



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Ásgrímur Jónsson

The early watercolours 1904-1914

Ritgerð til B.A. prófs

Derek Karl Mundell

Maí 2011

Háskóli Íslands

Íslensku- og menningardeild

Listfræði

Ásgrímur Jónsson

The early watercolours 1904-1914

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs

**Derek Karl Mundell
Kt.: 170351-7549**

**Leiðbeinandi: Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson
Maí 2011**

Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Foundation	5
1.2	Ásgrímur Jónsson	6
2	The foundation of a watercolourist's career	8
2.1	Where paths cross	8
3	The foundations of watercolour painting.....	13
3.1.	The legacy.....	13
3.2.	The materials.....	13
3.3	“Technical skill is mastery of complexity...”	15
4	The connections.....	21
4.1	The British tradition.....	21
4.2	William Gershom Collingwood.....	22
4.3	John MacWhirter, R.A.....	24
4.4	Joseph Mallord William Turner, R.A.	26
5	Conclusions	32
6	Acknowledgements	33
7	Bibliography	34
8	Appendix 1: Glyptotek, 1908	36
9	Appendix 2: Five letters and a postcard	38
10	Figures in the text	40

Abstract

This thesis investigates the early watercolours of Ásgrímur Jónsson (1876–1958) painted between 1904 and 1914. The artist returned from Denmark in 1903 without any formal training in the use of watercolours. He proceeded to teach himself to use this difficult medium to interpret the Icelandic landscape during the new wave of Romanticism which was sweeping through Icelandic culture at the turn of the century.

He commented in his memoirs which were published in 1956, that he had learnt most about watercolour by studying works by the British master J.M.W Turner (1775–1851). Studies were made for this thesis to determine which of Turner's works Jónsson is likely to have seen during these formative years. Only one exhibition of British art was held in Copenhagen while Jónsson lived in Denmark. Five oil paintings by Turner were exhibited at that time. Other evidence indicates that Jónsson purchased illustrated art books and used the coloured prints therein to improve his watercolour technique at this time.

A brief summary is made of technical terms connected with watercolour painting including an overview of materials. This enabled an empirical comparison to be made of selected examples of Jónsson's watercolours dated 1904 to 1914, with works by Turner and other painters of the British school. Certain links were established but it was also noticeable that Jónsson was in fact more of a 'purist' than the British painters because he did not use gouache (bodycolour) in any of his works from this period.

Jónsson reached a certain pinnacle in his large panoramic watercolours from Austur-Skaftafellssýsla which he painted in the years 1911 to 1913. He subsequently ceased painting landscapes in watercolour in 1914, and commented in his memoirs that he felt at that time that his art was becoming a routine skill and this was detrimental to his artistic development. It is reasoned in the thesis that in 1913–14 he was repeating popular landscape motives for sale and although this helped him financially, it meant that he was unable to develop his art in the direction he wanted to take. After this decision was made he continued to use watercolour in his illustrations for Icelandic folktales at the same time as painting in oils. Several years later when he became reacquainted with watercolour landscapes, it was on his own terms and his paintings showed the influence of impressionist and expressionist works which he had seen in Europe several years previously.

*"Technical skill is mastery of complexity while creativity is mastery of simplicity."*¹

Christopher Zeeman

1 Introduction

1.1 Foundation

Painting with watercolour is one of the earliest known examples of self-expression which has accompanied man for at least thirty millennia. The wall paintings in the limestone caverns of southern France were made with pieces of yellow and red ochre rocks which Palaeolithic man had ground into powder and mixed to slurry with water. They had already used the same materials to decorate their faces and bodies but it was a significant advance in Man's development when they painted two-dimensional forms of animals on the walls of those caves. These craftsmen were pioneers in every possible way, including this use of water-soluble pigment to make their mark. They taught themselves to paint by trial and error. Present day artists commencing with watercolour still learn by trial and error but have the advantage of being able to refer to the works of others who have come before them.

The best artists learn by personal discipline and exploration. They do not accept what they are told without researching and confirming it for themselves. In watercolour, however, there is an especially long, rich and varied tradition from these early cave painters through the tomb decorators of ancient Egypt to the manuscript illustrators of Persia and the Western world. Fresco painters of the Italian Renaissance are also known to have used water-based pigments. The Dutch and Germans subsequently revived watercolour painting in the 17th century from where it spread to the rest of Europe due to its use in topographical paintings. In the 18th century, painters of the British landscape school thoroughly exploited the possibilities and resource of watercolour. J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851) and John Constable (1776–1837), two of the great masters of landscape painting, made it evident that the medium lent itself to unsurpassed power and lyric beauty. Paul Cezanne (1839–1906), John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) and Winslow Homer (1836–1910) are but a few of the innumerable artists of the Western world who also adopted the watercolour medium alongside their oil painting. Few of

¹ Christopher Zeeman. *Today in Science History*. Website link: http://www.todayinsci.com/Z/Zeeaman_Christopher/ZeeamanChristopher-Quotations.htm. Accessed 2nd March 2011.

these latter-day masters received instruction on the idiosyncrasies of watercolour but instead learnt how to paint with this medium simply by doing many paintings. They studied what happened when watercolour paint was applied to paper with brush, sponge or even a morsel of dried bread.² They learnt that the moisture in the paper and the moisture in the brush were critical influencing factors in the way the paint spread on the paper. They realised that they could create effects which no other medium could offer them and that this could be done in seconds rather than days and weeks. It was the medium to capture a fleeting moment as the artist was experiencing it without using the camera. But above all it was the medium to interpret light.

In his essay “Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna” in the book *Blæbrigði vatnsins*, Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson points out that each nation has its own history of watercolour which often develops separately from the international art history of painting, sculpture and architecture found in the textbooks. With few exceptions in Western art, watercolour painting was not held in such high regard as was oil painting and sculpture.³ Iceland was no exception in this respect.

Elsewhere, it is proposed that the watercolour medium ought to be ideal to interpret the clarity and pure colours in Icelandic nature. It is therefore surprising that so few Icelandic artists have exploited this possibility. The reason for this could be that,

... nothing is more alien to [the Icelandic] rough temperament than the medium of watercolour. A medium which was admirably suited to the needs of cultivated Englishmen during the second half of the 18th century, has never agreed with artists from such an unsophisticated farming culture as [Iceland].⁴

There is, however, one Icelandic artist who challenges this reasoning.

1.2 Ásgrímur Jónsson

The first Icelandic artist to dedicate himself to mastery of this capricious medium is considered by many to be Ásgrímur Jónsson (1876–1958).⁵ In an interview in 1961, his colleague, Jón Stefánsson (1881–1962), justifiably declared that Jónsson was the

² Townsend, Joyce H. *Turner's Painting Techniques*. Tate Publishing, London, 2005, p. 23.

³ Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson. “Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna”. *Blæbrigði vatnsins- Vatnslitir í íslenskri myndlist 1880-2009*. Bókaútgáfan Opna og Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Reykjavík, 2010, p. 8.

⁴ Halldór Björn Runólfsson. “Reflections on Icelandic Art”. In *Aldarspejill*, Listasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, 1988, pp.172-3.

⁵ It should be noted that both Sölvi Helgason (1820 – 1895) and Benedikt Gröndal (1826 – 1907) were known to have used watercolours to make a visual record of their surroundings. During the 19th century, however, they were unable to obtain materials to practice their art to the same degree as Ásgrímur Jónsson did at the start of the 20th century.

Icelanders' "first professional painter".⁶ Jónsson commenced painting in watercolour at the turn of the century and continued to use the medium alongside his work in oils for the rest of his long career. Like many artists before him, he taught himself to use the medium, and in a remarkably short period reached an admirable level of proficiency. This thesis will examine this period of development from 1904, following his return to Iceland after his Academy years in Copenhagen, until 1914 when he apparently ceased painting landscape in watercolour for several years. His work subsequently underwent a metamorphosis and became much more influenced by his experience of French Impressionism and later, Nordic Expressionism.⁷

This thesis will also investigate Jónsson's own observation that he had "learnt most from Turner with respect to watercolours".⁸ The artist's sketchbooks, painting materials (paper and watercolour paints) and textbooks in his possession are used to try and shed light on this process of learning and personal development in the art of watercolour painting. An attempt will be made to determine similarities in his works with those of J.M.W Turner and other artists of the British school to which Jónsson could possibly have had access at this time. The comparisons are inevitably of a conjectural nature based on the watercolour painting techniques discussed in section three on techniques, although every attempt will be made to indicate factual links.

An attempt will also be made to explain the reason why Jónsson decided not to paint landscapes in watercolour for several years from 1914. He recalls in his memoirs that his "artistic development" was threatened but does not expand further on the nature of this threat.⁹ A study of his work during the formative years prior to 1914 will hopefully shed some light on this decision and will necessarily include speculation on the execution of the large panoramic works from Austur-Skaftafellssýsla.

⁶ Sigríður Thorlacius. „...eins og andinn sé að fálma eftir einhverju, sem ekki er skilgreinanlegt“, Interview with Jon Stefánsson. *Timinn*, 6th April 1961, p. 8.

⁷ Aðalsteinn Ingolfsson, "Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna", pp. 13 - 14.

⁸ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*. Almenna bókafélagið, Reykjavík, 1956, p. 200.

⁹ Ibid, p. 198.

2 The foundation of a watercolourist's career

2.1 Where paths cross

2.1.1 W.G. Collingwood

In June of 1897 the mail-boat *Laura* brought the English artist William Gershom Collingwood (1854–1932) to Iceland. He travelled widely in the west and south of the country and during the two months he dwelt in Iceland he painted about 300 watercolours and sketches on which he based the illustrations for his book *Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland* (1899).¹⁰ At that time Ásgrímur Jónsson was working as a labourer in Bíldudalur, in Northwest Iceland. He had taken the decision to move to Denmark and try his luck without having registered for any art studies but with only 200 krona in his pocket. He left Iceland with the same mail-boat *Laura* four months after Collingwood's visit commenced.¹¹ It is unlikely that the two artists met while Collingwood was in Iceland, but it is probable that Jónsson saw a copy of *Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland* at some time soon after its publication in 1899. Valtýr Guðmundsson reviewed the book in an article in *Eimreiðin*.¹² He wrote, “This book has been named a ‘royal jewel’ in the Icelandic press and rightly so since it is so rare to see such a well illustrated book about Iceland.” It is also suggested elsewhere that the pictures gained some popularity in Iceland and were used extensively in other publications concerning the country and its sagas.¹³ Although a copy of Collingwood's book was not found in Jónsson's library, it cannot be excluded that he saw the illustrations and an attempt will be made in this thesis to support this theory.

2.1.2 J.M.W. Turner

Jónsson comments in his memoirs that he first became acquainted with the work of J.M.W. Turner through the examination of prints of his works.¹⁴ There was, however, little evidence in his library of these prints or books containing these illustrations. He

¹⁰ Collingwood, William Gershom. *Fegurð Íslands og fornir sögustaðir: Svipmyndir og sendibréf úr Íslandsför W.G. Collingwoods 1897*. Ed. Haraldur Hannesson. Örn og Örlygur, 1988, p. 143.

¹¹ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, pp. 73 and 77.

¹² Valtýr Guðmundsson. Ritsjá V. “W.G. Collingwood og Jón Stefánsson: Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland.” *Eimreiðin*, 6, 1900, p. 148.

¹³ Haraldur Hannesson. In *Á sögulóðum. Nokkrar myndir úr Íslandsför sumarið 1897*. Bókaútgáfa menningarsjóðs, Reykjavík, 1969, p. 10.

¹⁴ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, p. 200.

goes on to reveal that he “...later saw many of his works in an exhibition of British art in Copenhagen and finally much later in British art galleries.”¹⁵ Jónsson lived in Copenhagen continuously from October 1897 to April 1902. He then returned there for the winters of 1902/3, 1904/5 and 1907/8. In March 1908 he left Copenhagen to travel to Rome, visiting Berlin and Weimar on his way there. He returned from Italy in March 1909, stopping in Berlin again before arriving back in Copenhagen for a brief stay before returning to Iceland.¹⁶ He only visited Copenhagen briefly on one other occasion in 1914, after which there is no record of him stopping there.¹⁷ An investigation of possible exhibitions held in Copenhagen during those years in which Jónsson is known to have been in the Danish capital, shows that one exhibition of British art was held in the capital during this period.

