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**Viking & Medieval Norse Studies**

# **A Study in Scribal Identification in Fourteenth Century Iceland**

**A Comparative Philological Analysis of Selected Sections of  
Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and *Reynistaðarbók*  
AM 764 4to**

**Ritgerð til MA-prófs í Viking & Medieval Norse Studies**

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## ABSTRACT

In previous scholarship it has been suggested that Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and *Reynistaðarbók* AM 764 4to share a common scribal hand. The primary research goal in this study is to either vindicate or challenge the notion of a common scribe using a comparative analysis of paleographic, orthographic, and phonological features. At the behest of the increasing demand for reproducible results in philology, a statistics-based analysis of various features will be employed.

I will discuss issues of the amount of paleographic and orthographic changes and variation that we could conceivably see over the course of a scribe's career, as well as address some of the methodological and epistemological concerns regarding the use and interpretation of philological data.

In this thesis, I will argue that it is indeed a single scribe responsible for Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, a fragment of *Laxdæla saga*, the redaction of *Trójumanna saga* found in AM 573 4to, and section G of AM 764 4to. There are trends and congruencies in the philological data to support this conclusion, each of which will be discussed individually.

## ÁGRIP

Í fyrrum verkum hefur verið lagt til að Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, og AM 764 4to hafi svipaða rithönd. Meigin ransóknarmarkmið þessara ritgerðar er að annaðhvort staðfesta eða vefengja þessa tillögu með notkun samanburðargreiningu á skriftarfræðilegum og hljóðfræðilegum þáttum ásamt stafsetningu. Tölfræðileg greining á þessum, ásamt öðrum, þáttum verður notuð sökum aukinna krafa á samkvæmum niðurstöðum í textafræði.

Ég mun ræða þann vanda sem fólgin er í því að leggja mat á þær breytingar sem geta átt sér stað á rithönd og stafsetningarvali ritara á æviferli hans. Einnig mun ég tala um þann aðfreðafræðilega vanda sem fylgir greiningu og túlkun textafræðilegra gagna.

Ég mun færa rök fyrir því að sami ritari skrifaði Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, brot af *Laxdælasögu*, útgáfu *Trójumanna sögu* sem finnst í AM 573 4to og kafla G í AM 764 4to. Loks, mun ég benda á leitni og samræmi í textafræðilegu gögnunum styðja þessa niðurstöðu.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *About the Manuscripts*

This study will concern three Icelandic manuscripts from the latter half of the fourteenth century, namely Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and AM 764 4to, or as it is also known, *Reynistaðarbók*. Chronologically, these manuscripts are roughly contemporaneous with the more well-known *Möðruvallabók* and *Flateyjarbók*, and indeed display many similar features from a philological perspective.

Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX is a two leaf fragment of *Laxdæla saga* that, as the name of the manuscript suggests, is housed in Stockholm. We find manuscript evidence of this text as early as the thirteenth century, so we can confidently assert that this manuscript contains innovations and ‘corruptions’ that are not to be found in the earliest manuscript attestations.<sup>1</sup> In her introduction to the *Editiones Arnemagnæe* edition of *Trójumanna saga*, Jonna Louis-Jensen passively identifies the hand in Holm. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX as the same hand found in the first part of one of the chief manuscripts of *Trójumanna saga*, AM 573 4to,<sup>2</sup> though no hard philological data or analysis is provided to support this claim.

AM 573 4to is a sixty-three leaf manuscript containing *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*, and likely dates to the third quarter of the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> This manuscript is linked to Northern Iceland, and Möðruvellir and Þingeyrar are both possible places of origin. This redaction of *Trójumanna saga*, along with the later redaction attested only in paper manuscripts, is believed to be a translation of the Latin *De Excidio Troiaæ*, which in turn is purported to be a translation of the supposed Greek text by Dares the Phrygian, who was believed to have fought at Troy on the Trojan side.<sup>4</sup>

Jonna Louis-Jensen claims that the second hand of AM 573 4to, the hand found in this copy of *Breta sögur*, is ‘almost certainly’ also found in *Möðruvallabók*, AM 132

