), p. LXIX–LXXIII. See Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson and Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, „Inngangur“, Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 21; Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, „Formáli“, p. IX. See also Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, „Manntalið 1703“, Andvari 72 (1947), p. 32.

Thus Skúli carried on or completed the work that the commission had begun. The 1760 Register of Estates was then used for administrative purposes in Copenhagen.

The second count of the 1703 Census was made by Skúli Magnússon. The statistics in his Addendum to the 1760 Register of Estates are the results of that second count. It states there were 7,537 families and puts the total number of Icelanders at 50,444.²⁹ His figures were published in a book in 1780.³⁰ They remained the official population count for Iceland from 1780 on, until Statistics Iceland undertook a new count in 1947. It is evident that Skúli tried to rectify the numbers of the first count, to which he had access.

THE RELIABILITY OF THE 1703 CENSUS

But how reliable is the census? Were all Icelanders included? An attempt to answer this relevant question would logically suggest trying to verify whether all the farms occupied in 1703 are recorded in the census. Contemporary records that provide information on this are first and foremost the Register of Estates prepared by Árni and Páll, which specifies whether a farm was inhabited or not, and the 1703 Livestock Register, where the farms and the owners of the livestock are specified. Comparison of these records reveals seven farms inhabited during the census year that are not recorded in the census.³¹ From the information

in the Register of Estates and the Addendum, it can be assumed that about 40 people would have lived on these farms.

As previously mentioned, the registration of the census took more than half a year, and during those months there would have been changes to the population, people dying and children being born. In other respects, it is clear that efforts were made to record everyone. For example, the only student who appears to be studying in Copenhagen during the census taking is listed in his home in Iceland but also said to be overseas.³² There are also examples of children who were born after the census taking in their district being added to the report before it was handed in.³³ Overall, however, the 1703 Census can be considered as an accurate and a reliable record of Icelandic society in that year.

29 ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, E/45. Viðbætur við Jarðabók Skúla Magnússonar saminn af Skúla Magnússyni 1778, p. 557–558. Cf. Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, “Formáli”, p. IX.

30 Olaus Olavius, Oeconomisk Reise II, p. 657.

31 See Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns III (Kaupmannahöfn 1923–1924), p. 91–92; Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns VI (Kaupmannahöfn 1938), p. 269, 284, 285. ÞÍ. Rentukammer. D1/4. Kvikfjártal 1703, Skagafjarðarsýsla, Tungusveitarhreppur June 7th, 1703. ÞÍ. Rentukammer. D1/4. Kvikfjártal 1703, Húnavatnssýsla, Þverárhreppur May 30th, 1703. Bjarghús is recorded in the Register of Estates of Árni and Páll in 1705 and is at that time inhabited. See Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns VIII (Kaupmannahöfn 1926), p. 205–206. As regards Viðey, see Viðbætur (Addendum), p. 232 and the article

of Helgi Skúli Kjartansson “Var Viðey í eyði 1703?”, Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 77–84.

32 The student was Björn Jónsson studiosus, the son of county magistrate Jón Thorláksson and Sesselja Hallgrímsdóttir. See Bjarni Jónsson, Íslenskir Hafnarstúdentar (Akureyri 1949), p. 59; Manntal á Íslandi árið 1703, p. 420.

33 Four children were added at the end of the census in the district of Vatnsheshreppur after it was completed on March 27th, 1703. Manntal á Íslandi árið 1703, p. 254.

Stadar- Nafn.	N.	Personunnar Stafi med hennar Dóttur. Nafn.	Aldur. enn.	Huor. Professi- on.	Stadar- Nafn.	N.	Personunnar Stafi med hennar Dóttur. Nafn.	Aldur. enn.	Huor. Professi- on.
	1	Maðr Björn Thorleifsson	40	Superintendentur Hóla Biskupdóttur		1	Madme Þrúður Þorsteins dóttir	37	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
Hloo.	2	Jon Arnason	37	Rector Hóla Skóla	Hloo.	2	Madme Sigríður Skúla dóttir	19	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
LAR	3	Jon Gunnlaugsson	36	Dómþinginnar þingmaður	LAR	3	Madme Jóna Skúla dóttir	10	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	4	Jon Jónsson	49	Dómþinginnar þingmaður		4	Þrúður Þorsteins dóttir	77	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	5	Jon Einarsson	29	Pro-Rector, Lar. Latínu fyrir nám		5	Skemman Gallgrímur dóttir	62	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
1	6	Jon Guðlaugsson	37	Dómþinginnar þingmaður	1	6	Guðrún Þorsteins dóttir	36	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	7	Einar Sigmundsson	33	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		7	Ingibjörg Skemman dóttir	38	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
Hjalta.	8	Einar Ásmundsson	26	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing	Hjalta.	8	Guðrún Þorsteins dóttir	20	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
dal.	9	Magnús Einarsson	15	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing	dal.	9	Ingibjörg Þorsteins dóttir	18	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	10	Jon Þorsteinsson	30	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		10	Guðrún Þorsteins dóttir	19	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	11	Olafur Þorvaldsson	14	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		11	Sigríður Þorsteins dóttir	15	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	12	Gallður Þorvaldsson	79	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		12	Málgjörður Þorsteins dóttir	16	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	13	Olafur Jónsson	19	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		13	Ingibjörg Þorsteins dóttir	27	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing
	14	Jon Olafsson	20	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing		14	Guðrún Olafsson dóttir	20	Þe. Biskupsins Húsnæðing