In 1908, an exhibition of “Aeldre Engelsk Kunst” from the Royal Academy was held in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.¹⁸ The actual dates of the exhibition are not to be found in the catalogue but it does show that five works by J.M.W Turner were exhibited, all of which were oil paintings.¹⁹ Evidence from other sources shows that this exhibition toured to Berlin.²⁰ There are no records of other exhibitions of British art held in Copenhagen during the time that Jónsson stayed in the city. It is therefore likely that he is referring to this exhibition, although there is no evidence that he viewed original watercolours by Turner at that time.

There is also a possibility that he viewed watercolours by Turner during his visits to art museums in Berlin and Weimar in 1908 and 1909.²¹ This is not specifically mentioned, although he does refer to his experience of the impressionist works in these two cities.²²

Jónsson’s mention of viewing Turner’s works “much later at exhibitions in British art galleries” can possibly refer to his visit to Inverness, Scotland in 1952 when he sought

¹⁵ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, p. 200.

¹⁶ Sama heimild, pp. 112-129.

¹⁷ Júlíana Gottskáldsdóttir. “Biography” in *Ljósbrigði*. Listasafn Íslands, Safn Ásgríms Jónssonar, Reykjavík, 1996. pp. 171-177.

¹⁸ Fuchs, Anneli. Research assistant, Danmarks Kunstbibliotek. Personal communication, 22nd February 2011.

¹⁹ These works are listed in appendix 1 together with photographs of the catalogue.

²⁰ Beaumont-Jones, Julia. Collection Registrar: Prints and Drawings, Tate Gallery. Personal communication, 7th March 2011. Two online catalogues show that the exhibition toured to both Copenhagen and Berlin. These can be found at the National Gallery of Art: <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg59/gg59-102-exhibit.html> and also at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where the link to ‘exhibition history’ should be followed: http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/european_paintings/elizabeth_farren_born_about_1759_died_1829_later_sir_thomas_lawrence/objectview.aspx?collID=11&OID=110001295

²¹ Confirmation on the presence of such works has not been forthcoming from the Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin or from Goethe-Nationalmuseum and Neues Museum in Weimar.

²² Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, pp. 114 and 128.

medical help.²³ This was the only time that Jónsson is known to have visited Britain for a longer period. In this respect, this late encounter with Turner would not have influenced Jónsson. It is of interest, however, that Jónsson mentions in his memoirs that he stopped briefly in Leith, Scotland on his sea voyages to and from Denmark in the first decade of the century. The post vessels stopped for a day to facilitate loading, during which the transit passengers could travel to Edinburgh. Jónsson recalls his first trip in 1897, “I was in the city [Edinburgh] for a whole day while the vessel was in port, and was amazed by everything I saw.”²⁴ He does not reveal whether he visited the National Gallery of Scotland in the city centre. It was not until the year 1899 that this Edinburgh art museum received a bequest of 38 Turner watercolours from the collector Henry Vaughan. The museum website states, “These outstanding works have been exhibited, as he requested, every January for the last 110 years. Vaughan wanted to limit their exposure to light so that they would be conserved; consequently, they are renowned for their excellent state of preservation.”²⁵ Assuming that these works were only exhibited in January, it is unlikely that Jónsson saw them since he travelled to Copenhagen in the autumn and returned in the spring like a migrating bird.

As mentioned earlier, Jónsson recalls in his memoirs that he had primarily learnt about watercolour from Turner’s works. It must be assumed that he achieved this objective through the study of good quality printed reproductions and observation of the Turner oil paintings in Copenhagen or Berlin. An attempt will be made in this thesis to make connections between Jónsson’s early watercolours and selected works by J.M.W Turner.

2.1.3 *Books in the artist’s library*

In an interview with Thor Vilhjálmsson in 1965, Þorvaldur Skúlason revealed that, “Ásgrímur owned a lot of books on art. One could study various subjects there which had a great effect on us.”²⁶ It is a fact that a large number of publications on art are to be

²³ Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. “Biography”, p. 176.

²⁴ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, p. 78.

²⁵ National Galleries in Scotland. “Turner in January”. Website link:

<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/whatson/exhibition/5:368/19993/20362> Accessed 20th April 2011.

²⁶ Thor Vilhjálmsson. “Vinnustofurabb við Þorvald” in *Hvað er San Marino?* Ísafoldarprentsmiðja hf, Reykjavík, 1973, pp. 178-9.

found in Jónsson's library but it is also notable that the majority of these volumes are published after 1920. Very few are registered before that date.²⁷

In a publication in 1986, Hrafnhildur Schram has pointed to the fact that Jónsson possessed a "small handbook for watercolourists which was entitled *Landscape painting in watercolour*, issued in London, 1911."²⁸ This volume was not found in Jónsson's library which he bequeathed to the Icelandic State in 1952.²⁹ The volume appears to have been lost before Bergstaðastræti 74 was closed to the public. A search on the internet for this title revealed that a book with this name was written by the artist John MacWhirter, R.A. (1839–1911) and first published in 1900 by Cassell and Co. Ltd., London. This book proved popular and was reprinted eight times between 1901 and 1921, including the year 1911 which Hrafnhildur Schram had noted.³⁰ A good copy was obtained and shown to her (see figures 1 and 2). She was uncertain whether this was the same handbook to which she had referred thirty years earlier, but she could not exclude with any certainty that this was indeed the book which she had seen in Jónsson's library in the 1980s. For the purpose of this study, it will be assumed that this book by MacWhirter was the one in Jónsson's library, since the title, year and place correspond with the information given by Hrafnhildur Schram in 1986. An attempt will be made to show that the illustrations in this handbook form to some extent a foundation for Jónsson's watercolour technique after 1911.

Another book in Jónsson's possession was entitled *A Descriptive Handbook of Modern Water-colour Pigments* first published in London in 1887 by the pigment manufacturer Winsor and Newton Ltd. (see figures 3 and 4) This reference volume lists the numerous colours produced by the company and includes hand-painted graduated watercolour washes of each colour on sample swatches of paper.

Thirdly, a six page sheet, which was apparently torn from a book, was found in Jónsson's library.³¹ This folded sheet comprised five pages of text in English and one

²⁷ This is based on a comprehensive list which was made by Ólafur Ingi Jónsson, Listasafn Íslands when Ásgrímur Jónsson's possessions were packed in 2006. (Hereafter the artist's name will be abbreviated to ÁJ in the footnotes.)

²⁸ Hrafnhildur Schram and Hjörleifur Sigurðsson. *Ásgrímur Jónsson*. Listasafn ASÍ and Lögberg, Reykjavík, 1986, p. 32.

²⁹ Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir notes in her book *Ljósbriði* that on 11. November 1952 ÁJ announced his decision to bequeath all his earthly possessions to the State after his death. During her research for this work in the 1990s, Júlíana was not able to locate this handbook on watercolour, although she did find a photocopy of the title page in ÁJ's library. Written communication dated 8th March 2011.

³⁰ World Cat. Viewed on 2nd March 2011 at <http://www.worldcat.org/title/landscape-painting-in-water-colour/oclc/21546889/editions?referer=di&editionsView=true>.

³¹ ÁJ apparently dismantled books which included coloured plates of paintings. He owned two copies of *Turner* in the Faber Series on artists, published by Faber and Faber, London in 1949. One copy was dismantled and the other intact, apart from the removal of one colour plate entitled *Petworth Park*.

coloured plate of a watercolour painting by Turner, *Plate VII. – Lausanne* (Figure 5). No other pages from this book were found in Jónsson's possessions. An internet search based on the only visible chapter heading, "Letter V. The flame leaps, expands and expires" revealed that the book was written by Charles Lewis Hind and is entitled *Turner, Five Letters and a Postscript*, published in 1900 by T.C. and E.C. Jack, London.³² The fact that Jónsson had taken the book apart would suggest that he used some or all of the eight colour reproductions within his studio. There is evidence that he pinned these illustrations up so as to be able to easily observe the colours, form and values used as well as scrutinizing the techniques employed.³³ These were the building materials for his foundations.

³² The illustrations from a personal copy of this same book are shown in appendix 2. They include three watercolours and five oils.

³³ There are clear pin holes on the corners of this fragment from the book, and also a thumbprint of red paint, showing that he was handling the page while working.

3 The foundations of watercolour painting

3.1. *The legacy*

It has generally been agreed that the distinctiveness of watercolour as a medium lies in its position between drawing and painting, allowing it to combine the graphic and spontaneous aspects of drawing, but at the same time it exploits the colourful and expressive effects of painting. Hafþór Yngvason writes in the introduction to *Blæbrigði vatnsins*, “Works in watercolour appear bright and alive, full of a luminosity and airiness which too often is lost in works executed in oil and acryl.”³⁴ He rightly points out that Cézanne used these properties to develop his own shorthand improvisation, whereby pencil and watercolour were skillfully combined as a rapid means to capture fleeting moments in nature that were outside the range of more time-consuming oil painting. Pencil was used to define form and paintbrush used to describe value and colour. This has meant that particularly in western art, watercolour has been employed in sketches in preparation for other less spontaneous media. These watercolour sketches *per se* were, however, not usually intended to be exhibited by the artist.

Such sketches are particularly evident in Turner’s oeuvre. Works on paper in various forms of watercolour comprise the majority of the nearly 20,000 items which were catalogued by Alexander J. Finberg between 1905 and 1909.³⁵ If the wording of Turner’s bequest had been followed exactly, then only one hundred finished oil paintings would have gone to the nation on his death and no works on paper at all. Turner never intended that the latter should be seen. But the fact that these works have been preserved provides posterity with an extraordinary showcase for Turner, the master of watercolour that he was. This applies equally to Jónsson’s bequest to the Icelandic nation, since the majority of these works were on paper. Drawings, watercolours and sketches now give an insight into the “thought processes” of a master.³⁶

3.2. *The materials*

Turner’s mastery of watercolour coincides with its establishment in Britain as an independent art form. It also depended greatly on the production of paper which could

³⁴ Hafþór Yngvason. “Formáli”. *Blæbrigði vatnsins- Vatnslitir í íslenskri myndlist 1880-2009*. Bókaútgáfan Opna og Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Reykjavík, 2010, p. 7.

³⁵ Shanes, Eric. *Turner’s Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*. Tate Gallery Publishing, London, 1997, p. 7.

³⁶ Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. “Biography” in *Ljósbrigði*, p. 12.

accept the paints in a controllable manner, and which was also strong enough to withstand the severe treatment which Turner applied to it.³⁷ Such paper was not available until late in the eighteenth century when Turner was embarking upon his career. Research has shown that he specifically looked for and purchased paper which had been well-sized³⁸ to make it resistant enough to withstand his vigorous brushwork.³⁹ The production of smoother paper also commenced at this time after J. Whatman the Elder introduced finely woven wire-meshed fabric into the moulding process in 1757.⁴⁰ This development enabled Turner and his contemporaries to increase the size of their works and thus measure up to the “competitive conditions” of the Royal Academy, where watercolours were jostling for attention on the overcrowded walls at Somerset House.⁴¹

Jónsson benefited from these developments and subsequent improvements which occurred in paper production during the eighteenth century. It is known that he used good quality paper for his watercolours. For many of his works Jónsson used paper produced by W. Balston & Co. at Springfield Mill, Maidstone in Kent, bearing the watermark “J. Whatman”. His largest paintings were executed in 1912 on “antiquarian”⁴² sheets from this manufacturer.⁴³ It would appear from the list of works registered with Listasafn Íslands that he did not use such large sheets again in his career. The next largest watercolour works which are registered are dated near the end of his career in the 40s and early 50s with Húsafell and its surroundings as his subject. These later works were painted on “double elephant”⁴⁴ sheets which can nevertheless still be considered a masterly achievement.

With regard to watercolour paints, Jónsson was evidently familiar with those produced by the two principal British manufacturers at the beginning of the 20th century – Winsor

³⁷ Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*, p. 23.

³⁸ Sizing is critical in determining the characteristics of watercolour paper. It was originally a solution of glue or gelatine but later any substance that reduced the rate at which paper absorbs water or ink. It is applied by addition to the pulp before forming and also by coating the finished sheet.