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<sup>1</sup> *Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek, Heft 4: Laxdæla saga*. ed. Kristian Kålund. (Halle-Niemayer A/S: Halle, 1896)

<sup>2</sup> *Editiones Arnemagnæe, Series A, vol.8: Trójumanna saga*, ed. Jonna Louis-Jensen. (Munksgaard: Copenhagen, 1963), XXXI.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, XXXI.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, XII.

fol.,<sup>5</sup> albeit without hard philological evidence. However, this potential link to *Möðruvallabók* does not necessarily make Möðruvellir a likely place of origin of AM 764 4to; in her near-exhaustive study of AM 132 fol., *A Grammar of Möðruvallabók*, Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen admits that is not even certain that AM 132 fol. is from Möðruvellir.<sup>6</sup>

As suggested by Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, AM 764 4to represents an attempt of an account of universal history in Icelandic.<sup>7</sup> The codex is divided into eight parts, reflecting a conception of the chronology of the universe that can be traced to Saint Augustine.<sup>8</sup> The book was most probably intended for clerics or cloistered people, and the emphasis on Judith of the Old Testament may suggest that the codex was intended specifically for a religious community of women.<sup>9</sup>

AM 764 4to contains a total of eight hands, and seems to have been compiled over a somewhat extended period of time. This study will focus on the work of ‘Scribe G’, and indeed I will refer to him / her in this way sporadically throughout the study, so as to, at least for the time being, hypothetically separate him from the scribe(s) of AM 573 4to and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. The sections that scribe G is responsible for contain an account of Jewish dynasties, a brief telling of the Trojan war<sup>10</sup>, as well as excerpts of *Breta sögur*.<sup>11</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir suggests that the scribe must have been quite familiar with the *Breta sögur*; as mentioned previously, we supposedly see her / his hand in AM 573 4to, the principal manuscript containing *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., XXXI.

<sup>6</sup> Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, *A Grammar of Möðruvallabók* (CNWS Publications: Leiden, 2000), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir. “The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Development of Reynistaðarbók (AM 764 4to)” *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages*. edited by Slavica Ranković. (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies: Toronto, 2012), 328.

<sup>8</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir. “Arctic Garden of Delights: The Purpose of the Book of Reynistaður.” *Romance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland. Essays in Honor of Marianne Kalinke*. ed. Kirsten Wolff and Johanna Denzin. Islandica 54. (Cornell University Library: Ithaca, 2008), 282.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 285.

<sup>10</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir. “The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Development of Reynistaðarbók (AM 764 4to)”, 331.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 335.

Árni Magnússon collected AM 764 4to in pieces from various places, including Skálholt and Gaulverjbær, around 1700.<sup>13</sup> It is likely that the codex originated from Northern Iceland, potentially having been produced at the Benedictine nunnery in Reynistaður.<sup>14</sup>

### ***1.1.2 Identification of a Common Scribal Hand in Previous Scholarship***

It has previously been suggested that there is a common scribal hand in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and AM 764 4to, namely in the work of Stefán Karlsson and Jonna Louis-Jensen, respectively.

In the introduction to the Arnamagnæn edition of *Trójumanna saga*, Jonna Louis-Jensen asserts that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX shares a common scribal hand in with AM 573 4to. No philological evidence is provided, though her assertion should not necessarily be taken lightly. It is evident from both the stemma and the depth of her analysis of the manuscript transmission of *Trójumanna saga* that she is intimately familiar with Icelandic manuscripts of the fourteenth century, and there would be no reason to mention a little-known fragment of *Laxdæla saga*, not *Trójumanna saga*, if we could not, at the very least, reasonably suspect a common scribe. Jonna Louis-Jensen does not, however, mention *Reynistaðarbók* AM 764 4to, at all in this discussion.

In the article “Af Skrifurum og Handritum”, contained in the festschrift entitled *Stafkrokar*, Stefán Karlsson suggests in a footnote that AM 764 4to, AM 573 4to, and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX share a common scribe, or at the least, very similar scribal hands.<sup>15</sup> As this suggestion appears in a footnote of what is otherwise a general discussion of script and manuscripts, there is no philological data provided to support this claim.