Source: Þl. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. Census in Hólahreppur in Skagafjarðarsýsla.

The Diocese of Hólar in Hjaltdalur

The diocese of Hólar in Hjaltdalur is in Skagafjörður in North Iceland. In 1703, Bishop Björn Þorleifsson and Madam Þrúður Þorsteinsdóttir were at the head of the household. This was one of the two largest households in Iceland, being both a bishop's see and an operating school. The specialisation of the employees is noteworthy. Here there is a bull-keeper, a caravan driver (i.e. of horses), a trout fisher in the summer, and

among the women are maids, weaving-women, a baker-woman, a cook and three fiancés. In addition, it is quite unusual to see that the genders are separated in the list. The image shows only a small number of the people at Hólar. The total number of residents was 92, of which 48 were men and 44 were women.

**Sölh. Registur Fyrra Depi, hvar me upskripader eru, Rúpbaen,,
dur, Børn, Dönnupölk og Ruspölk (far þad er) Sömulidid ridur,,
Setuþugar med öðru umþarande Gücitarpölke; Saman,,
Skríp ad ä Långapöstu Anno 1703**

Samars hollt

1	Einar Oddsson Ruspönde	46	lra
2	Steinun Olafsdött Ruspria	35	lra
3	Heinar sonur Olafs Þoroddsson	23	lra
4	Þudrún Einarsson ap fm upalen	20	lra
5	Ragneyd Eyvindsd ap fm upalen	11	lra
6	Sölborg Þordardött vinnukona	35	lra

Þingupell Rúpþyle

Jón Þudbrandsson anar Ruspönde	43	lra
Þurýdur Þordardött Ruspria	44	lra
Þeirra Barn Sigryd, þpur öngva Jölanött		
Katrýn Þordardött Ruspönde þar	45	lra

Öiðser Oddsson	41	lra
Þudleip Þáldött Ruspria	39	lra
Þetta son Magnús þepur öngva Jölanött		
Þnar son hallur Jónson laungeten	7	lra
Kalldöta Jónsd ap fm upalen	8	lra
Þorsteinn Jónson vinnuadur	25	lra
Þudrún Jónsd þar Ruspönde	40	lra

Þadar partur úr Þingupelle

Jón Þudmundsson Ruspönde	43	lra
Ranveig Þudmnds dött brútyra	46	lra
Andres Jónson ap fm upalen	10	lra
Alþur Þordarson ap fm upalen	13	lra
Þudmundur Jónson vinnuþilltur	20	lra
Þöra Einarsson dött vinnukona	23	lra

Rlyd

Eyvindur Olafsson Ruspönde	56	lra
Katrýn Magnús dött Ruspria	48	lra
Þeirra Børn		

Þroa	4	lra
en Jón	2	lra
Sigrýdur Jónsdött vinnukona	23	lra

Þöta

Kallvardur Kalldarsen Ruspönde	45	lra
Katrýn Þáldött Ruspria	40	lra
Þeirra dött Helga	3	lra

Þans Børn

Þordur	17	lra
Þudrún	18	lra
Helga	12	lra
Jón Þudmndsson vinnuþilltur	21	lra
Jugeþig Einarsson vinnukona	20	lra