³⁹ Townsend, Joyce H. *Turner's Painting Techniques*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ British Association of Paper Historians. “History of Paper-making in the United Kingdom”. Last modified 7th May 2009. Website link:

http://www.baph.org.uk/general%20reference/history_of_papermaking_in_the_united%20kingdom.htm. Accessed on 24th March 2011.

⁴¹ Wilton, Andrew and Anne Lyles. *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*. Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1993, p.260.

⁴² The term “antiquarian” refers to the size of the sheet, ca 79 x 135 cm.

⁴³ Peter Bowers. Personal communication 16th March 2011.

⁴⁴ The term “double elephant” refers to the size of the sheet, ca 68 x 102cm.

and Newton Ltd.⁴⁵ as well as George Rowney and Co.⁴⁶ Both companies produced the traditional hard pans or cakes as well as the collapsible metal tube with a screw cap which was first adopted for watercolours by Winsor & Newton in 1846. Jónsson could well have used both cake and tube paints, but it is certain that for his large works he must have used tube paints for the simple reason that such extensive areas of paper are impossible to cover with the required speed, while trying to dissolve the hard cakes with a wet brush. It is likely that he tested his newly purchased paints in his sketchbook on at least two occasions early in his career (figures 7 and 8) and it should be noted that he gradated the swatches in the same fashion as in the above mentioned handbook from Winsor and Newton Ltd.

With these relatively simple but highly developed materials to hand, Jónsson was able to practice his colour mixing and application to the ever-responsive watercolour paper which is of primary importance for good results. Several decades later he was able to pass on his experience of these materials to other artists by advising importing companies such as Pensillinn, Laugavegur 4, Reykjavík. In an interview in *Vísir* in 1962, Gunnsteinn Jóhannsson recalls that Jónsson “was also much more than an ordinary customer, since he was also my tutor and personal advisor on selecting artist materials for import and sale.”⁴⁷

3.3 “Technical skill is mastery of complexity...”

Watercolour painting has the reputation of being a difficult medium, one which refuses to hide mistakes. Unlike oils and acrylics, corrections cannot easily be made by lifting the paint off the support or by simply painting over with another layer. Watercolour pigment can be lifted to some degree by rewetting the offending area and laboriously scrubbing with a brush or blotting with tissue, but the paper support is delicate and has a good “memory”. All this means that watercolour is a medium which can share its secrets with the trained observer. It is necessary for the purpose of this study to define various terms which will be used to compare the techniques of the artists and the orchestration of the materials as they interact with the carrier agent, water.

⁴⁵ This assumption is based on the fact that ÁJ possessed a copy of Winsor and Newton’s book *A Descriptive Handbook of Modern Water-colour Pigments* first published in 1887.

⁴⁶ This assumption is based on the fact that ÁJ possessed a copy of a booklet of colour samples from George Rowney and Co. The company’s name was changed to George Rowney and Co. Ltd. in 1924 (see figure 6).

⁴⁷ *Vísir*. Hvergi málað eins mikið og á Íslandi. Interview with Gunnsteinn Jóhannsson, 18th edn, 24th January 1962, p. 4.

3.3.1 Basic facts about water

It can be argued that water plays a more important and active role as a carrier in the act of watercolour painting than the comparative carriers do in other painting mediums such as oils and acrylics. Colours can be allowed to run and mix together in water which is both on and within the paper. In order to exploit this behavior a familiarity with water's quirks is required in order to nudge the work in the right direction rather than trying to control or dominate the carrier. This rather goes against human nature which usually demands total control, but with practice the artist can relax his ideas of dominance and thus experiment in order to understand what water can do in different conditions. The skilled watercolourist can exploit a few basic facts about water in order to interpret aerial perspective, i.e. far and near or in and out of focus. This depends entirely on the wetness of the paper support and the concentration of paint in the brush.

Wet-in-wet. This refers to any passage where wet paint is applied to wet paper, or where wet paint or water is added into wet paint already on the paper. In general, wet-in-wet is one of the most distinctive features of watercolour painting and is the technique which produces the most striking painterly effect. This brushstroke in watercolour offers the expressive textures which result from pigment diffusion, granulation and colour gradation. A wet mark placed into a wet surface will spread until it is evenly distributed. The more pigment in the mark, the slower its progress. If the paper is saturated with water, the pigment will spread further and be more diluted. If the drying time is shortened because of a higher ambient temperature or a drying breeze outdoors, then the spread of pigment will be slowed down. This fact alone makes painting *en plein air* even more challenging than painting indoors under more controlled conditions.

This brushstroke was used profusely by Turner in both his finished works and sketches. In later decades, he prepared his sketches solely by this means, as found in those unfinished sketches which have been called “colour beginnings”⁴⁸. Shanes quotes Turner's contemporary, William Leighton Leitch, who was one of the few to witness the painter at work on his watercolours,

⁴⁸ Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*, p. 9.

Turner's method was to float-in his broken colours while the paper was wet...he stretched the paper on boards, and, after plunging them in water, he dropped the colours onto the paper while it was wet, making marblings and gradations throughout the work.⁴⁹

Ample evidence of wet-in-wet brushstrokes can be found in both Jónsson's and Turner's work.

Dry-in-wet. A dry or damp brush with concentrated pigment can be applied to wet paper to produce a soft and yet controlled edge. The brush will deposit pigment but at the same time soak up water from the paper's surface. Examples are rare in both Jónsson's works as well as Turner's.

Wet-on-dry. This is the most common and most controllable brushstroke. The wet brush mark will stay exactly where it is laid on the paper's surface and will not run unless the paper is tipped acutely so that gravity pulls the wet drop of pigmented water over dry paper. Both Turner and Jónsson used this brushstroke almost exclusively in their early paintings.

Dry-on-dry. A dry or damp brush which is drawn on its side over the dry surface of watercolour paper will leave broken, stippled marks. The pigment is deposited on the innumerable microscopic peaks of the paper and the valleys remain untouched. This brushstroke is much rarer but can be found in the work of both artists.

3.3.2 *A vocabulary of techniques*

As mentioned earlier, watercolour has the reputation of being a medium which is not easily corrected. There are ways, however, to amend and rework paintings. These can be summarised as follows:

Wash. This is an application of colour over a larger field than cannot conveniently be covered by the brush in one stroke. A wash must be continued and extended while the colour is still wet and show no joins. Washes can be bled into one another when still wet. A common example is a blue wash for a clear sky. Washes can be applied in a number of ways to achieve different effects. Both wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry are common but they give different results. With the paper fixed to a rigid support by clips or tape, the board is tilted slightly so that the top of the wash area is higher than the

⁴⁹ Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*, p.23.

bottom. Then the diluted paint is brushed on the paper in a series of even, horizontal brush strokes in a downward sequence, each stroke just overlapping the stroke above to pull downward the excess paint, and finally soaking up the excess paint from the last stroke using a paper towel or the tip of a dry brush which acts like a sponge. If this same method is used on wet paper, a graduated wash will result since the water on the paper dilutes the pigment in the brush as it zigzags down the paper. If executed on dry paper, individual horizontal strokes will remain visible contributing to a more dynamic quality to the work. Both methods produce an airy, translucent colour effect unique to the watercolour medium. Washes with a blending on the paper of more than one colour can also be used, for example as a wash with areas of blue and perhaps some red or orange for a sky at sunrise or sunset. This is termed a variegated wash. All of these examples can be found in the works of both Jónsson and Turner.

Glazing. This is the term used for a transparent painting technique often used to create luminous atmospheric effects. It comprises the application of one paint colour over a previous paint layer, with the new paint layer at sufficient dilution to permit the first colour to show through. Glazes are used to optically mix two or more colours, to adjust a colour, or to produce a controlled but delicate colour transition (light to dark, or one colour hue to another). Each layer must be completely dry before additional layers are applied, otherwise the result becomes opaque as the previously applied layers are disturbed by the subsequent brushstrokes. It is possible to complete a work without the use of glazing but these are usually spontaneous sketches used to capture the moment. The majority of works in this study show clear signs of the use of glazing.

Washing out. Pigments exhibit various degrees of solubility in water and also a diverse affinity to bind to the fibres in the paper. It is possible to wash out dried pigment from selected areas of a painting or indeed from the whole work. This has a variety of effects depending on which pigments are involved. Some watercolour artists use this technique together with subsequent glazing to establish a depth and harmony which cannot be obtained by other means. Evidence of washing out is very evident in Turner's sketches but less so in his finished works. The same is the case with Jónsson's works. It is not a technique which the latter appears to have used to any extent.

Lifting pigment. Washing out of pigment from small areas is possible by wetting the selected area with clean water and then lifting the wetted pigment with the tip of a damp brush, or an absorbent cloth, or sponge. This is good for correcting and also for creating

soft highlights. Examples of lifting out of pigment can be found in the works of both artists.

Scraping out. In this method the top level of pigmented paper is scraped away with a sharp instrument which could be a knife but more commonly the point of a brush handle, or even a fingernail. This exposes the white paper for a sharp highlight but means that over-painting of the scraped area is not possible. Turner used both the lifting technique and scraping out extensively.⁵⁰ Evidence in Jónsson's works is not so clear.

Use of gouache paint. Highlights and corrections can also be made with water-soluble bodycolour or gouache which is relatively opaque and can cover previously laid pigment. Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson notes that many of the 18th and 19th century masters used gouache to lighten or darken values in their watercolours but that "few used it with such genius as Turner himself".⁵¹ In a review of the history of the Royal Watercolour Society, the author points out that, "[w]hile 'purists' may frown upon a watercolourist using bodycolour to produce mere highlights, they may forget that many of Turner's most beautiful Continental watercolours were painted in this medium alone."⁵² Jónsson, however, appears to have avoided the use of gouache in his paintings and sketches. Was he perhaps one of these 'purists'?

Stopping out (masking the paper). Preservation of a highlight by masking a selected area of the painting is possible with a liquid agent such as gum in order to prevent that area being painted over by subsequent layers of wash. When the paint has dried, the gum can easily be removed revealing a sharp highlight. Once again, there is evidence that Turner used this method⁵³, but either Jónsson was not aware of this possibility or else he consciously avoided using it.

Negative space. Many of the above techniques rely on the removal of pigment to create a highlight. Stopping out can be employed to reserve an area but there is also the possibility of painting around the highlight to create what has been termed negative space. This technique is distinctive of watercolour painting and rarely needs to be used in other mediums. It is also of interest since Jónsson uses negative space almost

⁵⁰ Townsend, Joyce H. *Turner's Painting Techniques*, p. 23.

⁵¹ Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson, "Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna", p.17.

⁵² Spender, Michael. *The Glory of Watercolour: The Royal Watercolour Society Diploma collection*. David and Charles, London, 1987, pp. 18-19.

⁵³ Townsend, Joyce H. *Turner's Painting Techniques*, p. 26.

exclusively to create highlights such as snow in the mountains or smoke from a farmhouse.

These terms listed above give the background necessary to make a study of Jónsson's early watercolours in an attempt to find connections with the works of other masters who had gone before him. In no way does such an association detract from the originality of Jónsson's works. On the contrary, it demonstrates his considerable ingenuity and skill that he should be able to interpret the reproductions he possessed and originals he may have studied in museums abroad.

4 The connections

4.1 *The British tradition*

It is notable that all of the connections made in this study are with sources of British origin. As mentioned previously, there is no record that Jónsson visited Britain for any length of time until near the end of his life in 1952. Why, therefore, should the British tradition have been so influential in his development as a watercolour artist?

Watercolour in its modern application as a medium for recording Nature was pioneered in a watery country, the Netherlands, but was introduced as such into Britain by Dutch artists in the early 17th century.⁵⁴ The medium was used all over the European continent for topographical purposes during the 17th and 18th centuries. With the advent of the Grand Tour, the need to record gave way to the need to recollect and reminisce where atmosphere was equally important as factual details. The British watercolour developed more in the direction of the finished painting alongside its inherent importance as a sketching medium. Between 1770 and 1800, a number of technical innovations were introduced to improve the appearance of watercolours.⁵⁵ This experimentation had no parallel on the Continent where watercolour was to change little until after the 1820s.⁵⁶

The British tradition is considered to have commenced with the revolutionary watercolours of John Robert Cozens (1752–97) and continued into the 19th century with Thomas Girtin (1775–1802) and J.M.W. Turner who spent their apprenticeships copying works by Cozens at the evening sessions of Dr Thomas Monro’s famous ‘academy’ at the doctor’s home in Adelphi Terrace.⁵⁷ Turner became the virtuoso who went his own way in interpretation and innovative techniques. In 1804 he became the prime inspiration for the foundation of the Society of Painters in Water-colours (OWSC), although he was unable to become a member himself due to his affiliation to the Royal Academy. The OWSC swiftly became the exhibiting forum for the newly blossoming watercolour medium in Britain and led the way for its development alongside that of oil painting within the Academy. From these beginnings arose a tradition which was to reach even to Iceland.