The so-called common scribe is posited to have been responsible for the two extant leaves of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, 1r-45v of AM 573 4to, and 10v1-38, 11r3-12v, 38r-38v24, 40v1-22, 40v25-bottom of AM 764 4to.

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<sup>13</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “Arctic Gardens of Delight: The Purpose of the Book of Reynistaður”, 279.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>15</sup> Stefán Karlsson, “Af Skrifurum og Handritum” in *Stafkrokar*. ed. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson. (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar: Reykjavík, 2000), 316.

## **1.2 Methodology**

### **1.2.1 Nomenclature**

In this study, I have striven wherever possible to use the jargon of established scholars when dealing with issues in the study of Medieval Icelandic manuscripts.

In matters of phonology and orthography, I have drawn upon the models laid out and the vocabulary used by notable Icelandic scholars that have dealt with similar topics, such as Stefán Karlsson, Hreinn Benediktsson, and Haraldur Bernharðsson. I have also borrowed their manner of spelling certain sounds in the international phonetic alphabet; while this practice may not take into account some of the international variants in the use of the international phonetic alphabet, it is nonetheless congruent with the common practice here in Iceland.

In the discussion of paleographic matters, I have, to a certain extent, attempted to hybridize the technical vocabulary of Albert Derolez and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, as Derolez provides a broader European framework, while Guðvarður provides specifics that are most relevant in the Icelandic context. I have also drawn upon the work of Odd Einar Haugen and Lars Svensson, albeit primarily to heighten awareness of broader trends in script development in Anglo-Saxon England, Norway, and eventually Iceland.

Occasionally I employ terms that, at least within my secondary source material, are restricted to Albert Derolez' *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, from which I borrow terms such as 'box-a', that are not necessarily common in Icelandic manuscript studies per se, but are nonetheless useful in the discussion of the finer points of Gothic script.

### **1.2.2 The Growing Demand for Statistics and Reproduceable Results in Philology**

Paleography in the twenty-first century is witnessing a growing demand for statistics-based analysis and reproduceable results. This trend, in my view, comes at the behest of both more traditional paleographers, such as Albert Derolez, and the growing popularity of digital philology.

In the introduction to *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, Albert Derolez advocates a more statistics-based approach to paleographic studies, and indeed insists that such a revision of approach is necessary for the survival of the field of



study.<sup>16</sup> I am of much the same mind, and believe that in the attempt to make results more reproduceable and observations less subjective, statistics are more useful than either general impressions or vague adjectives. When dealing with matters such as identifying a script type or scribal hand, percentage-based statistics are doubtlessly more precise and objective than a vague description; I advocate replacing ambiguities such as ‘occasionally’, or ‘in the majority of instances’ with specifics, such as ‘twenty-three percent of instances’ or ‘eighty-eight percent of instances’.

### ***1.2.3 The Use of Statistics in this Study***

In the pursuit of a more statistics-based model for philological studies, and bridging the gap between traditional and digital philology, I have modelled all of my analysis of individual paleographic, orthographic, and phonological features on statistics.

Particularly for the paleographic features, that is to say, different allographs of the same letter, I have collected samples of approximately one-hundred instances of each letter, so as to gauge the relative distribution of the different allographs that appear. It is important to note that my statistics are derived from my samples, not the entire manuscript or even the entire excerpt of the manuscript under study.

My sample includes the two extant leaves of AM 573 4to, all of the approximately four leaves attributed to Scribe G in *Reynistaðarbók*,<sup>17</sup> and nine leaves of the forty-five attributed to the supposed common scribe, namely leaves 2, 12, 13, 18, 20, 27, 32, 38, 41. The sample leaves for Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and AM 764 4to were essentially chosen for me, by virtue of them being either the only surviving leaves or the only leaves in the codex attributed to a particular scribe. Conversely, I selected the sample leaves from AM 574 4to with considerations of legibility as well as examining different parts of the manuscript.

In the cases that a particular variant is found throughout, I have generally refrained from including an in-text table, as it would merely read ‘100%’ for a single variant among several possibilities.