Þaugar

Þorlákur Þiðlþson Ruspönde	51	lra
Helga Þorsteinsdött Ruspria	50	lra

Þeirra Børn

Þorsteinn	21	lra	Þudmundur	20	lra
Jón	18	lra	Sigrýdur	17	lra
Ranveig	8	lra	Þurýdur	6	lra
Þurýd Sueinsd möð Helgu Þorsteinsd	85	lra			
Helga Sueinsdött vinnukona	31	lra			

Þörrens Stader

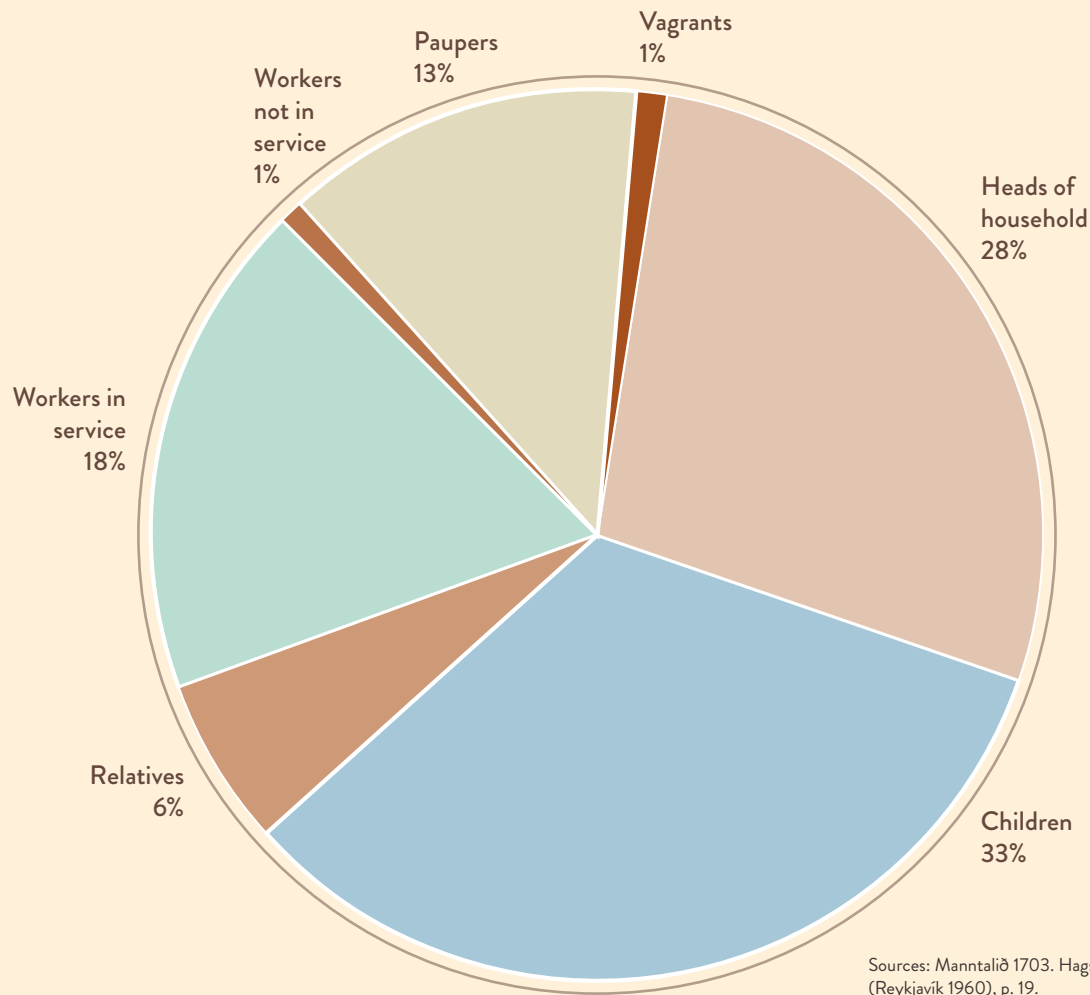
Jón Þordarson Ruspönde	63	lra
Sölborg Erlends dött Ruspria	56	lra

Þeirra Børn

Erlendur	19	lra
Solveig	22	lra

Reikiadalur

Þresturen Þ. Þyle Jónson Ruspönde	62	lra
Ragneidur Kalkonard Ruspria	58	lra
Jugemundur þans bróðer	70	lra



Population of Iceland in 1703

In 1703, Iceland had a population of 50,366; 22,874 men and 27,492 women. The large discrepancy in the number of men and women can for the most part be attributed to the greater danger inherent in the men's work. They were responsible for work outside the home, at sea and on land, with the attendant risks.