⁵⁴ Wilton, Andrew and Anne Lyles. *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*, p.12.

⁵⁵ J. Whatman’s innovation of woven paper become available in the 1780s and at the same time William and Thomas Reeve established themselves in London as colourmen, supplying ready-made watercolour paints.

⁵⁶ Wilton, Andrew and Anne Lyles. *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ Hamilton, James. *Turner, A Life*. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1997, p. 35.

4.2 William Gershom Collingwood

Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson has succinctly catalogued the visits of numerous European watercolour artists to Iceland in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁵⁸ He suggests that W.G. Collingwood was more than just one of a line of travelling artists. Collingwood's works have been described elsewhere as "a part of Icelandic culture, cultural history and Icelandic heritage."⁵⁹ In their book *A Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland* published in 1899 (hereafter referred to as *Pilgrimage*), Collingwood and his co author, Dr. Jón Stefánsson selected 152 of the artist's drawings and paintings, thereof thirteen good quality colour plates. In all of these thirteen plates it is evident that Collingwood works on relatively dry paper, laying each layer of paint wet-on-dry. This can be seen even in his interpretation of calm water as in *Lögberg and Nicolas Chasm* (plate 10 in *Pilgrimage*) (figure 9) and also in the sunset painting *Melsted and Reykir* (plate 139 in *Pilgrimage*) (figure 10) where the dry brushstrokes of red in the sky are rather unconvincing.

It is suggested that there are two reasons for this style of painting. Firstly, Collingwood normally painted in layers on dry paper. This can be seen in earlier works such as *John Ruskin in his study* (1881) (see figure 11). Secondly, the damp and relatively cold climate which he experienced during his expedition in Iceland meant that he was unable to work on wetted paper. The painting would never have dried sufficiently to enable him to pack it into his bag so that they could continue their journey.⁶⁰ Evidence of some wetter painting can be found in portraits painted on the expedition where he probably had more time and could leave the painting to dry overnight before leaving it with his hosts. An example of this is the *Portrait of Guðrún Magnúsdóttir* (1897) (see figure 12).⁶¹

If the assumption is correct that Jónsson studied these colour plates in *Pilgrimage*, then a connection could possibly be found with some of the Icelandic's early watercolours. These connections could be in the form of brushstrokes, colour usage or composition. In Jónsson's works from 1904 there is a predominance of brushstrokes on dry paper. Typical works are *Árdalur í Andakíl í Borgarfirði* (1904, LÍÁJ 398) (figure 13) and

⁵⁸ Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson, "Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna", p 9.

⁵⁹ Einar Falur Ingólfsson. *Sögustaðir. Í fótspor W.G. Collingwoods*. Crymogea / Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, 2010, p. 128.

⁶⁰ It should be noted here that the majority of the known works painted on or after the Icelandic expedition were ca. 14,5 x 20 cm. About a fifth were ca. 20 x 29 cm.

⁶¹ Collingwood, W.G. *Fegurð Íslands og fornir sögustaðir*, p. 113.

Jarlhettur í Langjökli (1904, LÍÁJ 392) (see figure 14). These are comparable with most of Collingwood's colour plates with regard to working on dry paper. In a painting of flowing water from this period, *Tröllkonuhlaup, Hekla* (1904, LÍÁJ 393) (figure 15) all of the brushstrokes are on dry paper, worked in layers. There is, however, evidence in a similar work from 1904, *Barnafoss í Borgarfirði* (1904, LÍÁJ 547) (figure 16) that he was experimenting with blending two washes on damp paper to obtain a variegated wash.

The vignette entitled *Vorið* (1904, LÍÁJ 595) (figure 17) is extraordinary for this period, not only because of the unusual motive and execution, but also because of the evidence of negative space which form the light coloured flowers on the grassy slope where the two girls are kneeling. Jónsson has painted around each of these forms to reserve white paper and then dropped yellow colour into some of the negative spaces and left others untouched. If this is compared with Collingwood's work *Gill at Gisbakki* (plate 42 in *Pilgrimage*) (figure 18), a similar technique has been employed to interpret the small flowers on the grassy bank at the left foreground.

Use of colour in Jónsson's early watercolours bears little resemblance to those in the Collingwood plates with the possible exception of the use of greens and blues in *Árdalur í Andakíl í Borgarfirði* (1904, LÍÁJ 398) (figure 13) and Collingwood's *Gill at Gisbakki* (see figure 18). It is not known whether the two artists were using pigments from the same manufacturer although they were both probably using the most common pigments such as cobalt blue, French ultramarine, cerulean blue, viridian green, emerald green, cobalt green, cadmium yellow, Naples yellow, vermilion, madder lake, yellow ochre, the siennas and the umbers. All of these were readily available at the turn of the century.⁶²

Similarities in composition are necessarily more subjective in comparison. It could be argued that Collingwood's relatively large work entitled *Kóngsbakki in Helgafellssveit* (plate 73 in *Pilgrimage*) (figure 19) bears some resemblance to some of Jónsson's paintings where the farmstead is dominant in the foreground. An example is a work which is privately owned and has been titled *Sveitabær - sést til Þríhyrnings* (n.d, nr 143) (see figure 20). The compositions mirror each other very closely with the home field sloping away from the farm houses and surrounded by a low wall. In the distance the mountains rise majestically into a cloud scattered blue sky. There is a calm serenity

⁶² Skelton, Helen. A colour chemist's history of Western art. *Rev. Prog. Coloration*, 29, 1999, pp 43-64.

over both of the works, although this does not necessarily mean that one was the inspiration for the other.

Collingwood was an experienced watercolourist and worthy representative of the British school of landscape painters. He interpreted the Icelandic landscape with the trained eye of an artist who was also well acquainted with the Sagas and appreciated their significance in Icelandic and Northern European history. He emphasised in his introduction to *Pilgrimage* that the paintings were not intended as a personal interpretation, but rather as accurate and true images of the places which were made famous in the Icelandic Sagas.⁶³ When, however, Collingwood's interpretation is compared to photographs taken by Einar Falur Ingólfsson in his book *Sögustaðir. Í fótspor W.G. Collingwoods*, it is noticeable that the British artist amplifies the grandeur of the mountains in his works. The author commented, "...he employed visual illusions available to the trained artist. He moved the mountains closer to the viewer as a photographer would use a telephoto lens, and also raised them to emphasise their magnificence."⁶⁴ The same cannot be said for most of Jónsson's landscapes which are topographically correct and yet demonstrate his personal interpretation of the scene with regard to colour and value. This fact alone would seem to indicate that if Jónsson had indeed seen Collingwood's book *Pilgrimage* on his return to Iceland in the spring of 1903, then he was only studying the painting techniques used by the British artist in order to improve his own proficiency in the watercolour medium. The rapid progress Jónsson made is proof of his keen analytical skills.

4.3 John MacWhirter, R.A.

As mentioned previously, it is assumed that the book which Hrafnhildur Schram found in Jónsson's library was the one written by John MacWhirter, containing twenty three colour plates of his works. The copy in Jónsson's possession was printed in 1911 but it is not known when he obtained it. The illustrations are all taken from nature and include studies of flowers and trees as well as predominantly landscape works. There is a sketch-like study of meadow flowers where negative spaces have been left for the white flowers (see figure 21). Another interesting work is a portrait of a silver birch trunk isolated against dark undergrowth in the background. Here is another clear example of

⁶³ Collingwood, William Gershom. "Preface" in *Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland*. W.Holmes, Ulverston, 1899, p. v.

⁶⁴ Einar Falur Ingólfsson. *Sögustaðir. Í fótspor W.G. Collingwoods*, p. 100.

negative painting, but also some brushwork on wet or damp paper to interpret the dark vegetation in the background (see figure 22).

The work which is of particular interest in this collection is the study entitled *Highland river in flood*, (figure 23) where the artist has interpreted fast flowing water by the use of wet on dry brushstrokes, layer on layer in an optical fusion of cadmium yellow, siennas and madder. Highlights have been added to the water and rocks in Chinese white.⁶⁵ This work is seemingly echoed in Jónsson's excellent study of *Hverfisfljót* (1912, LÍÁJ 449) (figure 24), both in colour usage and lively brushstrokes. He did not, however, use Chinese white (gouache) to describe the spray but instead employed dry-on-dry brushstrokes and also lifting of the pigment with a damp sponge or cloth. This technique is not visible in Collingwood's paintings or in MacWhirter's illustrations. The execution of Jónsson's work is in many ways more advanced than his previous works of rapidly flowing water such as *Barnafooss í Borgarfirði*, 1904 (figure 16) and *Tröllkonuhlaup, Hekla*, 1904 (figure 15) as well as at least one work of the same motive, painted while he was in Rome, *Tröllkonuhlaup, Hekla* (1908, LÍÁJ 429) (see figure 25). It must be admitted, however, that his usage of colour is similar in all three works painted over an eight year period.

There are several alpine landscapes in MacWhirter's book showing clear examples of aerial perspective, i.e. blue mountains in the far distance, purple hills in the middle distance and warm slopes in the foreground. For example the work entitled *At Glion, Lake Geneva* (figure 26) exhibits this technique. Usage of this illusion is not really evident in Jónsson's works, neither in oil or watercolour, before 1912 when he uses it in the panoramas of Skaftafellssýsla. The work *Úr Mýrdal, við Dyrhólaey* (ca 1910, privately owned, nr. 346) (figure 27) is an example where aerial perspective could have been used to improve depth of field. On the other hand, *Frá Hornafirði* (1912, LÍÁJ 1977) (figure 28) demonstrates well this illusion of distance.

In a foreword to MacWhirter's collection of watercolours, the artist states:

I do not recommend the copying of many pictures. There is a risk, that when you go to nature you will see with another's eyes. You must look and see for yourself. [...] Of course, you can learn much by looking well at great works, and taking mental notes; and, indeed, it can do no harm but only good to copy *parts* of a great picture, if only to find out how thoroughly the master works.

⁶⁵ MacWhirter comments on p.14, "Waters in flood, or in rapid motion, should be painted with a quick, nervous touch. This will help the illusion of flowing."

[...] You cannot study [Turner and Millais] too much. Turner for light and atmosphere, and the drawing of mountains and clouds; Millais for everything. [...] There are two kinds of impressionists – those who seem to receive only a vague and blurred impression [...] and those who receive a more powerful impression, who see all that the others see, while at the same time they can also remember and reproduce colour, detail, texture, etc. Turner was the greatest impressionist in landscape painting.

4.4 *Joseph Mallord William Turner, R.A.*

Jónsson and Turner were artists who worked in watercolour and oils simultaneously throughout their careers. In both of their oeuvres one can trace a definite influence of the watercolour work on the technique in oils.^{66,67} They were both masters of the watercolour medium and continually explored its possibilities and quirks. They were also first and foremost landscape painters of the Romantic school. Romanticism took many forms but central to it was the expression of personal ideas, visions and emotions. The new wave of romanticism which swept through the Icelandic society at the turn of the 20th century was a direct result of the fight for independence which had taken place during the second half of the 19th century and culminated in Denmark granting home-rule to Iceland in 1904. A similar wave of nationalism had swept through British society one hundred years earlier as a result of the Napoleonic Wars 1803–1815. Both Jónsson and Turner were swept up on these waves of nationalism and it reflected in their works. It is perhaps not surprising that Jónsson looked to Turner to the extent which he revealed in his biography by Tómas Guðmundsson as mentioned earlier.