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<sup>16</sup> Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Development of *Reynistaðarbók* (AM 764 4to)”, 331.

When interpreting the statistics, I will not only compare the values for each of the three manuscripts, but also look for trends in the data. That is to say, when trying to answer questions such as those surrounding the supposed common scribe, my analysis will include looking for trends, such as consistent relative distribution of certain allographs, rather than merely comparing percentage values across the respective statistics table.

In dealing with the data, and attempting to answer questions such as whether we are looking at the work of a common scribe or not, I will make a few basic assumptions: that a scribe's career likely lasted about twenty-five years, that a scribe's hand may change slightly or perhaps even notably over a period of time,<sup>18</sup> and that an increased frequency of decorative features such as loops represents a later or at least more innovative form of script than that which may not feature such decorative features.

Unfortunately, and possibly to Derolez' dismay, the practicalities involved in interpreting philological data are by no means a hard science, and may perhaps involve the same manner of subjectivity of the approach that precludes statistical philology, Derolez' so-called 'paleographer's eye'.<sup>19</sup> Though I will be using hard data as the basis for all of my arguments, there is, as yet, not a codified method of interpreting, or indeed even how to best harvest, philological and / or paleographic data. Ultimately, I will be making subjective judgement calls informed by the data when trying to answer the fundamental questions of this study, and it is my hope that I will be able to generate discussion surrounding not only the three manuscripts dealt with in this study, but also the methodological precepts employed in doing so.

### **1.3 The Scope of this Project**

The primary goal of this study is to either confirm or deny the notion of a common scribal hand in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and AM 764 4to. My analysis will feature paleographic, orthographic, and phonological criteria.

The analysis of paleographic features will, to the best of my ability, be kept separate from the orthographic and phonological matters in the body text portion of this

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<sup>18</sup> It is unlikely that a Medieval scribe's handwriting would have changed as much as a modern person's over the course of their life. The method of holding the pen, as well as the angle at which people wrote during the middle ages likely would have minimized the amount of personal script features that we might expect to see in a modern hand, or indeed in any hand later than about the seventeenth century.

<sup>19</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 2.

study. This will be done primarily to avoid circular reasoning during the analysis of specific features, avoiding such circumlocutions as ‘this paleographic feature seems archaic or innovative relative to this related orthographic feature’. Each chapter subsection will contain a comparative analysis of each feature (whether paleographic, orthographic, or phonological) as witnessed in each of the three manuscript excerpts.

I will however correlate the paleographic and orthographic / phonological data in the concluding chapter, comparing trends in the paleography and orthography of each of the three manuscripts, so as to argue for or against the notion of a common scribe.

The secondary, but by no means less important, goal of this study is to address methodological and epistemological concerns one might have with a philological exercise such as this one. I will deal with issues such as: what we might be able to say about how a scribe’s letter forms and personal orthography may develop over his / her career, how an exemplar may have affected a scribe’s copying, and how we can argue for such influence, as well as the issue of whether particular scribes were restricted to copying certain types of text.

I also intend to address the issues of statistical paleography, specifically, the hitherto subjective art of interpreting statistics of a philological nature. Questions such as: what kind of statistical proof do we need to verify / deny a common scribe? How do considerations of unconscious changes in one’s hand-writing and personal orthography over time affect such statistical demands? Does a more statistical approach to philology still merely leave us with an endless regression of subjective judgement calls?

I will more or less side-step issues of genre, as I do not intend to address issues of genre in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, as I believe that our understanding of Medieval conceptions of genre is inadequate and anachronistic, which is, again, not a topic to be discussed in the present study.

## II. PALEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

### 2.1 The letter a

According to Liefertinck's criteria for broadly distinguishing between Gothic Textualis and Gothic Cursiva, the shape of the letter a is paramount; Textualis features the two-storey a, while Cursiva features the one-storey a.<sup>20</sup> However, in the study of Icelandic script, the two-storey versus one-storey is often used to distinguish between Cursiva Antiquior and Cursiva Recentior rather than broadly between Textualis and Cursiva.<sup>21</sup> As two-storey a is found throughout Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and AM 764 4to, it is difficult to make a case for the script being anything but Textualis, at least according to the Liefertinck schema. Though, as I will discuss in subsequent sections of this chapter, the level of influence from Cursive script is not the same for each of the three excerpts under study.

