



## Pushing Boundaries: A Data-Driven Dive into 'Legend of the Ice People'

Unravel the unexpected synergy of literature and data science

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INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

# Outline

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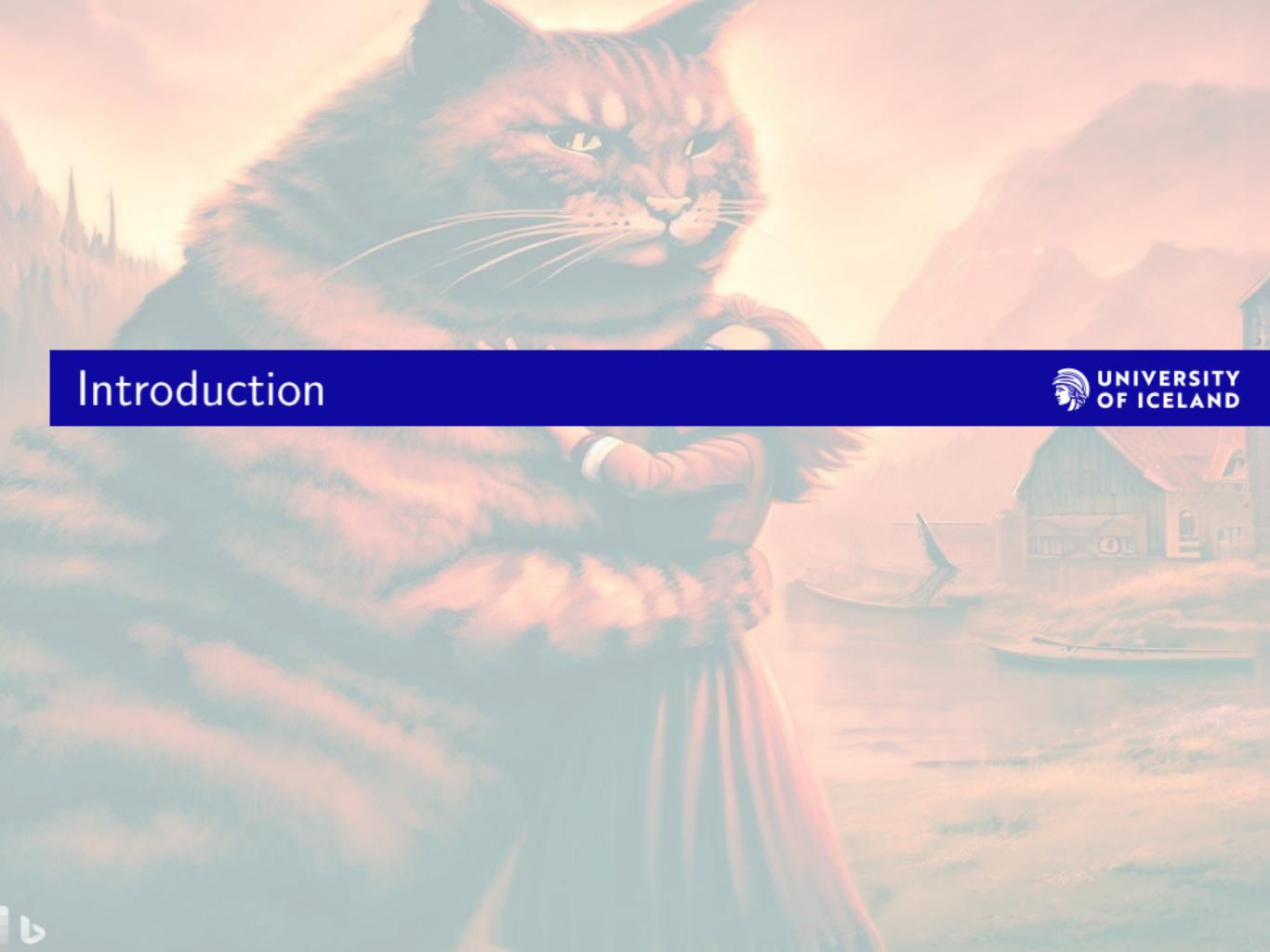
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# Introduction



I am a **Ph.D.** in Computational Engineering.

Past Roles:

- ▶ Software Developer at Valka
- ▶ SQL Consultant at AGR
- ▶ Research Scientist at deCODE genetics
- ▶ Data Scientist at CCP Games
- ▶ Head of AI Research at Travelshift

Current Role:

**Assistant Professor** in  
the Industrial Engineering  
Department at the  
University of Iceland

## Signature Talk

Analysis of **Legend of the Ice People** a.k.a. **ÍSFÓLKID** for Reykjavík  
Databeers #6.

Inspired by the literary podcast I co-hosted, **ÍSKISUR**.

# A Surprising Insight

What surprised most about my presentation at **Reykjavík Databeers** was the audience's reaction:

- ▶ They didn't expect a data-driven angle to **ÍSFÓLKID**.
- ▶ Astonished by **several** data-driven approaches to literature.
- ▶ Analytical framework shed new light and perspectives.



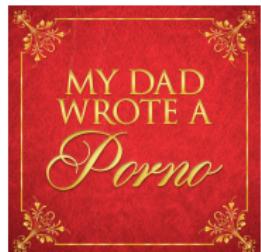
## Take-Home Message

Anything can be data-driven with the right mindset. Data is everywhere; it's about looking for it and using it. Embrace data for fresh insights, even in unexpected domains.

- ▶ 2012: Became the internet cat lady – Memes ⇒ Friends' Cat pics.
- ▶ 2016: Inspired by **My Dad Wrote A Porno** podcast.
- ▶ Solution: Read **ÍSFÓLKID** with our twist.
- ▶ Special Segment: **(Internet) Cat of the Week.**

## TL;DR: My Dad Wrote a Porno (2015–)

A 3-time Webby Award-winning comedic podcast where host Jamie Morton reads his father's amateur erotic novel. With friends James Cooper and Alice Levine, they hilariously dissect awkward, improbable tales blending family and risqué fiction.



# About ÍSKISUR

- ▶ A literary and feline entertainment podcast\*
- ▶ Discuss the erotic and surreal book series **The Legend of the Ice People** by Margit Sandemo
- ▶ Each episode covers part of a book from the series and concludes with a segment on internet cats



via @iamlilbub

Grumpy Cat first meeting Lil Bub  
Internet Cat Festival, 2013

X



Birna, Kristín, and dr. Helga

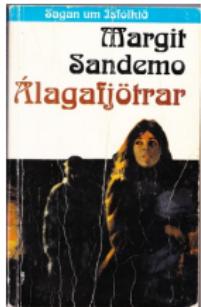
\*None of the hosts are actually cats or literary experts.