Turner himself was trained in drawing at the School of the Royal Academy from 1789 to 1799 but practiced watercolour painting outside of the school by copying older works by Paul Sandby, John Cozens, Malton, Hearne and De Loutherbourg amongst others. W.G. Rawlinson wrote in 1909, “...all had their influence on him, but in no case did it last long. [...] after his first years of training and experiment, he was simply and always himself – he was Turner.”⁶⁸ Many consider the turning point in Turner’s art was his first visit to Italy in 1819. Not only did he experience the sublimity of the Alps for the first time, but he was also inspired by the vivid colours and clarity of light of the Mediterranean, the likes of which he had never seen in his native country. It was

⁶⁶ Hrafnhildur Schram and Hjörleifur Sigurðsson. *Ásgrímur Jónsson*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ Brown, David B. *The Art of J.M.W. Turner. A celebration of one of the world’s most influential artists*. Quantum Publishing Ltd., London, 2003, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Rawlinson, W.G. “The water-colour drawings of J.M.W Turner, R.A.” in *The water-colours of J.M.W Turner*. Offices of ‘The Studio’, London, 1909, p. 4.

Venice, however, that captured his imagination. This city on the water proved later to be a turning point in his art. At the age of 44 he found there the light he had always sought to achieve in his works. The dazzling orange light of the floating city contrasted vividly with the azure blue of the sea and sky. The brilliance must surely have been in sharp contrast to the bluish grey light of England breaking through overcast skies onto the rough seas of the English Channel.

In 1908 the art historian and curator, Alexander J. Finberg wrote about Turner's first experience of Venice,⁶⁹

[In Italy] the novelty of the scenery and buildings stimulated the thirst for detailed observation which had been gradually growing on Turner during the previous six or seven years. But in England the very quickness and strength of his intuitions had always prevented the desire for precise observation from gaining the upper hand. In Italy his powers of intuition were useless. He was disoriented. Everything disconcerted and thwarted him. His rapid glance no longer penetrated to the inner essence of the scenes around him. He did not understand the people and their ways, and their relation to the surroundings. For a time he seemed to become less certain than usual of his artistic mission. But he set to work with his usual pluck and energy to assimilate his strange surroundings by tireless observation of the outside. The result was a vast accumulation of disorganized or of only partially organized impressions.⁷⁰

It of interest that Turner painted very few works in Italy. Even his sketches went mostly uncoloured. It is a fact that during his career he rarely painted *en plein air* and stated that in the time that it took him to create one watercolour in the open air he could make fourteen or fifteen pencil sketches. Many of these drawings later served as the basis from which to develop finished watercolours or oils, sometimes as much as 30 years later.⁷¹

By all accounts Jónsson was equally confounded by Italy. Hrafnhildur Schram summarizes his mood in one concise sentence, "Jónsson seems to have been indisposed to do any painting in Italy."⁷² His thoughts were directed to his mother country and many of the works, dated during his 12 month stay in Rome, have their origins in Iceland and its folktales. The difference is, however, that Jónsson found his own

⁶⁹ At that time Finberg was considered to be an authority on Turner. He had thoroughly researched the artist's life and made the first catalogue of his works on paper totalling almost 20,000 items.

⁷⁰ Finberg, A.J. "The Turner drawings in the National Gallery, London." in *The water-colours of J.M.W Turner*. Offices of 'The Studio', London, 1909, p. 38.

⁷¹ Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*, p. 11.

⁷² Hrafnhildur Schram and Hjörleifur Sigurðsson. *Ásgrímur Jónsson*, p. 22. (Icelandic: "Ásgrímur virðist ekki hafa verið vel fyrir kallaður til að mála á Ítalíu.")

Venice in the Icelandic landscape, culminating in the flood plains of Skaftafellssýsla during the warm and calm summer of 1912.

After Jónsson's return from Italy there are notable similarities in some of his paintings to those of Turner's later works. Although it is not known which of the British master's works he was able to study, it is likely that he saw some of the Venetian studies.⁷³ Shanes writes, "The mounted Venetian watercolours have become some of the artist's best-known works to have emanated from the 1819 tour."⁷⁴ Works such as *The Punta della Salute, with the Zitelle in the Distance: morning* (1819) (figure 29) and *Venice: San Giorgio Maggiore – Early Morning* (1819) (figure 30) can be mirrored in Jónsson's *Kvöld í Reykjavík* (1909-10, LÍÁJ 523) (see figure 31). It shows clear indications of variegated wet-in-wet washes in the sunset sky as well as glaze washes in the foreground. This work also shows a certain similarity to the watercolour illustration *Lausanne* which was found in Jónsson's library (see figure 5). Another clear example is the painting *Frá Hornafirði* (1912, LÍÁJ 436) (figure 32) which bears considerable resemblance to the well-known Turner masterpiece *The Blue Rigi, Sunrise* (1842) (see figure 33). Several of the paintings such as *Frá Hornafirði* (LÍÁJ 436) (figure 32) which emanated from Jónsson's stay in Skaftafellssýsla, are perhaps the best evidence of the influence which Turner had upon him. In particular, Jónsson's more loosely painted works *Frá Hornafirði* (1912, LÍÁJ 562) (figure 34) and *Frá Hornafirði* (ca 1914, LÍÁJ 1045) (figure 35) capture the late hours of a summer evening in the same manner which Turner captured the early morning light in the illustration *Arth from the Lake of Zug* (1842-43) (figure 36) from Jónsson's book *Turner, Five Letters and a Postcard*.

Ólafur Kvaran wrote in his foreword to the book *In the Land of Light*,

These paintings [from Skaftafellssýsla] mark a distinctive phase in Jónsson's artistic career and also an important chapter in Icelandic history. In basic terms, Ásgrímur Jónsson's position in Icelandic landscape painting is primarily as an interpreter of the light which either envelops or dissolves his subject, regardless of whether he is working in oils or watercolours. [...] It is at once a romantic and majestic vision that he reveals.⁷⁵

Many of his panoramic watercolours from southeast Iceland attributed to the years 1911–1913 are painted on sheets of antiquarian paper which measures 79 x 135 cm.

⁷³ One such study is found in the book *Turner Five letters and a Postscript* remains of which were found in Jónsson's library as mentioned previously.

⁷⁴ Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*, p. 36.

⁷⁵ Ólafur Kvaran. "Foreword" in *In the Land of Light*. National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, 1999, p. 7.

Usually he divided these huge sheets into two, lengthwise, so that the works measure ca 39 x 135 cm. Only one painting *Dalbær í Landbroti* (1912, LÍÁJ 1050) (figure 37) is on record as having been painted on a full sheet. It has been assumed in accounts relating to these works that these panoramic views from southeast Iceland were painted *en plein air*. There is, however, a wealth of circumstantial evidence that this was not the case.

Firstly, it can be argued that works of this size are physically impossible to paint outdoors with the degree of control which Jónsson exhibited in their execution. Information from Arnþór Gunnarsson, author of the literary work *Saga Hafnar í Hornafirði* (1997), indicates that Jónsson probably arrived in Höfn at Hornafjörður on 5th June 1912 with the freight vessel *Perwie*.⁷⁶ Jónsson's guide and escort, Gunnar Jónsson from the farm Þinganes in Nes, Austur-Skaftafellssýsla, noted in his diary on 8th June that, "[He] took Ásgrímur the painter south to Vagnsstaðir in Suðursveit." The next entry dated 9th June stated plainly, "Returned home." Presumably he left Ásgrímur at Vagnsstaðir and then on 15th June, "Went to collect Ásgrímur at Vagnsstaðir." Then there is no further mention of the artist until the diary entry on 11th August, eight weeks later, which states, "The wife and I together with our girls, Nanna, Snorri, Karl and Runa went out to Höfn to see Ásgrímur's paintings." This is the last entry pertaining to Ásgrímur Jónsson. Arnþór Gunnarsson suggests that he could have gone south to Reykjavík with the freight vessel *Perwie* on 16th August. This would mean that Ásgrímur Jónsson was a total of ten weeks in the area. The artist himself recalls in his memoirs more than forty years later, "I was there for a month and lived in a tent."⁷⁷

During this period the weather was good according to Gunnar Jónsson's diary. He often mentions calm weather or a light breeze from the east although there were also periods of rain and wind. This predominately calm, clear weather certainly reflects in many of Ásgrímur Jónsson's paintings. It is not unreasonable to conclude therefore, that he painted them outdoors before the magnificence of this panoramic landscape.

Nevertheless, in spite of the good weather, it would have been too cumbersome and risky for the artist to have a backing board which would need to be at least 135 cm wide on his easel in the open air without shelter. Such a board would shift with the slightest breeze even if it had been propped up on a table. There is evidence that the large sheets of paper were held on the backing board with ten or eleven drawing pins as opposed to

⁷⁶ Arnþór Gunnarsson. Personal communication dated 1st April 2011. Entries in Gunnar Jónsson's diary concerning ÁJ and weather were sent in this e-mail.

⁷⁷ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, p. 157.

being taped down.⁷⁸ In a few places on some of the large works there is an indication that a pencil drawing was made before painting commenced. It is feasible, therefore, that Jónsson made the preparatory pencil drawing *en plein air* on the large sheets before rolling them up and bringing them back to the farm for painting.

Secondly, paintings of this size and detail would have taken at least several hours to paint during which time the lighting is continually changing. Without the use of a camera, Jónsson would have had to rely on his memory and rapid sketches in pencil and watercolour to fix the shadows convincingly in the image of rocky crevasses on the mountain slopes. In this respect it is of interest to read Finberg's observation about Turner,

The usual way of describing the process by which a slight sketch from nature is converted into a finished drawing is to say that the artist copied his sketch as far as it went and then relied upon his memory for the further elaboration that was required. An artist's memory is assumed to consist of images of the scenes he has witnessed, which he has some mysterious power of storing in his mind, something like, I suppose, the undeveloped exposures in a Kodak.⁷⁹

Thirdly, it is evident that Jónsson did several preparation paintings before addressing the full size version. Some of these fully painted sketches are known to have been left with the farms where he stayed. For example, at least two sketches were made of a view looking west from Hornafjörður, both of which are in private collections but unsigned and not dated. (see figures 38 and 39). These were evidently the basis for the large painting titled *Frá Hornafirði* (1912, LÍÁJ 1977) (see figure 28). Another example is the sketch of *Stóralag í Hornafirði* (1912, catalogue nr 299) (figure 40) which is signed and privately owned. This was most likely a preparation for a considerably larger work of the same view *Stóralag í Hornafirði* (1912, LÍÁJ 93) (figure 41). Both of these examples of sketches were given to the farm where Jónsson is known to have stayed for most of the ten weeks while he was painting in Hornafjörður.⁸⁰

Surprisingly, no other records of Jónsson's stay in the area were found, neither written nor photographic. The presence of this unusual man from Reykjavík did not seem to be worth recording in diaries. Much more important was the weather, the haymaking and the fish catch. The fact that he left the sketches on farms in the area indicates that it is likely he painted at least one large painting while there, probably in the shelter of the

⁷⁸ Ólafur Ingi Jónsson. Verbal communication, 19th April 2011.

⁷⁹ Finberg, A.J. "The Turner drawings in the National Gallery, London." in *The water-colours of J.M.W Turner*, p. 31.

⁸⁰ Björg Erlingsdóttir, Director of the Cultural Centre of Hornafjörður. Personal communication, 12th April 2011.

farm. He definitely made copies, however, of his more popular works. There are, for example, at least two exact replicate paintings of the scene titled *Frá Nesjum* (ca 1912, LÍÁJ 1432 and the other work ca 1912, privately owned, catalogue nr 035) (see figures 42 and 43 respectively).⁸¹ Another of his works was also painted three times, two of which are privately owned, *Lómagnúpur, Dalbær í Landbroti* (ca 1913, catalogue nr 413) and *Lómagnúpur frá Dalbær* (ca 1911, catalogue nr 530) as well as the large work previously mentioned *Dalbær í Landbroti* (1912, LÍÁJ 1050) (see figures 44, 45 and 37 respectively). This shows that popular works were in demand and the artist found himself in the uncomfortable position of repeating his paintings without the slightest deviation. Not even the clouds in the sky were changed in the two works entitled *Frá Nesjum*. Admittedly it provided an income which was probably most welcome at this stage in his career. In his memoirs, however, he recalls the isolation of being an artist in Iceland at this time:

I [...] knew that I would have to watch myself constantly if my artistic development were not to be arrested and my art become a routine skill. It was only because of this that I stopped using watercolours in 1914 and instead turned to oils which I was then painting in a much more intense manner. Later I naturally returned to watercolours but not before I was sure that I would be able to approach them in a new and fresh manner. [...] Being an artist always requires a good deal of severity.⁸²

This decision was a watershed for Jónsson. Between 1914 and 1920 he painted few landscape works in watercolour but instead worked on a predominance of illustrations from the Icelandic folktales. Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson notes that many of these works deal with the struggle between good and evil which could be a direct result of the First World War at this time.⁸³ In 1915 he first spent some time in Húsafell and painted largely in oils. He used his watercolour palette occasionally and on those occasions the works exhibit a different tone. They were more colourful and more dramatic in value than previously. The effects of the impressionist and post impressionist works which he had seen on his visits to art museums in Europe were starting to show in his art. His watercolours benefited from this change of direction and he found new ways of expressing himself with the medium but was continuously building on the foundation he had gained from the British school.