The household was the basic unit of Icelandic society; it was both a home and a place of work, and held all Icelanders, including homeowners,

children to the age of 15, relatives, workers in service, workers not in service, paupers and vagrants.

Households in Iceland in 1703 numbered 8,191. Of these, there were 567 one-person households, and two extremely large households, the Skálholt and Hólar dioceses, with close to one hundred people each. The average household size in Iceland in 1703 was 6.1 persons. (Manntalið 1703. Hagskýrslur Íslands II, 21, Reykjavík 1960, p. 18–19.)

THE PUBLICATION OF THE CENSUS AND NEW FIGURES

Statistics Iceland published the census in 17 booklets over the period of 1924 to 1947.³⁴ On the completion of the publication in 1947, it was stated that Icelanders in 1703 had numbered 50,358, which is slightly fewer than had previously been believed.³⁵

The 1947 publication created a new basis to prepare statistics. In 1960, Statistics Iceland published detailed statistical data based on the printed version.³⁶ There, the figure 50,358 is confirmed as the official population figure for Iceland in 1703. Men numbered 22,867 and women 27,491. The calculations of Statistics Iceland took account of double and multiple registrations as far as possible, and deducted them from the total number of all individuals in the census.

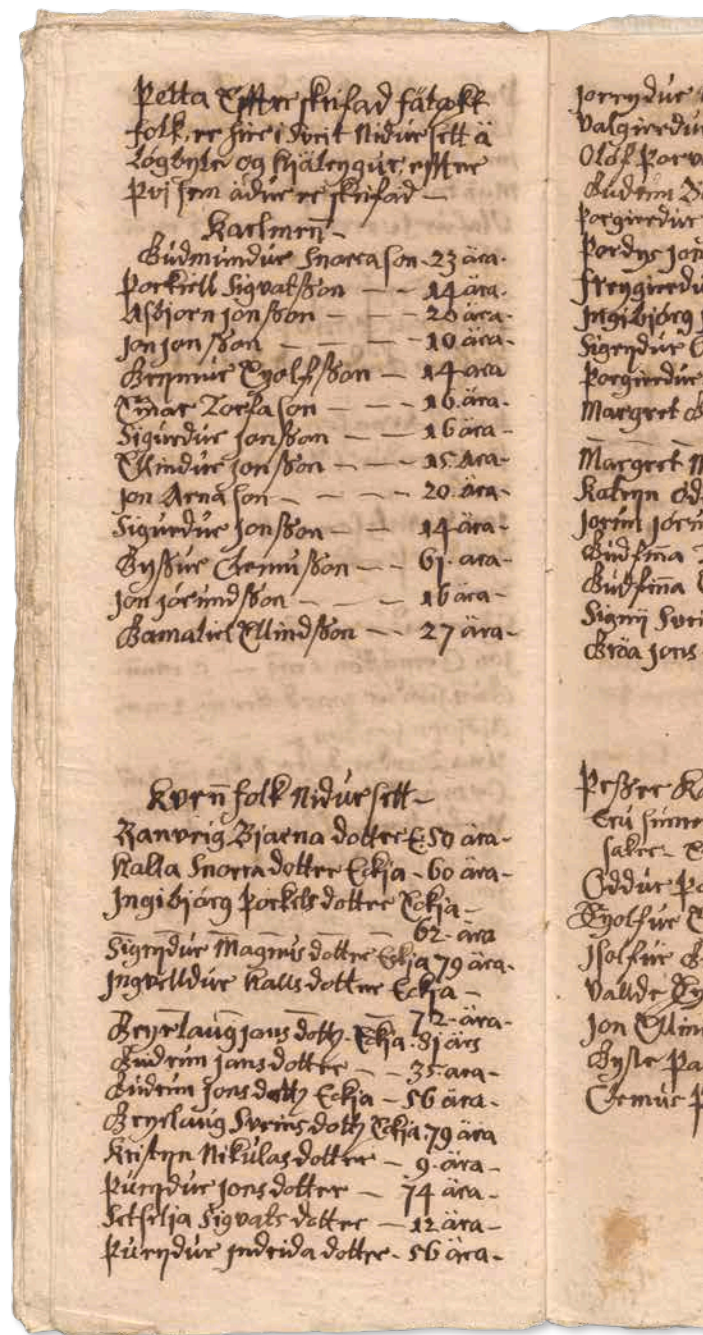
In 1964, long after the publication of the census and several years after the publication of the statistics, a note from the census with 9 named individuals and 2 unnamed children, a total of 11 persons (3 female and 8 male), was found in the National Archives. Of these 11 persons, one woman and her two children are also recorded elsewhere in the census, making them twice recorded. The note, therefore, brings to light 8 persons (one woman and seven men) that are not included in the statistics published by Statistics Iceland in 1960. The total number of Icelanders in 1703 should, therefore, be increased by 8 and registered as 50,366, at least until such time as different evidence should suggest otherwise.³⁷

³⁴ See Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, "Formáli", p. VII, XII, XIV, XV–XVI.