- ▶ Epic 47-volume tale set in historic Scandinavia with fantasy elements.
- ▶ The tale revolves around a **curse** originating from malevolent Pengill.
- ▶ Silja, an ordinary woman, becomes intertwined with the curse through Pengill the Good.
- ▶ Their offspring, destined to face Pengill the Bad's rising evil, represent each book's focus.
- ▶ Culmination: The family's ultimate confrontation with Pengill the Bad.
- ▶ Spirits and mandrake root: Mysterious aids interwoven into the narrative.



- ▶ **Silja:** Innocent matriarch of the cursed family.
- ▶ **Pengill the Good:** Bearer of the curse, forsakes celibacy for Silja.
- ▶ **Pengill the Bad:** Ever-strengthening evil antagonist.

# Exploring Different Formats



## The Written Books

- ▶ 80s cult phenomenon.
- ▶ Re-translated in 2007.
- ▶ Influenced children's names.



## The Audio Books

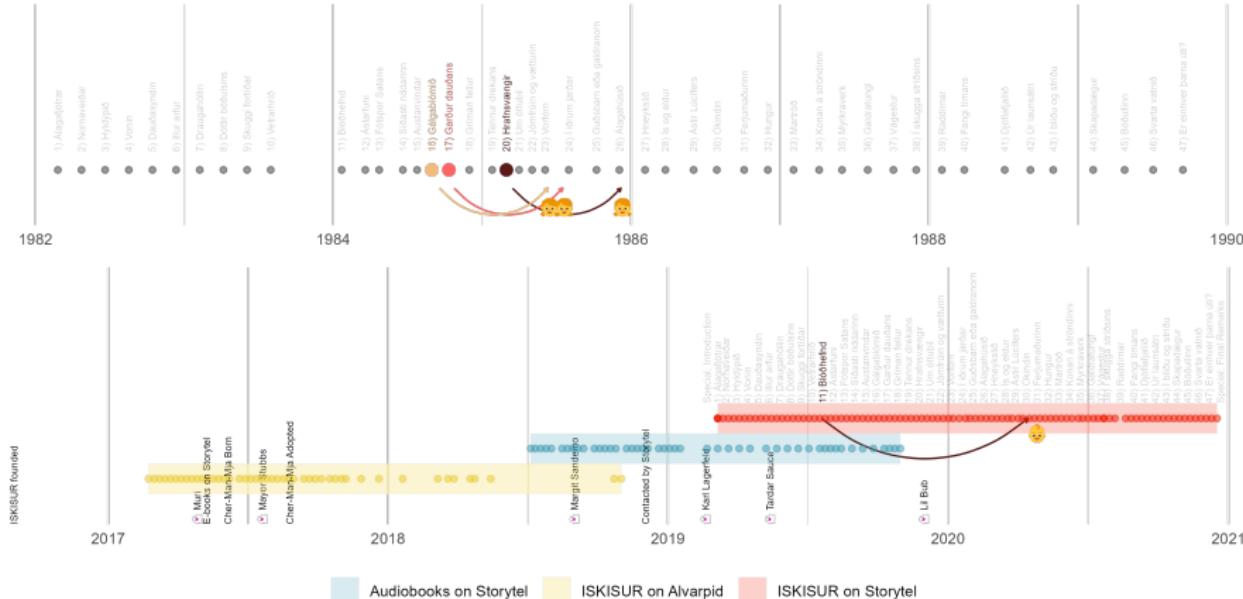
- ▶ Top content on **Storytel**.
- ▶ Widely listened to.



## The Podcast

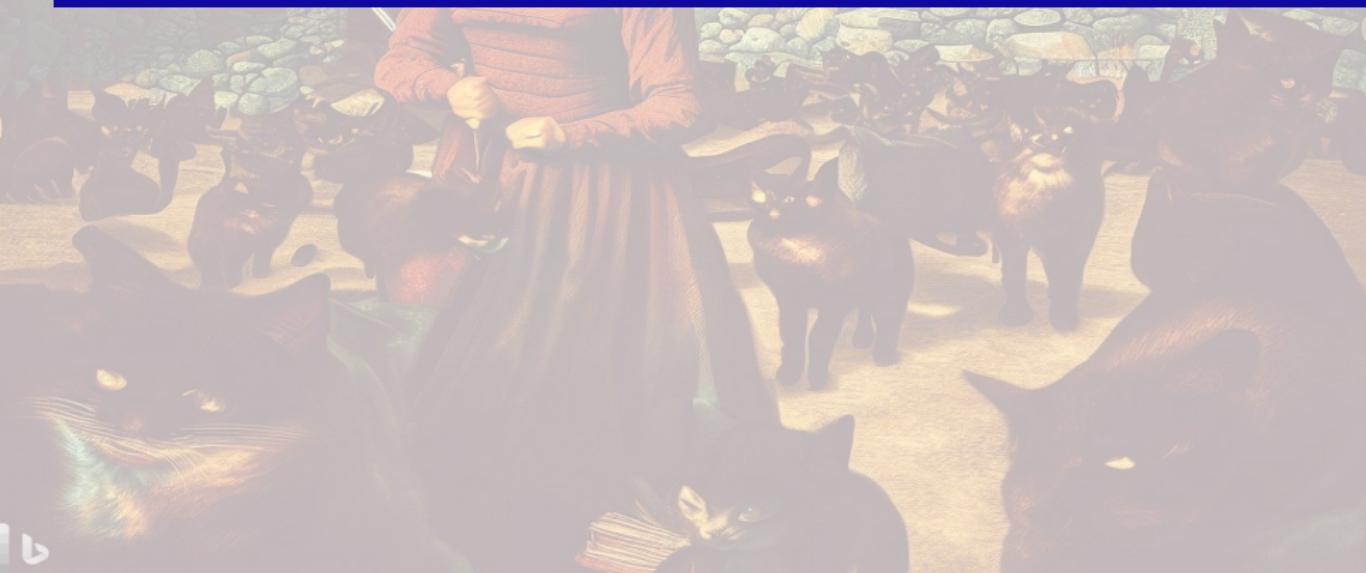
- ▶ Small friend-led bookclub.
- ▶ Started on **Alvarp Nútímans**.
- ▶ Moved to **Storytel**.