⁸¹ Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. Personal communication dated 29th April 2011.

⁸² Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. "In the Land of Light and Colour" in *In the Land of Light*. National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, 1999, p. 25.

⁸³ Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson, "Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna", p 13.

5 Conclusions

In his memoirs as recorded by Tómas Guðmundsson in the 1950s, Ásgrímur Jónsson makes the comment that he has learnt much from other painters and by doing so he is not concerned about losing his individuality or his personality. In this respect he names all in one breath, Monet, Cezanne, Renoir and van Gogh. But then he pauses, “However, I consider that I learnt most about watercolour from Turner. The remarkable use of colour by this genius raised British landscape painting to a new level.”⁸⁴ This thesis approaches Jónsson’s comment about Turner in an empirical way in order to find possible links between the works of the two artists. It also attempts to find links to other artists of the British school based on the probability of Jónsson coming into contact with their works.

A comparison of selected works by the Icelandic artist from the period 1904 to 1914 shows that there are many similarities in technique which tend to confirm the theory that he had studied coloured prints and book illustrations in order to increase his proficiency in this notoriously difficult medium. This learning process culminated in the paintings from Skaftafellssýsla during the years 1911–13. Much has been written about these watercolours and it is evident that they had an impact on the Icelanders’ appreciation of their country at a time when nationalism was at a peak. The paintings were exhibited in Vinaminni in the spring of 1913 and convinced the people of Reykjavík of the beauty of their own country in a way which had never been done before. In the same way J.M.W. Turner opened the eyes of his countrymen to the timeless views within Britain by producing and publishing several series of engravings from his watercolours of the kingdom’s land- and seascapes.

Jónsson did not have the opportunity or patronage to distribute his work as prints and therefore responded to demand by painting copies of his more popular watercolours. This routine painting inevitably resulted in him reassessing his use of the watercolour medium and for several years Jónsson turned his attention to oils, until he felt able to express himself in a fresh, new way with his watercolour expertise. It was as though he had been born again, primed with skills and techniques which he could ‘forget’ while working and was therefore able to respond to the moment with an open mind.

⁸⁴ Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*, p. 157

6 Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Ólafur Ingi Jónsson, Dagný Heiðdal and Elín Guðjónsdóttir at the National Gallery of Iceland for their invaluable help and advice during the preparation and writing of this thesis. In addition, he is grateful to Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir for her encouragement and valuable suggestions at the commencement of the research.

7 Bibliography

Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson. “Hugleiðingar um vatnslitamyndir íslenskra listamanna”. *Blæbrigði vatnsins- Vatnslitir í íslenskri myndlist 1880-2009*. Bókaútgáfan Opna og Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Reykjavík, 2010.

Arnbór Gunnarsson. Personal communication dated 1st April 2011.

Beaumont-Jones, Julia. Collection Registrar: Prints and Drawings, Tate Gallery. Personal communication, 7th March 2011.

Björg Erlingsdóttir, Director of the Cultural Centre of Hornafjörður. Personal communication, 12th April 2011.

Bowers, Peter. Personal communication dated 16th March 2011.

British Association of Paper Historians. “History of Paper-making in the United Kingdom”. Last modified 7. May 2009. Website link: http://www.baph.org.uk/general%20reference/history_of_papermaking_in_the_united%20kingdom.htm. Accessed on 24th March 2011.

Brown, David B. *The Art of J.M.W. Turner. A celebration of one of the world's most influential artists*. Quantum Publishing Ltd., London, 2003.

Christopher Zeeman. *Today in Science History*. Website link: http://www.todayinsci.com/Z/Zeeman_Christopher/ZeemanChristopher-Quotations.htm. Accessed 2nd March 2011.

Collingwood, William Gershom. “Preface” in *Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland*. W.Holmes, Ulverston, 1899.

Collingwood, William Gershom. *Fegurð Íslands og fornir sögustaðir: Svipmyndir og sendibréf úr Íslandsför W.G. Collingwoods 1897*. Ed. Haraldur Hannesson. Örn og Örlygur, 1988.

Einar Falur Ingólfsson. *Sögustaðir. Í fótspor W.G. Collingwoods*. Crymogea / Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, 2010.

Finberg, Alexander J. “The Turner drawings in the National Gallery, London.” in *The water-colours of J.M.W Turner*. Offices of ‘The Studio’, London, 1909.

Fuchs, Anneli. Research assistant, Danmarks Kunstabibliotek. Personal communication, 22nd February 2011.

Hafþór Yngvason. “Formáli”. *Blæbrigði vatnsins- Vatnslitir í íslenskri myndlist 1880 - 2009*. Bókaútgáfan Opna og Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Reykjavík, 2010.

Halldór Björn Runólfsson. “Þankar um íslenska nútímalist (1900-1987)”. In *Aldaspeggill*, Listasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, 1988.

Hamilton, James. *Turner, A Life*. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1997.

Haraldur Hannesson. In *Á söguslóðum. Nokkrar myndir úr Íslandsför sumarið 1897*. Bókaútgáfa menningarsjóðs, Reykjavík, 1969.

Hrafnhildur Schram and Hjörleifur Sigurðsson. *Ásgrímur Jónsson*. Listasafn ASÍ and Lögberg, Reykjavík, 1986.

Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. "Biography" in *Ljósbrigði*. Listasafn Íslands, Safn Ásgríms Jónssonar, Reykjavík, 1996.

Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. "In the Land of Light and Colour" in *In the Land of Light*. National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, 1999.

Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. Personal communication dated 8th March 2011.

Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir. Personal communication dated 29th April 2011.

Ólafur Ingi Jónsson. Verbal communication, 19th April 2011.

Ólafur Kvaran. "Foreword" in *In the Land of Light*. National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, 1999.

Rawlinson, W.G. "The water-colour drawings of J.M.W Turner, R.A." in *The water-colours of J.M.W Turner*. Offices of 'The Studio', London, 1909.

Shanes, Eric. *Turner's Watercolour Explorations 1810-1842*. Tate Gallery Publishing, London, 1997.

Sigríður Thorlacius. „...eins og andinn sé að fálma eftir einhverju, sem ekki er skilgreinanlegt“, Interview with Jon Stefánsson. *Timinn*, 6th April 1961, pp. 9-10 and 13.

Skelton, Helen. A colour chemist's history of Western art. *Rev. Prog. Coloration*, 29, 1999, pp 43-64.

Spender, Michael. *The Glory of Watercolour: The Royal Watercolour Society Diploma collection*. David and Charles, London, 1987.

Thor Vilhjálmsson. "Vinnustofurabb við Þorvald" in *Hvað er San Marino?* Ísafoldarprentsmiðja hf, Reykjavík, 1973.

Townsend, Joyce H. *Turner's Painting Techniques*. Tate Publishing, London, 2005.

Tómas Guðmundsson. *Myndir og Minningar*. Almenna bókafélagið, Reykjavík, 1956.

Valtýr Guðmundsson. Ritsjá V. "W.G. Collingwood og Jón Stefánsson: Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland." *Eimreiðin*, 6, 1900, p. 148-149.

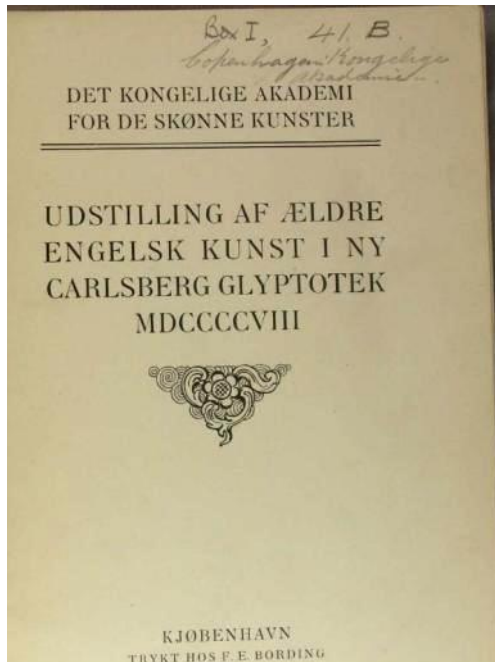
Vísir. Hvergi málað eins mikið og á Íslandi. Interview with Gunnsteinn Jóhannsson, 18th edn, 24th January 1962, pp 4 and 10.

Wilton, Andrew and Anne Lyles. *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*. Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1993.

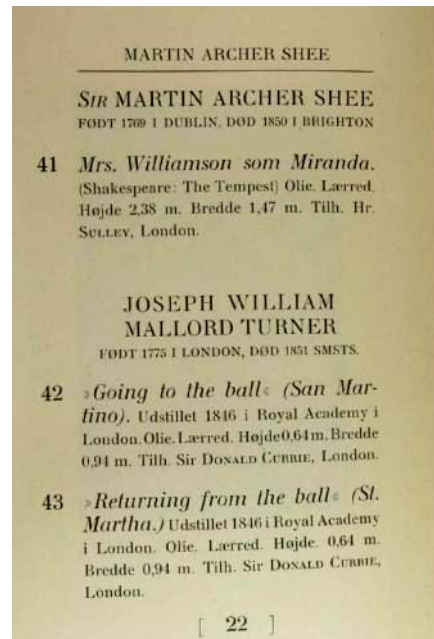
World Cat. Website link:<http://www.worldcat.org/title/landscape-painting-in-water-colour/oclc/21546889/editions?referer=di&editionsView=true>. Accessed on 2nd March 2011.

8 Appendix 1: Glyptotek, 1908

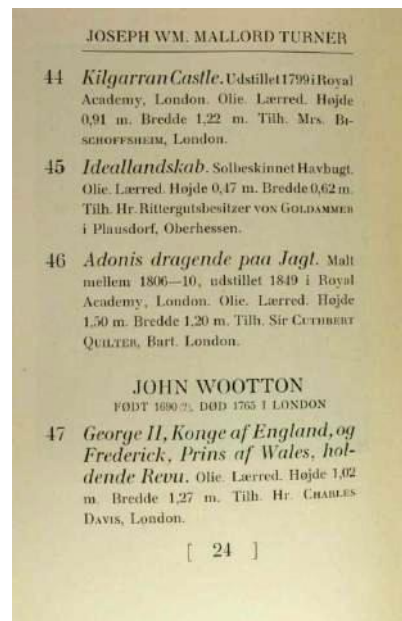
Exhibition catalogue and the paintings by J.M.W. Turner which were exhibited.