³⁵ Þorsteinn Þorsteinsson, "Formáli", p. XIV.

³⁶ Hagskýrslur Íslands II, 21.

³⁷ See Björk Ingimundardóttir and Eiríkur G. Guðmundsson, "Manntalið 1703 – skuggsjá samfélags", Manntalið 1703 þrjú hundruð ára, p. 70–72.



Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/1. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. Record of paupers in Stokkseyrarhreppur in Árnessýsla.

Anno 1703

Biarni Jónsson í ofeigsfriði h² veruð Jón Svein Jónsini
 þennarvet² til heimilis, + 11 öðr² Jónsdótt² h²
 furit² kona, hielill bodevarlsö þier t² furit² konin t²
 Jón Þorsteinsson, midalldra mið² a h² fúert nokkra þeir
 þad² veitir og h² vinnuþv² v². A set² selia ásgrynisdótt²
 þ² n² konin h² fúert m² tucim² omög² pillti og stulka
 a h² angva fúert² v²tolu, h² kient þessi s²yn b²odi b²örn
 þem²ungi gudmundssini frýktu og m²orkudu þ² þiornad
 þorsteinsson umhleiping² þ² fúert i n²es² þv² v²
 otti odka s²on þ²ailur þaldana s²on fleppan ásgrynms
 þ² s² þ² opar þ²ris ad² men voru h² i fúert² | s²on
 þ²ir h² aug² dagr²u þ² p²arka til merkis v²nd² þ²ris þ²riopn.
 Jón magnússö 2 h² Jónundur Þiarnsson e²
 Jón Linarson m² 2 6