# Timeline for the Legend of the Ice Cat-People





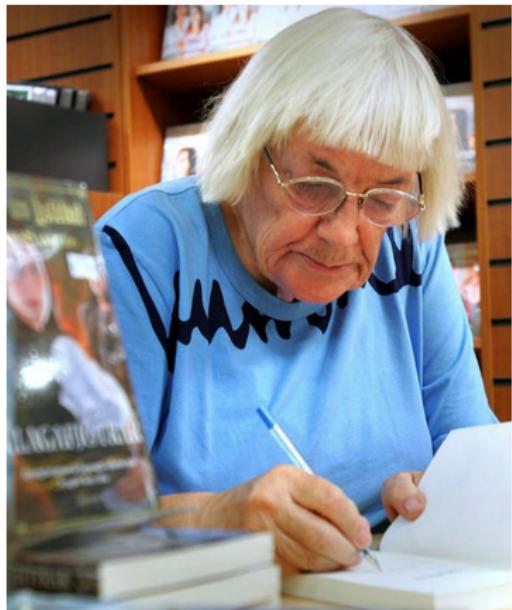
## Written Books



# Margit Sandemo, 1924–2018

- ▶ Norwegian-Swedish author
- ▶ Father was a Norwegian poet, Anders Underdal
- ▶ Claimed lineage to Nobel Prize-winning author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson
- ▶ First published at forty years old
- ▶ Best-selling author in the Nordic countries since the 1980s

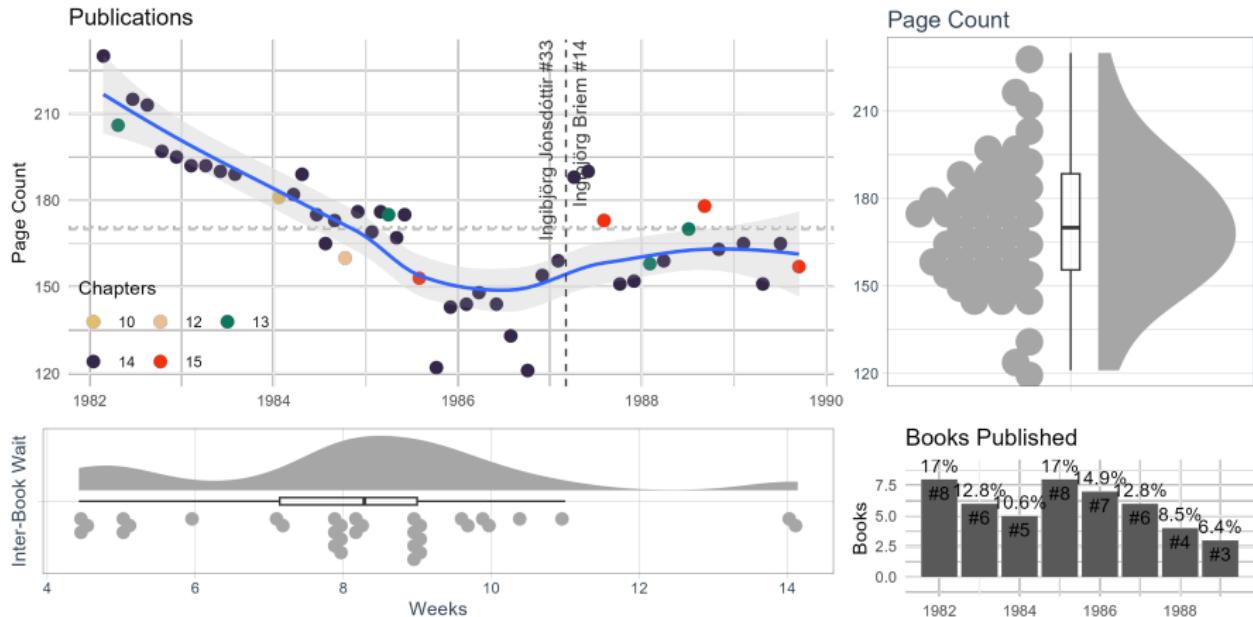
Notable Book Series	Years	n
The Legend of the Ice People	1982–89	47
The Warlock	1991–94	15
The Legend of the Realm of Light	1995–99	12



mbl.is/Þorvaldur Örn Kristmundsson

Margit signing **Álagafjötrar**  
in Eymundsson, 2007

# Publications



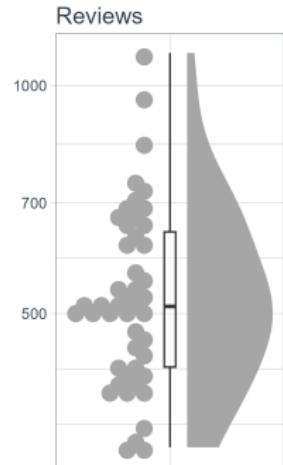
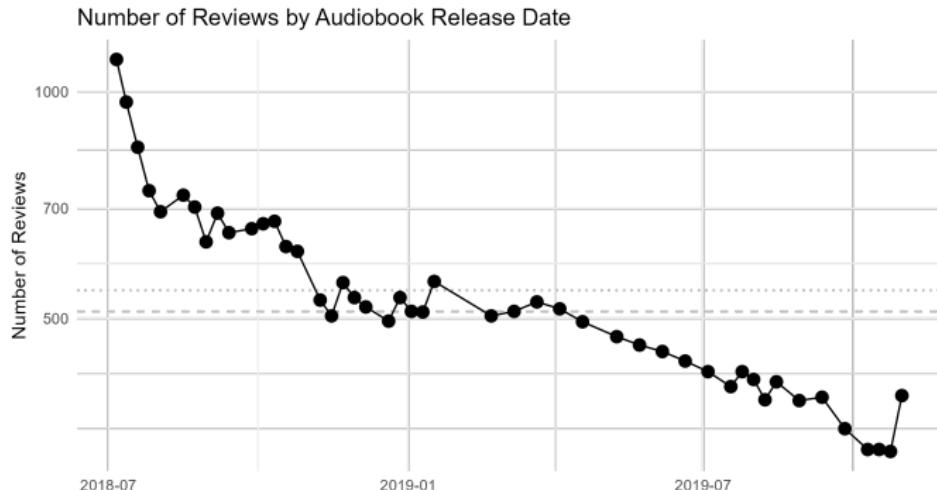
- ▶ 47 books, 652 chapters, 8,023 pages, 8 years
- ▶ Average book length: 170 pages (avg. 13.9 chapters)
- ▶ Released 1 book every 2 months (avg. 57.9 days), usually on Tue.