Title page from exhibition catalogue Carlsberg Glyptotek 1908



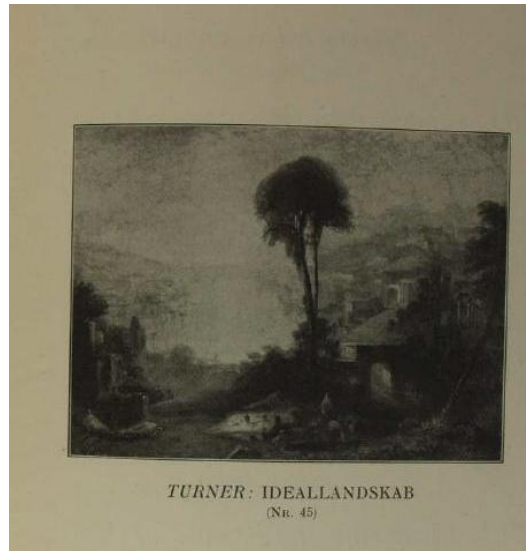
Page 22 of the catalogue – first part of list of works by J.M.W. Turner



Page 24 from catalogue – second part of list of works by J.M.W. Turner



J.M.W. Turner. *Going to the ball (San Martino)*. ca 1846. Oil on canvas. 64 x 94 cm



J.M.W. Turner. *Ideal landscape*. Unknown date. Oil on canvas, 47 x 62 cm



J.M.W. Turner. *Returning from the Ball (St Martha)*. ca 1846. Oil on canvas. 64 x 94 cm

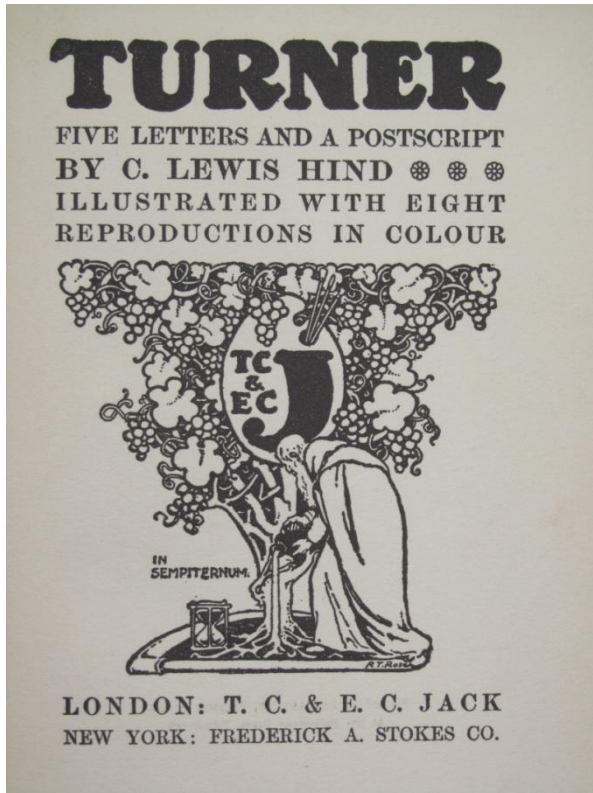


J.M.W. Turner. *Venus and Adonis*. 1803-5. Oil on canvas. 150 x 120cm



J.M.W. Turner. *Kilgarran Castle*. 1799. Oil on canvas. 91 x 122 cm

9 Appendix 2: Five letters and a postcard



Title page of *Five letters and a Postcard*



Plate 1. J.M.W. Turner. *A ship aground*. 1828.
Oil on canvas. Size unknown



Plate 2. J.M.W. Turner. *Hastings*. n.d.
Oil on canvas. Size unknown



Plate 3. J.M.W. Turner. *Norham Castle Sunrise*.
ca 1845. Oil on canvas. 91x 122 cm



Plate 4. J.M.W. Turner. *The Fighting Téméraire*. 1839. Oil on canvas. 91x 122 cm



Plate 5. J.M.W. Turner. *Venice: Grand Canal – Sunset*. 1825. Watercolour on paper. 11.5 x 19 cm



Plate 8. J.M.W. Turner. *Tivoli – Tobias and the Angel*. ca 1835. Oil on canvas. 90.5 x 121cm



Plate 6. J.M.W. Turner. *Arth from the Lake of Zug*. 1842-43. Watercolour and pencil, with pen on paper. 22.8 x 29 cm



Plate 7. J.M.W. Turner. *Lausanne*. 1841-42. Gouache, pencil and watercolour on paper. 25 x 37 mm

10 Figures in the text



Fig. 1. Flysheet of *Landscape painting in water-colour* (1900) by John MacWhirter



Fig. 2. Title page of *Landscape painting in water-colour* (1900) by John MacWhirter

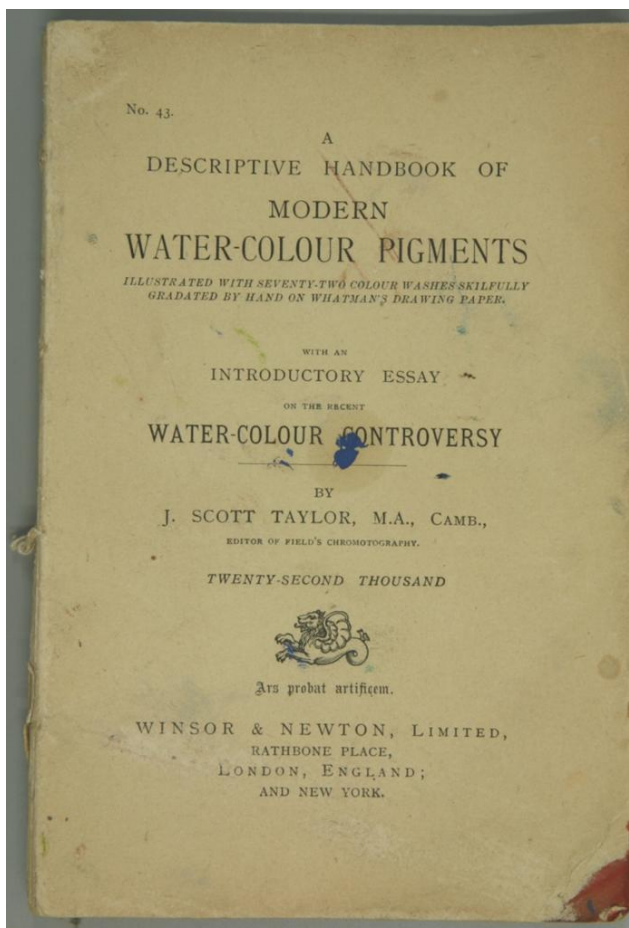


Fig. 3. Title page of *A Descriptive Handbook of Modern Water-colour Pigments*



Fig. 4. Watercolour swatches from *A Descriptive Handbook of Modern Water-colour Pigments*

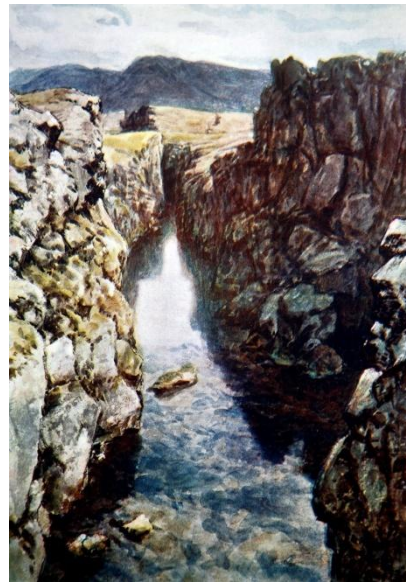
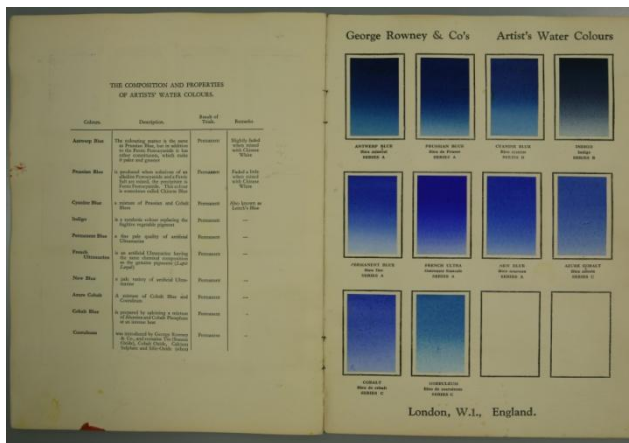




Fig 11. W.G. Collingwood.
John Ruskin in his Study. 1888.
Watercolour on paper. Size unknown



Fig. 12. W.G. Collingwood.
Portrait of Gudrun Magnúsdóttir. 1897
Watercolour on paper. 19 x 14 cm



Fig. 13. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Árdalur í Andakíl í Borgarfirði*. 1904. LÍÁJ 398.
Watercolour on paper. 27 x 49 cm



Fig. 14. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Jarlhettur í Langjökli*. 1904. LÍAJ 392.
Watercolour on paper. 27 x 33.5 cm



Fig. 15. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Tröllkonuhlaup, Hekla*. 1904. LÍAJ 393.
Watercolour on paper. 24.5 x 44.5 cm



Fig. 16. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Barnafoos í Borgarfirði*. 1904. LÍAJ 547.
Watercolour on paper. 24.5 x 45 cm



Fig. 17. Ásgrímur Jónsson.
Vorið. LÍAJ 595.
Watercolour on paper. 23 x 17.5 cm

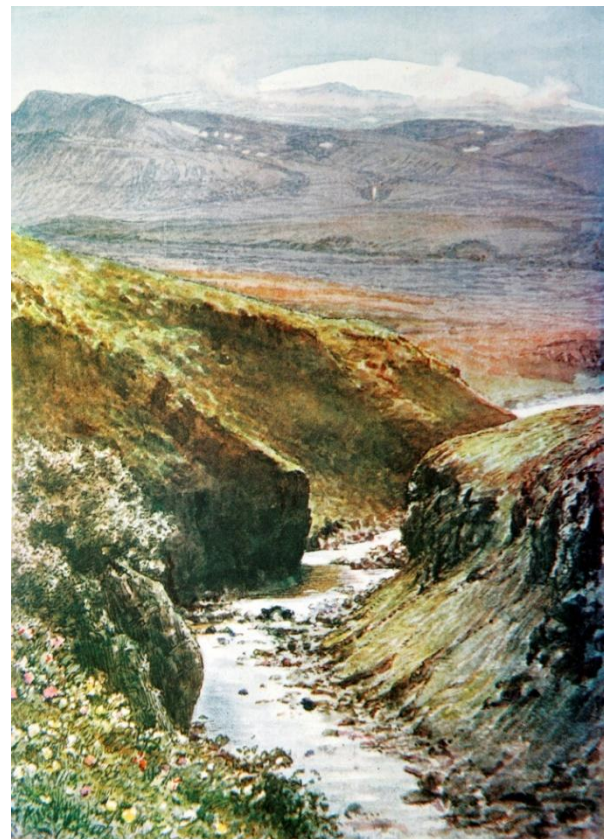


Fig. 18. W.G. Collingwood.
Gill at Gilsbakki. 1897.
Watercolour on paper. Size unknown



Fig. 19. W.G. Collingwood. *Kongsbakki in Helgafellssveit*. 1897.
Watercolour on paper. 28 x 39 cm



Fig. 20. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Sveitabær - sést til Þríhynings*. 1910 -1920?
Private collection, nr. 143
Watercolour on paper. 36 x 59 cm



Fig. 21. J. MacWhirter.
Study of Meadow flowers. n.d.
 Watercolour on paper. Size unknown

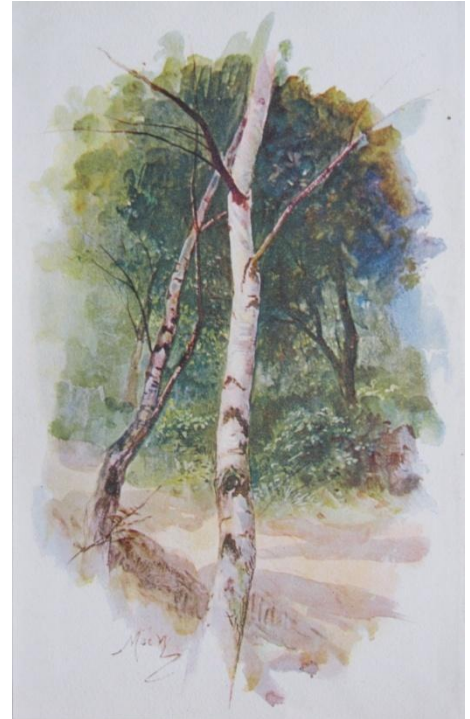


Fig.22. J. MacWhirter.
Sketch of Silver Birch. nd.
 Watercolour on paper. Size unknown