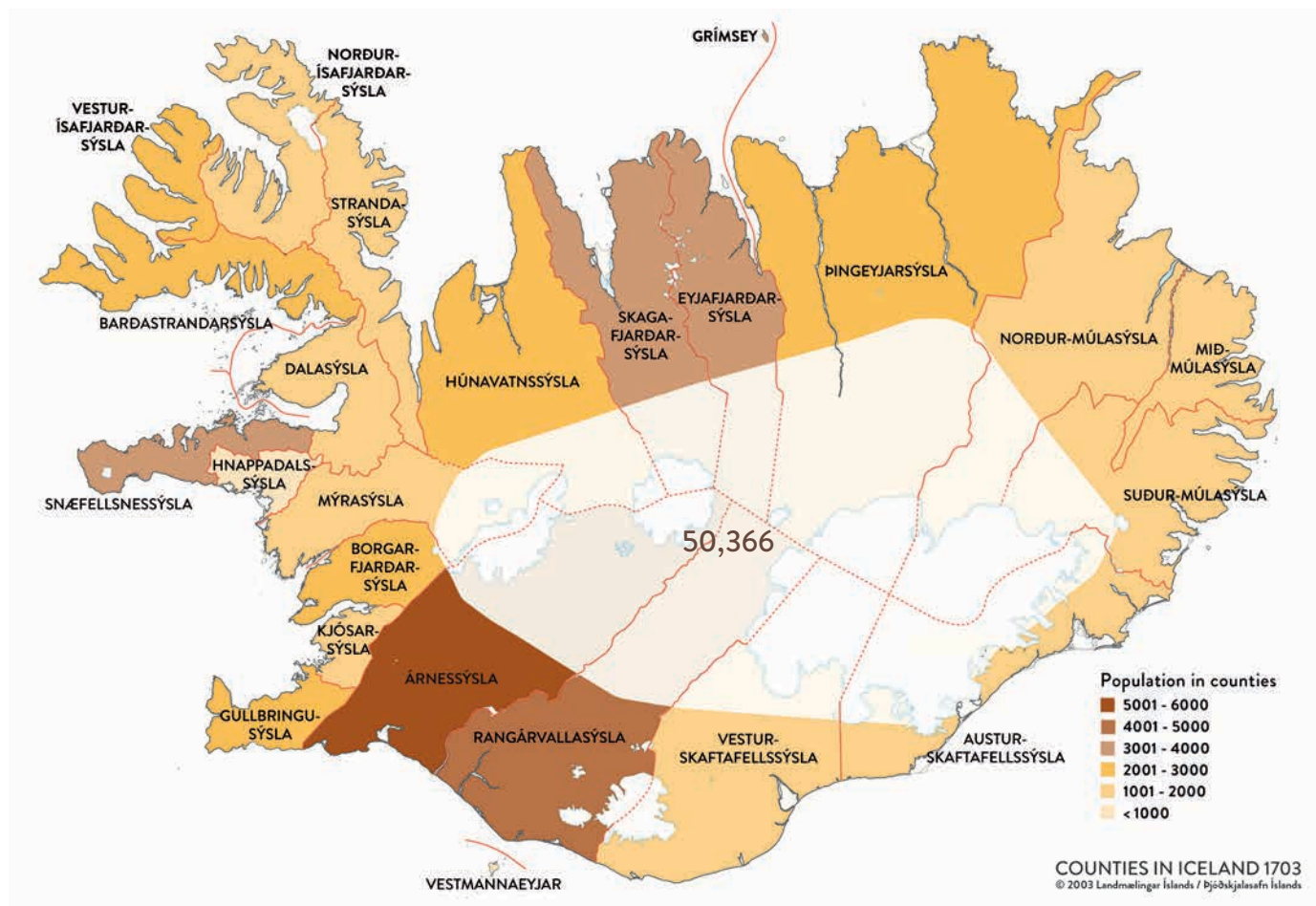
teir h² aug²
 illis
 vik

Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, D1/2. Manntalið 1703 [The 1703 Census]. Record of paupers and vagrants in Trékyllisvík in Strandasýsla.

The Missing Note

Statistics Iceland published the 1703 Census in 1924 - 1947 and statistics based on the publication in 1960. According to these publications, the population of Iceland in 1703 was 50,358. Late in 1963 or early 1964, a note dated 1703 was found in the National Archives of Iceland containing nine named individuals and two unnamed children from Trékyllisvík in Strandasýsla. Three of these were recorded elsewhere. The other eight are missing from the printed version and the statistics published by Statistics Iceland. The official number of Icelanders in 1703 should, therefore, be increased by this number to 50,366.

The note was found among livestock records that were compiled at the same time as the census. It appears to have been delivered to Árni Magnússon or Páll Vídalín sometime after Alþingi ended in 1703.



Source: Þí. Rentukammer. 1928–11, D1/1 and D1/2. The 1703 Census.

The Distribution of the Population in 1703

Iceland is 103,000 km². In comparison, Denmark is 43,000 km². The central highlands are uninhabitable. About ten percent of the island is covered by glaciers.

In 1703, Iceland consisted of 23 counties, each divided into several districts. The number of people living in each county differed widely and depended on the conditions for agriculture and fishing. The south

part of Iceland, along with the north, had the largest and best areas for agriculture, and there the population was highest.

In 1801, the population of Iceland was 47,240. Over the next one hundred years, the population grew to 78,470. On January 1st, 2015, Iceland's population numbered 329,100, a figure more than six times greater than the count given in the 1703 Census.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Certifies the inscription of

The 1703 Census of Iceland

National Archives

(Institution)

Reykjavík

(Town)

Iceland

(Country)

ON THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD INTERNATIONAL REGISTER

18 June 2013

(Date)



Irina Bokova
Director-General, UNESCO

Source: ÞÍ. The Archives of the National Archives of Iceland. Fileno. 1301045. Certification document from UNESCO, date June 18th, 2013.

Inscription into the Memory of the World International Register

In 2012, an application was sent to UNESCO requesting the inclusion of the 1703 Census in the Memory of the World Register. The application was successful, and the census was inscribed on the list on June 18th, 2013.

UNESCO states: “The inclusion of this documentary heritage in the Memory of the World Register reflects its exceptional value and signifies that it should be protected for the benefit of all humanity.” (ÞÍ. The

Archives of the National Archives of Iceland. Fileno. 1301045. Letter from Jānis Kārkliņš, Assistant Director General for Communication and information UNESCO, dated September 2nd, 2013.)

The Certificate from UNESCO states that the 1703 Census of Iceland, preserved in the National Archives of Iceland, has been inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register. The document is signed by the organisation’s Director-General, Irina Bokova.