# Audio Books

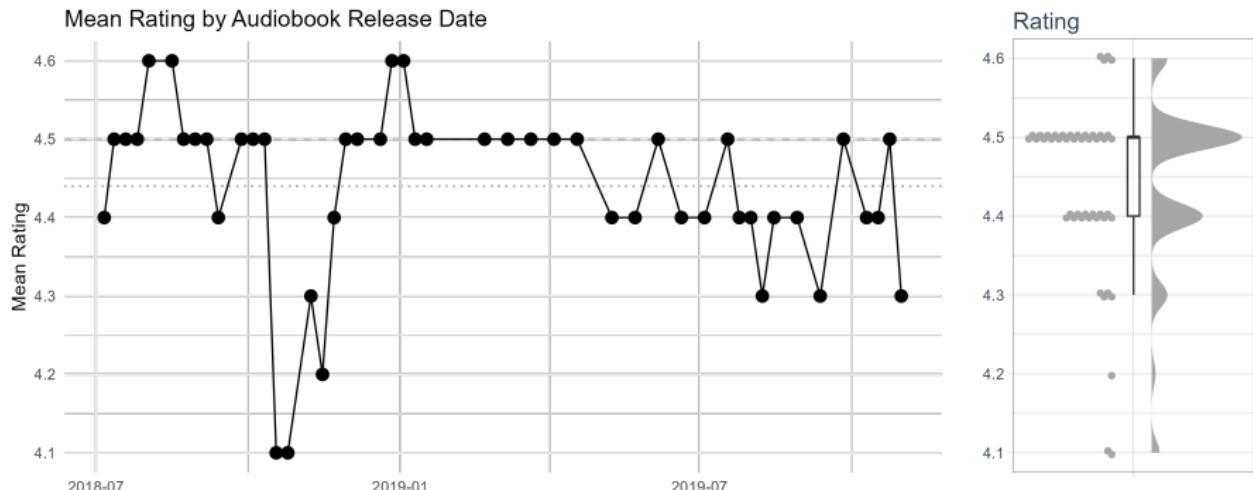


# Audiobooks on Storytel: Active Fanbase



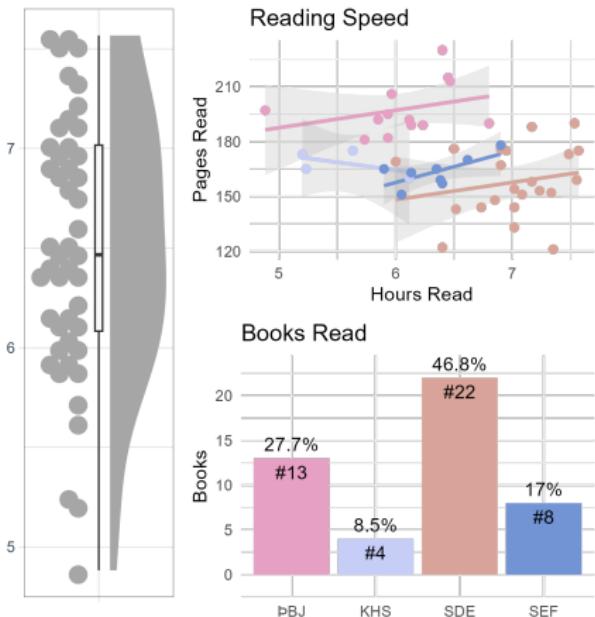
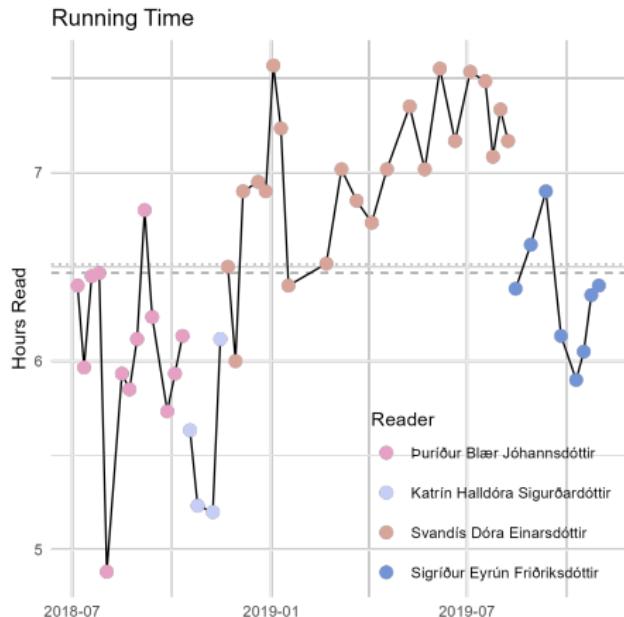
- ▶ The series has a dedicated fanbase, with consistently high engagement.
- ▶ A solid median review count of 511, and minimum of 333.
- ▶ Releases on Thursdays, spaced 1–2 weeks apart, over 16-months.

# Audiobooks on Storytel: High Ratings



- ▶ Overall high rating, an average 4.44 stars out of 5.

# Audiobooks on Storytel: Our Narrators



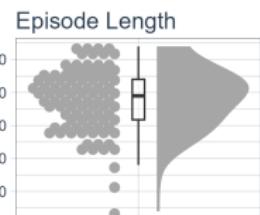
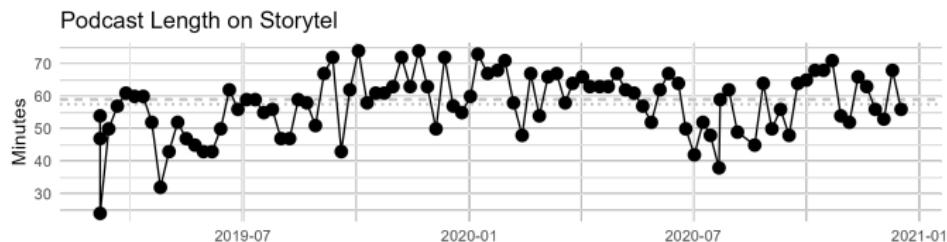
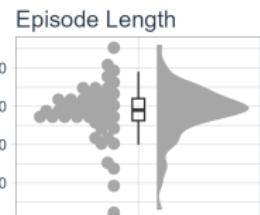
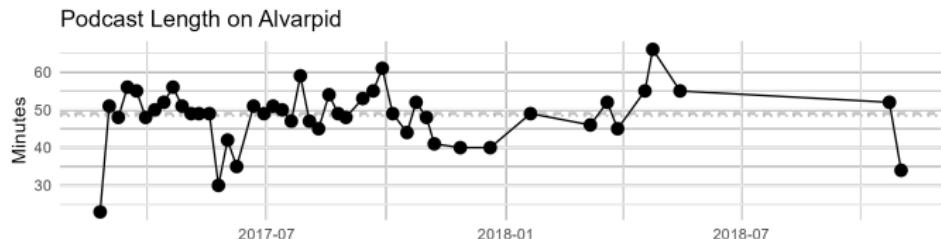
- ▶ Over 18K min of romantic medieval fantasy – 12.8 days of cont. listening
- ▶ Four distinct voices with varied styles & perseverance with Margit's prose