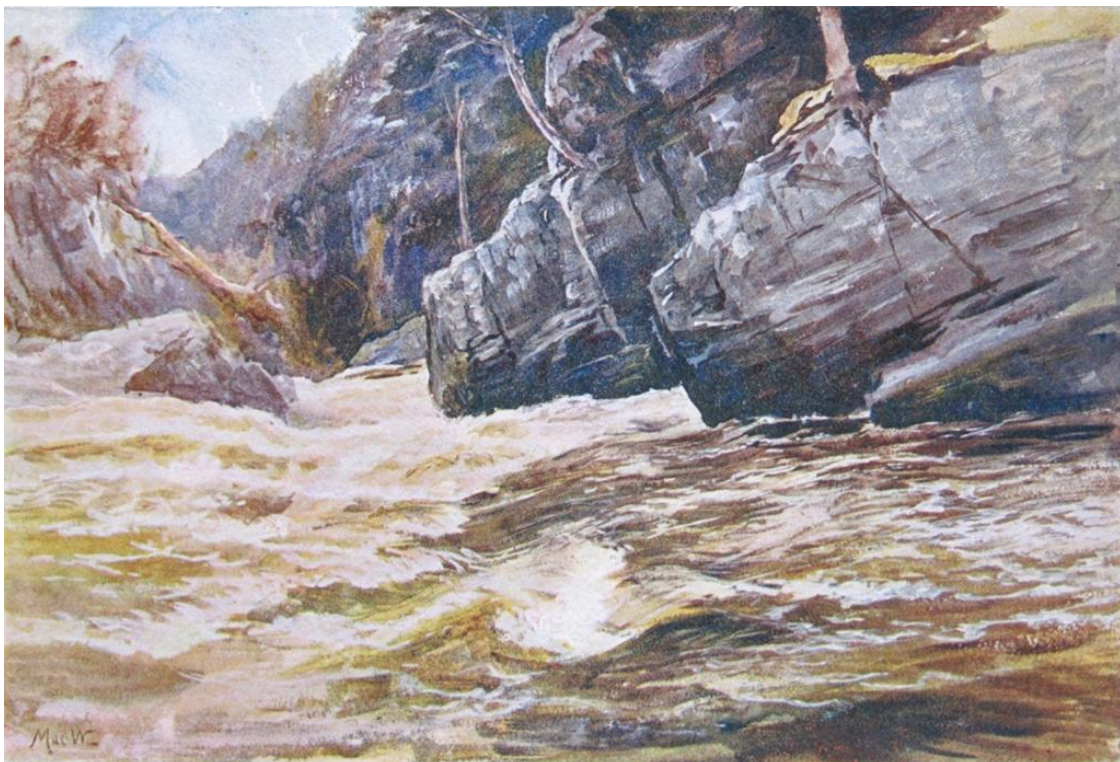


Fig. 23. J. MacWhirter. *Highland River in Flood.* n.d. Watercolour on paper. Size unknown



Fig. 24. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Hverfisfljót*. 1912. LÍAJ 449. Watercolour on paper. 48 x 68 cm



Fig. 25. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Tröllkonuhlaup, Hekla*. 1908. LÍAJ 429.
Watercolour on paper. 15.5 x 23.5 cm



Fig. 26. J. MacWhirter. *At Glion, Lake of Geneva*. n.d. Watercolour on paper. Size unknown.



Fig. 27. Ásgrímur Jónsson.
Úr Mýrdal, við Dyrhólaey. ca 1910. Private collection, nr. 346
 Watercolour on paper. 25.5 x 46.5 cm



Fig.28. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði*. 1912. LÍÁJ 1977. Watercolour on paper. 38 x 133.5 cm



Fig. 29. J.M.W. Turner. *The Punta della Salute, with the Zitelle in the Distance: Morning*. 1819.
Watercolour on paper. 22.4 x 28.7 cm



Fig. 30. J.M.W. Turner. *Venice: San Giorgio Maggiore – Early Morning*. 1819.
Watercolour on paper. 22.3 x 28.7 cm



Fig. 31. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Kvöld í Reykjavík, Tjörninn*. 1909 -1910. LÍAJ 523.
Watercolour on paper. 23.5 x 32.5 cm



Fig. 32. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði, Vatnajökull*. 1912. LÍAJ 436b.
Watercolour on paper. 23.5 x 60 cm



Fig. 33. J.M.W. Turner. *The Blue Rigi, Sunrise*. 1842. Watercolour on paper. 29.7 x 45 cm



Fig. 34. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði*. 1912. LÍAJ 562. Watercolour on paper. 24.5 x 87 cm



Fig. 35. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði*. 1912. LÍ 1045. Watercolour on paper. 30 x 56 cm



Fig. 36. J.M.W. Turner. *Arth from the Lake of Zug*. 1842-43.
Watercolour and pencil, with pen, on paper. 22.8 x 29 cm

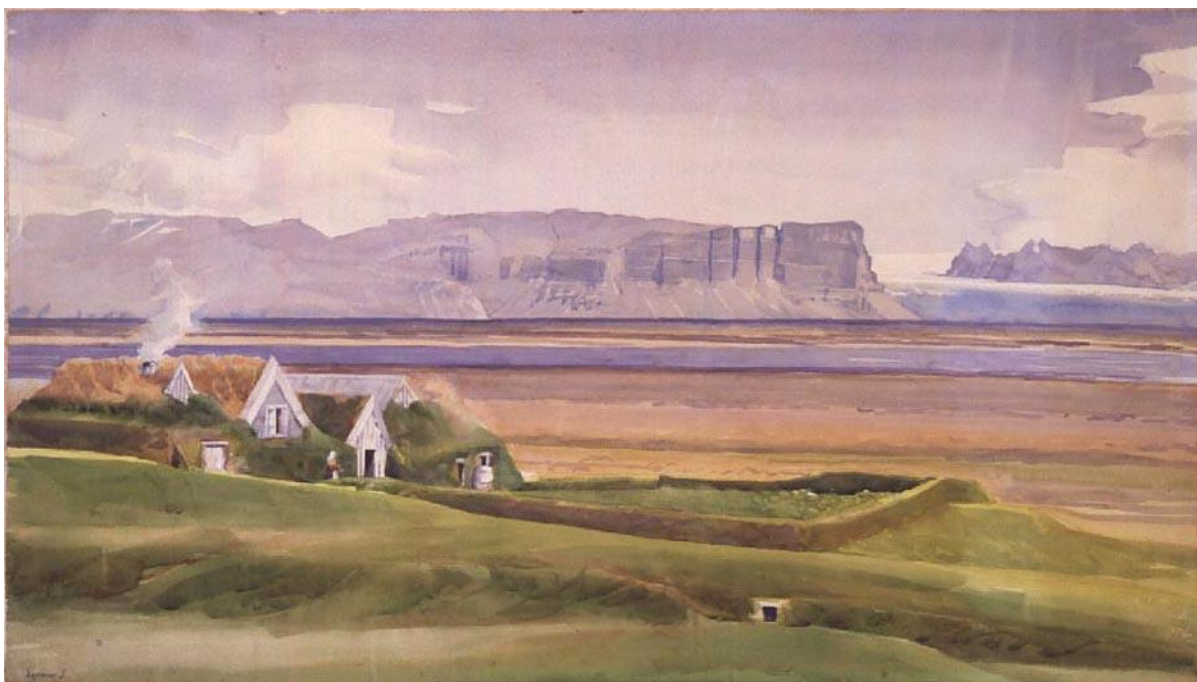


Fig. 37. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Dalbær í Landbroti*. 1912. LÍ 1050. w/c on paper. 75 x 134 cm



Fig. 38. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði*. 1912. Private collection. w/c on paper. 20.5 x 54 cm



Fig. 39. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Hornafirði*. 1912. Private collection. w/c on paper. 20.5 x 54 cm



Fig. 40. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Stóralág í Hornafirði*. 1912. Private collection, nr 299.
Watercolour on paper. 24 x 56.5 cm



Fig. 41. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Stóralág í Hornafirði*. 1912. LÍ 93.
Watercolour on paper. 41 x 101 cm



Fig. 42. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Nesjum*. ca 1912. LÍ 1432.
Watercolour on paper. 34 x 103 cm



Fig. 43. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Frá Nesjum*. 1912. Private collection, nr 035.
Watercolour on paper. 33 x 99 cm

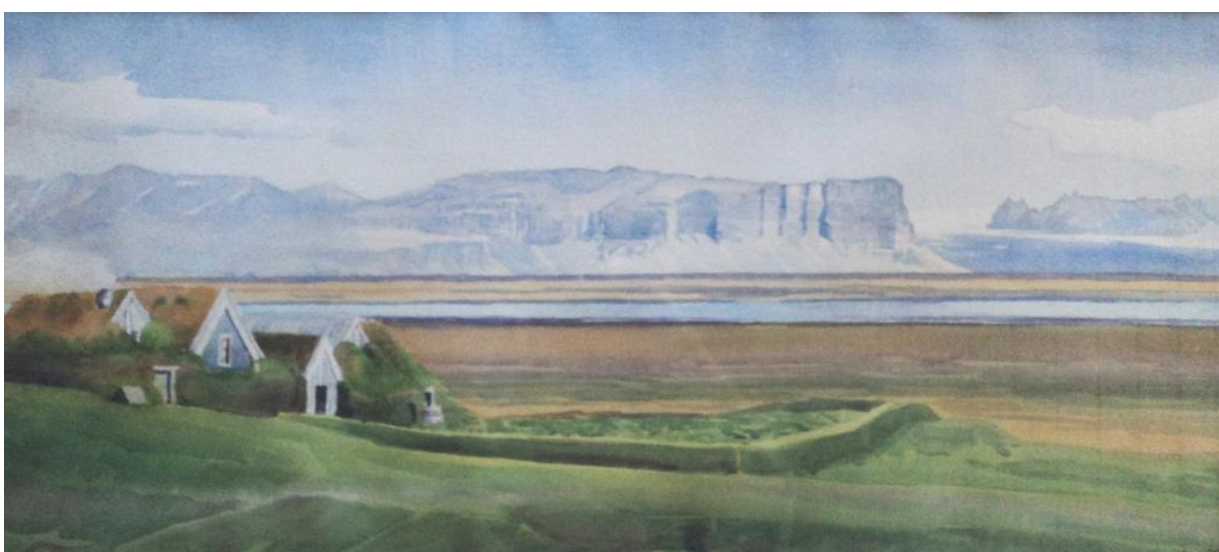


Fig. 44. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Lómagnúpur, Dalbær í Landbroti*. ca 1911. Private collection, nr. 413.
Watercolour on paper. 43.5 x 97 cm

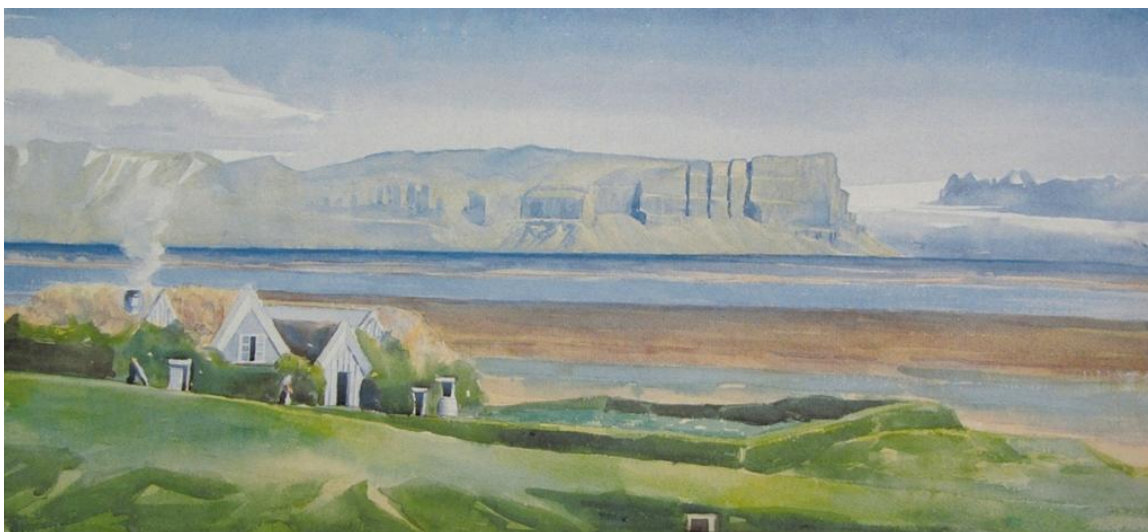


Fig. 45. Ásgrímur Jónsson. *Lómagnúpur frá Dalbær*. ca 1911. Private collection, nr.530.
Watercolour on paper. 42 x 88 cm