Anno 1703 þá 7 Aprilis, sem er la-
 gar Dagurinn næstur fyrir páska Voru þi
 or þaddar tvær menn, or þig nafna son
 Jóns son og Magnus Oddi son, son þessa
 förgift þorra 52 ára gamall, barnfæd-
 dur og þess alnir a skardfærind f þess
 nesi þyngr, en um næst lidur þessi á-
 græpað þess þess f þessardar systni f
 skála þyk og bindunga þyk, En Magnus
 Oddi son er 49 ára gamall, barnfæd-
 ur, f þessardal f þessardar systni, en
 þessi þingad a þessardar, a 21 ári þess
 er alldur, og þess þess f þessardar
 systni þessardar þess, bæði f þessardar
 þess þess folk, og þess þess þess
 a með al godra manna f þess systni,
 þess þess mat þess þess þess, þess
 þess 28 ára þess þess þess f þess
 þess þess þess, þess þess þess þess
 þess þess þess þess þess þess
 a þess þess þess 9 Aprilis Anno 1703
 Þingur þess þess
 m f þess þess þess þess þess
 þess þess þess þess þess

Baldur Blafðottir " " Ómagi 18 ara
 Sigvald Eggþorsson " " " " Ómagi 56 ara

Þrengholar

Jón Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 5 ara
 Eggþorsson " " " " Ómagi 4 ara
 Eiríkur Þorvaldsson " " " " Ómagi 16 ara

Einholts kirkjuþekja

Flatey

Halldóra Gissursdóttir " " Ómagi 5 ara
 Halla Jónsdóttir " " " " Ómagi 24 ara
 Þorvald Jónsdóttir " " " " Ómagi 15 ara
 Þorvald Jónsdóttir " " " " Ómagi 9 ara

Þessir 4 menn þiggja þenkafétt

Eiríkur Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 44 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " " " Ómagi 14 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " " " Ómagi 14 ara

Þessir 3 menn þiggja þenkafétt

Flatey eptir.

Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 52 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 50 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 22 ara
 Halldóra Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 10 ara

Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 20 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 18 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 12 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 15 ara

Jón Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 50 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 44 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 56 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 19 ara

Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 24 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 24 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 23 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 2 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 8 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 20 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 50 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 18 ara