A painting depicting a scene from a story. In the foreground, a white cat sits on the floor, looking towards a vintage-style camera with a red button. In the background, three figures are visible: a man on the left with dark hair and a blue shirt, a woman in the center with long blonde hair and a green tattoo on her forehead, and another person on the right. The setting appears to be a wooden cabin or hut with a lamp hanging from the ceiling.

# Podcast



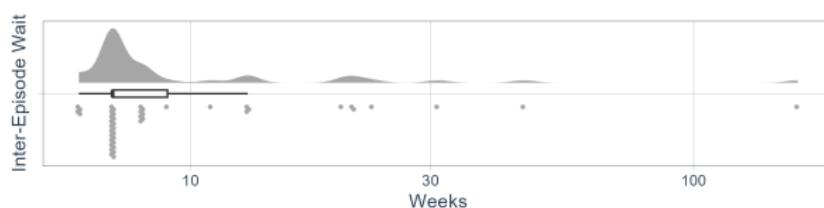
# Podcast: Hours Rambled



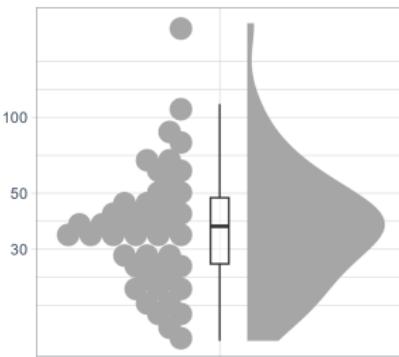
- ▶ Over a period of 45.8 months, there is 7,762 minutes of **quality** content, or 5.4 days of continuous listening.
- ▶ Average length is 57.6 minutes on Storytel (48.5 on Alvarpið), but never surpassing 75 minutes.

# Podcast on Alvarpið

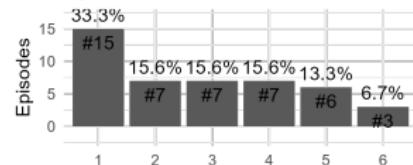
Listeners on Mixcloud



Streams

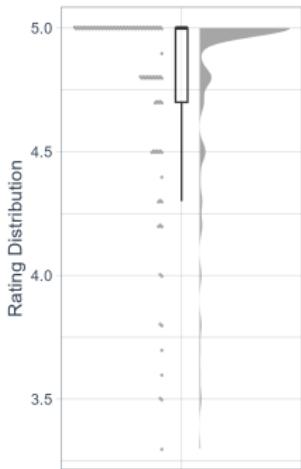
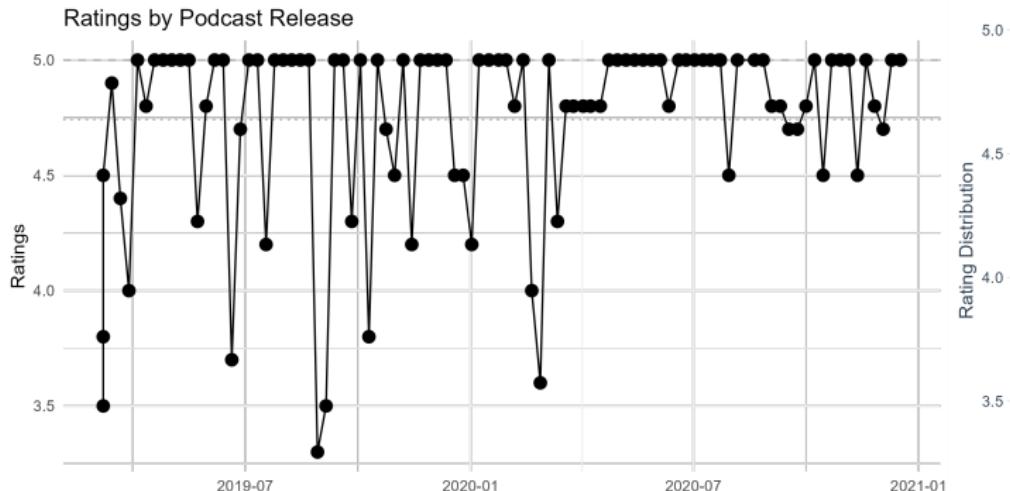


Episodes per Book



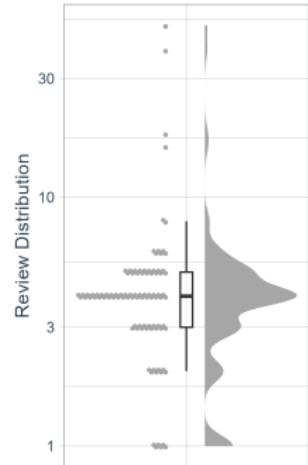
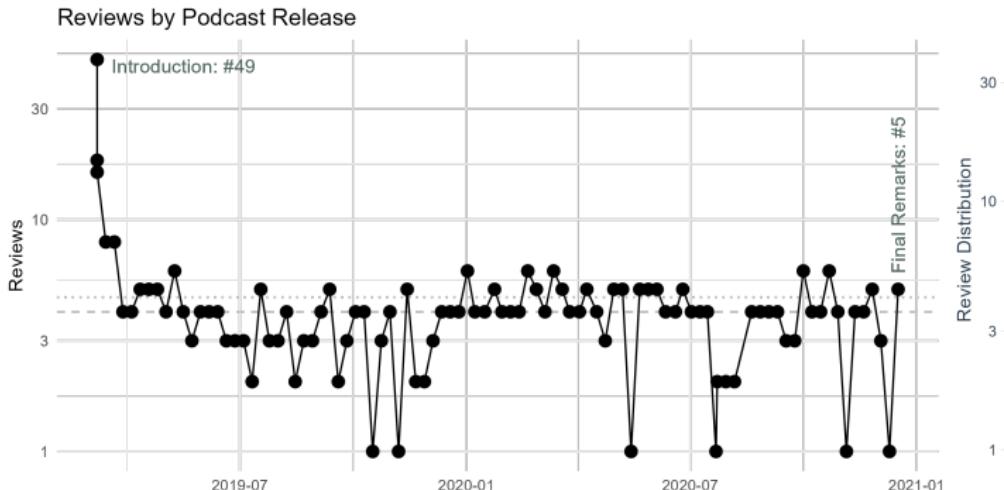
- ▶ 46 episodes, 20 months, 5.5 books
- ▶ 2,231 minutes – 37 hours – 1.5 days of continuous listening
- ▶ Roughly 1,040 streams per episode (thereof 40 via [nutiminn.is](http://nutiminn.is))

