

The 1783–1785 A.D. Laki-Grímsvötn eruptions I: A critical look at the contemporary chronicles

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Abstract – *The 1783–85 Laki-Grímsvötn eruptions are the best documented of the pre-twentieth century volcanic events in Iceland. A large body of contemporary sources contain information about the sequence of events and eruption phenomena. A number of these are chronicles of these events and in Iceland they are known as Eldrit (Book of Fire). The Eldrit compiled by the Reverend Jón Steingrímsson at Prestbakki in the Síða district (about 35 km to the south of the Laki fissures) are by far the most detailed and informative. Here I evaluate the accuracy and reliability of the Eldrit and other contemporary chronicles and show that, apart from minor discrepancies, they give an accurate account of the course of events during the Laki eruption.*