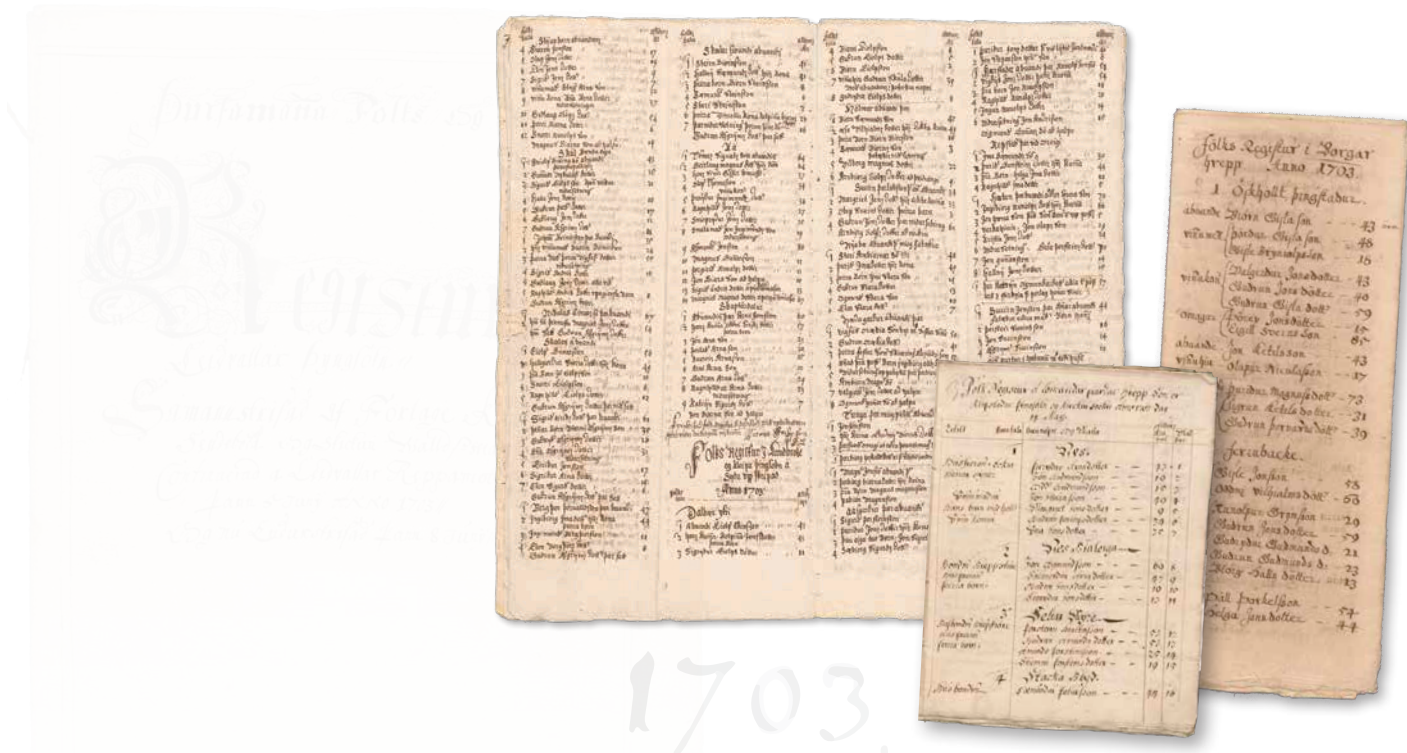
Þorvaldsson

Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 32 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 50 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 63 ara
 Þorvaldsson " " Ómagi 14 ara

Source: ÞÍ. Rentukammer. 1928, DI/I. Mannatalið 1703
 [The 1703 Census]. Census from Austur - Skafthellssýsla.

A Pointing Hand

In several places in the census records for Austur-Skaftafellssýsla county in the south of Iceland, those who accept public support are indicated with a hand pointing to their name. The farm Flatey in Einholtskirkja parish in Hornafjörður consisted of two households and both accepted support from the district authorities. One of the households consisted of Halldóra Gissursdóttir and three young women, very likely her daughters. Eiríkur Sigmundsson and his two children formed the other household. A hand pointing has been drawn on the margin of the paper and points to these comments: "These four people accept public support", and "These three persons accept public support". Those who were unable to support themselves were called paupers (Ómagar) and were listed last. They were at the bottom of the social ladder, both in the home and in society.



CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD HERITAGE AND NEW OBJECTIVES

The inscription of the 1703 Census on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register is a wonderful and welcome recognition of the uniqueness and importance of these special records. The 1703 Census is the oldest complete census in the world that has survived. With only a few minor exceptions, it records all the inhabitants of a country, as well as each person's name, age, and residence, and social or employment status. No other nation has as accurate demographic information from this time. UNESCO has confirmed that the 1703 Census not only has great meaning for Icelanders, but also makes an important contribution to world heritage.

The first complete census in the Danish Kingdom was conducted in 1769 (it includes also Iceland), but it only counted the inhabitants. The first nominal census in Denmark was carried out in 1787.³⁸ In most other European countries, general

censuses were first carried out in the early 19th century. Before the time of censuses, it was customary to count only tax-payers and men able to bear arms.

Having written records on the Memory of the World Register brings new objectives. The programme emphasizes three: safe preservation of the records in question, good access for all and increased awareness of its existence and importance. All these objectives have been achieved. The original census documents have been stored with the best available archival materials, they are stored in the Archives' secure storage unit with limited access and are subject to restrictions. Access for all has been ensured by publishing a digital copy of the census records on the internet.³⁹ In addition, samples of some of the original records have been on public exhibition in Reykjavik.⁴⁰ Hopefully this booklet will further increase the awareness of the 1703 Census, and its importance to our shared cultural heritage.

38 Johansen, Hans Christian, „Folketællinger“, Dansk kulturhistorisk Opslagsværk I, 1991, p. 244-246. Besides the 1703 census, three other nominal censuses were carried out in the 18th century, in 1729, 1762 and in 1785, because the authorities in Copenhagen were, for different reasons, collecting information about the Icelandic society. The 1729 and 1762 censuses are incomplete, and the 1785 census is lost.

39 Images of the census are accessible on the website of the National Archives at www.skjalasafn.is/skjalaskra (search for manntalið 1703). A digital copy is also available at Archives Portal Europe, www.archivesportaleurope.net.

40 Sjónarhorn/perspectives in the Culture House opened April 2015.

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



The 1703 Census of Iceland
Inscribed on the International Register in 2013
Memory of the World

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