# Podcast on Storytel: High Ratings



- ▶ Average rating: 4.74 out of 5
- ▶ 54 episodes with a perfect 5.0 score (56% of total)
- ▶ Only 7 episodes with a rating below 4.0 (worst case 3.3)

# Podcast on Storytel: Low Reviews

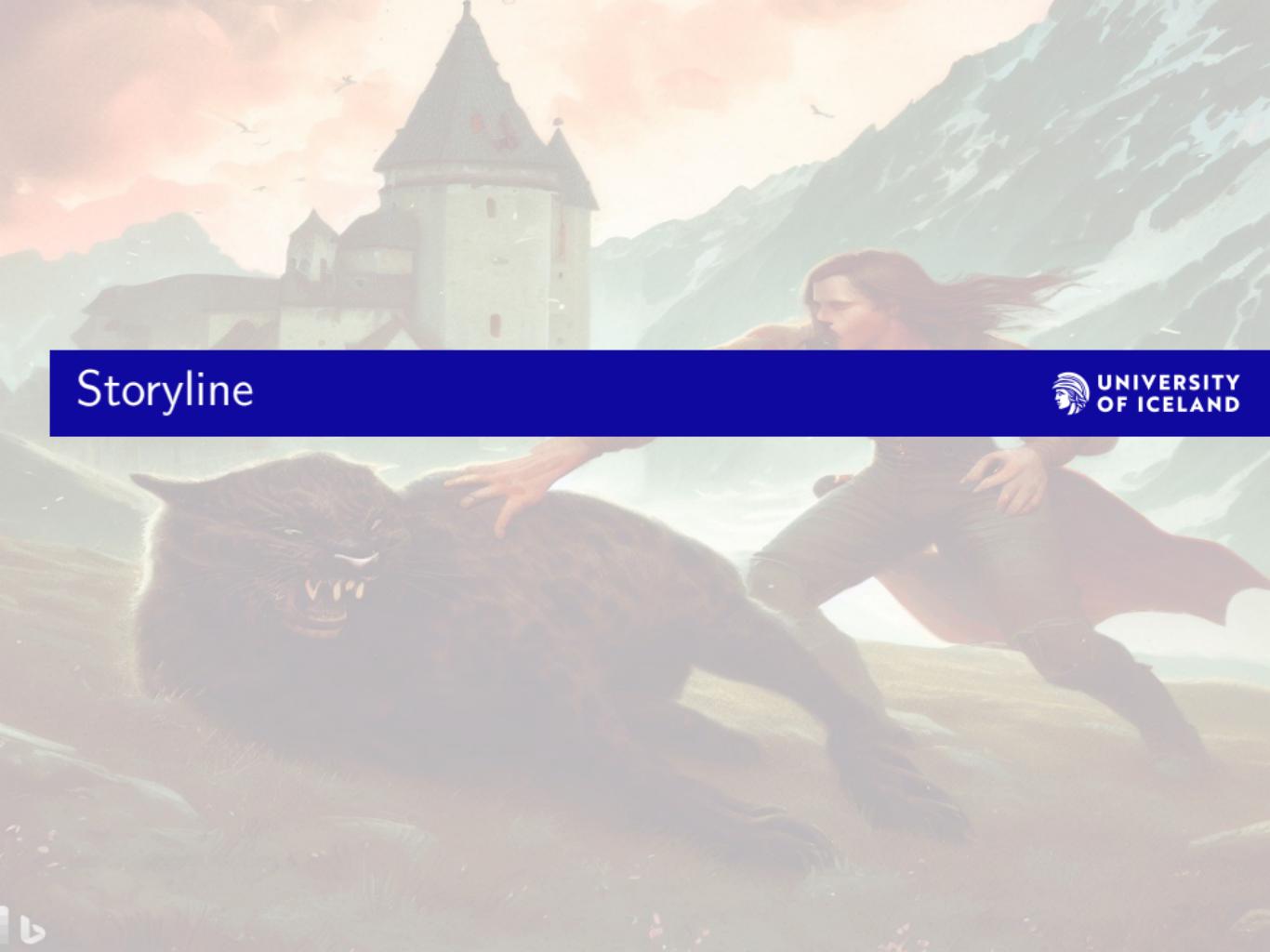


- ▶ Number of reviews: 444 total (25,627 for the audiobooks)
- ▶ At least one active fan throughout the period
- ▶ Four regular fans who consistently provided review

# Podcast Platform Comparison

	Episodes	Books	Total Running Time (hours)	Average Length (min)	Median Days to Next	Average Days to Next	Max Days to Next	Months Active
Alvarpið	46	6	37.2	48.50	7	13.69	161	20.3
Storytel	96	47	92.2	57.61	7	6.85	14	21.4
	142		129.4				45.8*	

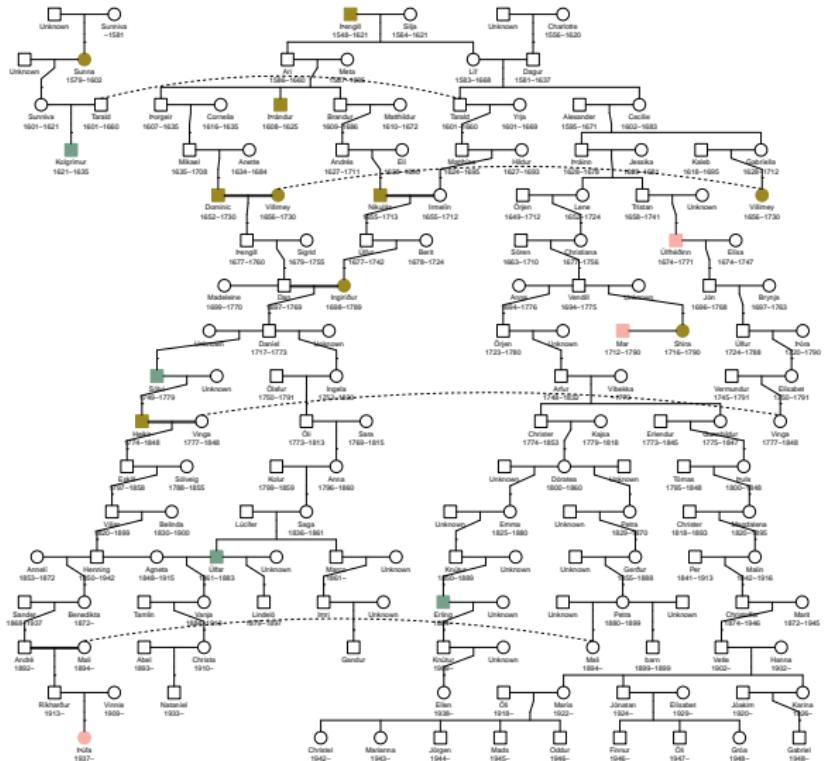
\*4.1 months hiatus between Alvarpið and Storytel



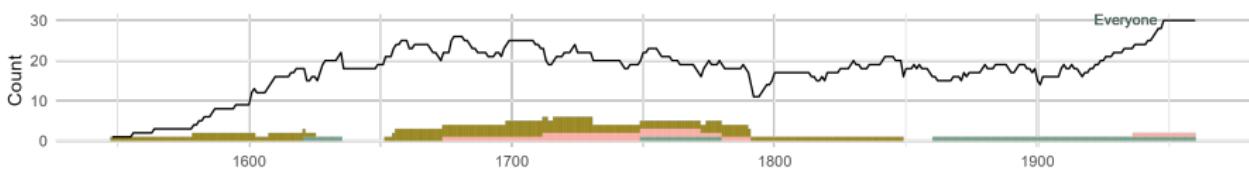
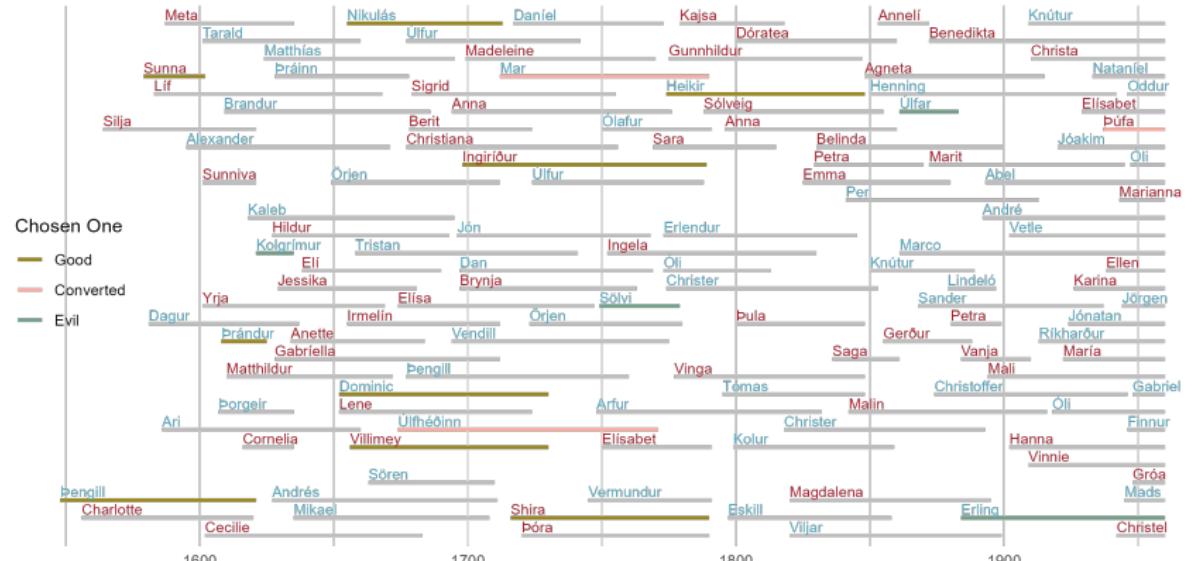
# Storyline



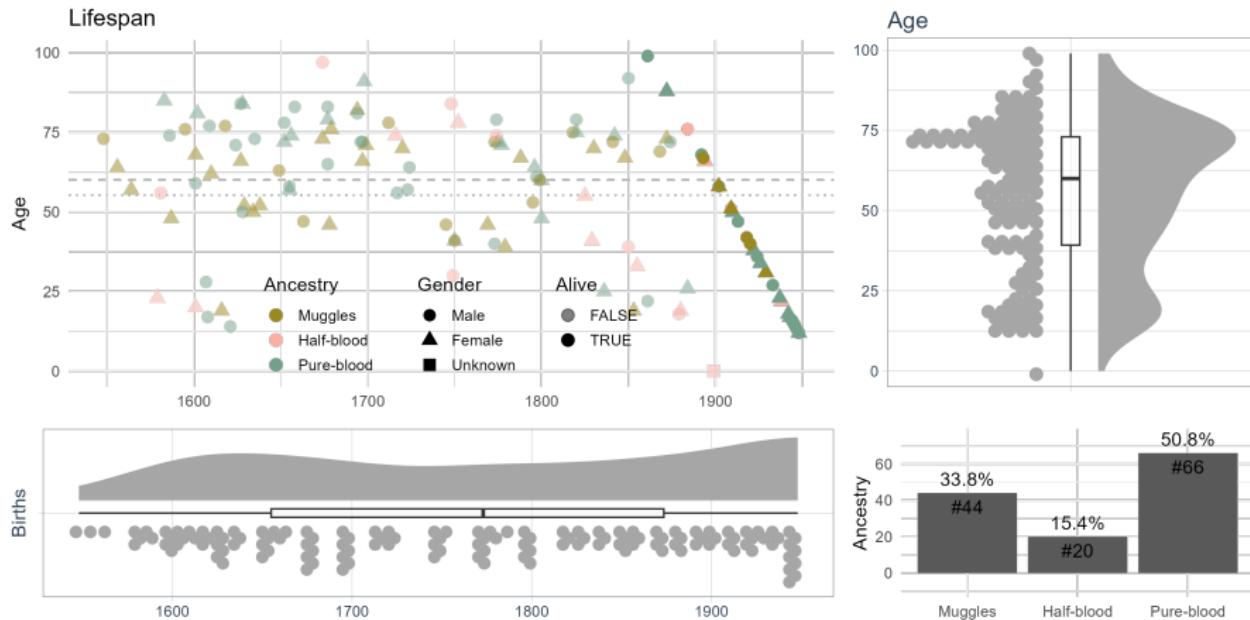
# Ice People Family Tree



# Ice People Family Gantt Chart

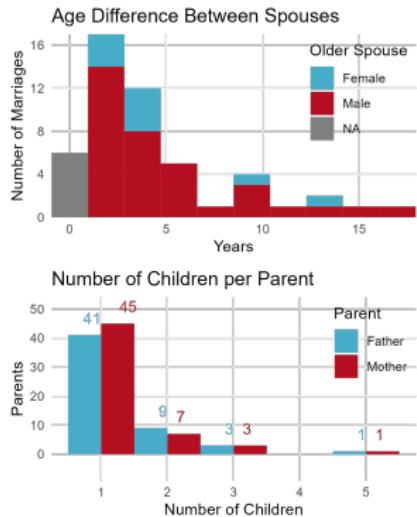
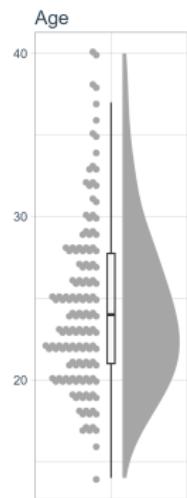
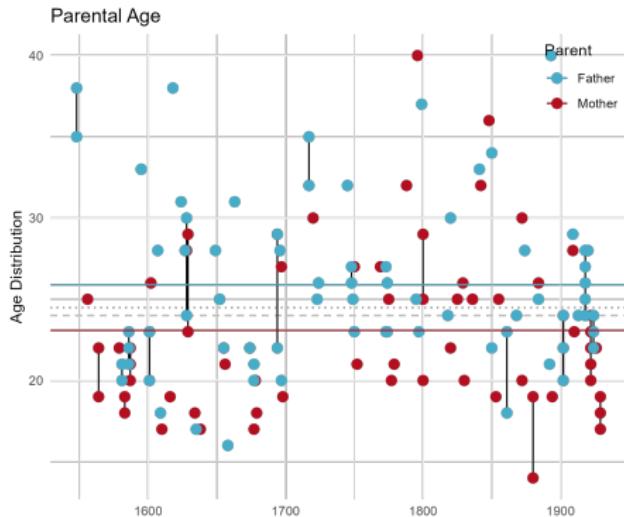


# Lifespan of the Ice People



- ▶ Average woman lives 58.5 years (median 65,  $n = 50$ )
- ▶ Average man lives 62.5 years (median 71,  $n = 49$ )
- ▶ 1 centenarian, 4 people live to 90, 14 live to 80, 46 live to 70

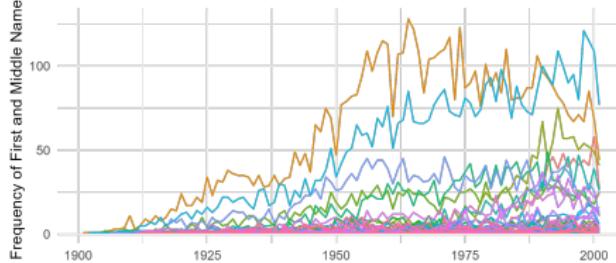
# Parental Age Trends & Marital Age Gaps



- ▶ 53 relationships described, 66 children born
- ▶ Average age of mother at childbirth is 23.5 years (fathers 26.0)
- ▶ 22 kids have either no father ( $n = 10$ ) or no mother ( $n = 12$ )
- ▶ 85% of marriages have an older husband, age difference generally 3 years (max 17 years)

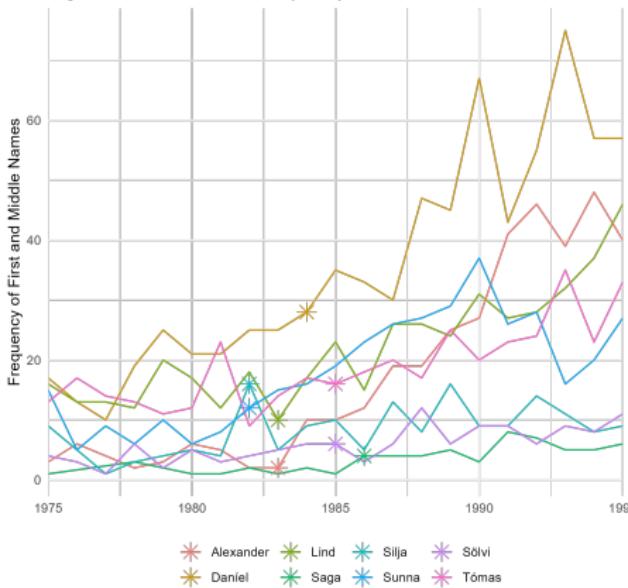
# Icelandic Naming Trends

Name Trends in Iceland



Alexander	Dan	Ingírður	Mira	Tristan
André	Daniel	Jónatan	Nathaniel	Úlfar
Anette	Dominic	Karina	Nikulás	Úlfhéðinn
Angelika	Eldar	Kolgrímur	Ölafsdóttir	Vermundur
Anna	Elisabet	Lind	Pétur	Vetle
Belinda	Ellen	Magdalena	Ríkharður	Viljar
Benedikta	Frank	Malin	Saga	Yrja
Brink	Gunnhildur	Marcel	Shíra	Þengill
Cecille	Heikir	Marco	Silja	Þorgeir
Christa	Henning	Maria	Sunna	Þráinn
Christer	Hildigerður	Matthías	Sólví	Púla
Christoffer	Hildur	Mikael	Tómas	

Significant Difference in Frequency Post-Publication



- ▶ Protagonists' names **Yrja**, **Púla**, **Heikir** and **Viljar** first appear in the census a few years after Margit introduced them in her saga.
- ▶ Icelandic census data provided by Yngvi Gautsson of **Utopia Arctica**



# Thank You



Feel free to contact me at [helgaingim@hi.is](mailto:helgaingim@hi.is)  
or [@tungufoss](https://twitter.com/tungufoss) on Twitter.

Get the source of this data analysis at:  
[github.com/tungufoss/  
iskisur-rek-data-beers](https://github.com/tungufoss/iskisur-rek-data-beers)