There are two allographs of this letter that appear, both of which are variants of the Gothic two-storey a. One of the allographs has a closed top compartment, the other open. The allograph with a closed compartment, a1, is considered to be a later form of the letter, not least because the allograph with the open compartment is strikingly similar to the letter a in Carolingian and Proto-Gothic script.

*the two a allographs as seen on 10r of AM 573 4to:*  
*closed compartment a (a1)*



*open-compartment a (a2)*



	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>two-storey, closed compartment a (a1)</b>	100%	19%	10%
<b>two-storey, open compartment a (a2)</b>		81%	90%

<sup>20</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 130.

<sup>21</sup> Haraldur Bernhardsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*. 3rd Draft. (Reykjavík, 2013), 82.

The distribution of a-allographs across the three manuscript excerpts is not necessarily anomalous for the period in question, yet it is problematic with regards to the notion that the three excerpts under study share a common scribal hand. As the open-compartment allograph predominates in AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to, yet is absent from Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, it is difficult to justify a claim of a shared scribal hand based on this feature alone.

Somewhat uniquely in my study, AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to are quite congruent with regard to this feature, as the former manuscript employs the open-compartment allograph in ninety percent of instances, while the latter employs it eighty-one percent of the time. This distribution suggests a more innovative employment of the letter a in AM 573 4to than in AM 764 4to, which is somewhat surprising, as the script of AM 573 4to is considerably more conservative than AM 764 4to with regards to essentially every other criterion in my study.

It is difficult to conjecture why these two excerpts share such a similar distribution of a-allographs, especially since many other paleographic features suggest that they are somewhat removed from each other with regards to allographic distribution and / or date of origin and scribal practice.

## **2.2 The uncial d**

Over the course of the fourteenth century, the insular letter ð, adopted through Anglo-Saxon influence by way of Norwegian influence, was gradually replaced by the letter d.<sup>22</sup> The uncial d became predominant by the latter part of the fourteenth century, and indeed all of the d allographs that we encounter in this study are variants of the uncial d.

As we might expect in Icelandic manuscripts of the latter part of the fourteenth century, the round form of the letter d, derived from uncial script, is used exclusively throughout the three excerpts; unlike earlier variants of the letter, such as the so-called straight or miniscule d, in which the shaft is essentially vertical, the shaft of the uncial d curves to the left.<sup>23</sup> Three allographic variants appear of the uncial d, at least according

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<sup>22</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Íslenzk Handrit: Icelandic Manuscripts. Series in Folio II. (The Manuscript Institute of Iceland: Reykjavík, 1965), 44.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 46.

to my schema, though the frequency of each variant is quite disparate in each of the three manuscript excerpts. The distribution across the three manuscripts does however seem to agree with the notion that these scribes share a common scribe, and that his script developed, acquiring what we would consider more innovative and later features over the course of his career.

*The three d allographs, as seen in AM 764 4to.*

*d1*



*d2*



*d3*



	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>uncial d (d1)</b>	50%	24%	13%
<b>uncial d, open loop (d2)</b>	40%	62%	78%
<b>uncial d, closed loop (d3)</b>	10%	12%	8%

Regarding the frequency of particular allographs, AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to share a much more similar distribution than Perg. nr. 10 IX does with either of them. As the table below suggests, AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to feature looped variants of the letter d seventy-four and eighty-six percent of the time, respectively, while Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX has an exactly equal distribution of looped and unlooped allographs.

With further regard to the issue of whether these three excerpts are the work of the same scribe, it is worth noting that each of the three fragments contain a 10% +/-2 distribution of the letter d with a closed loop. However, while d2 is most common and d3 is least common in both AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to, d1 is most common in Perg. nr. 10 IX; this contradicts the notion that a scribe would more or less maintain the same relative distribution of allographs of a certain letter throughout his career.

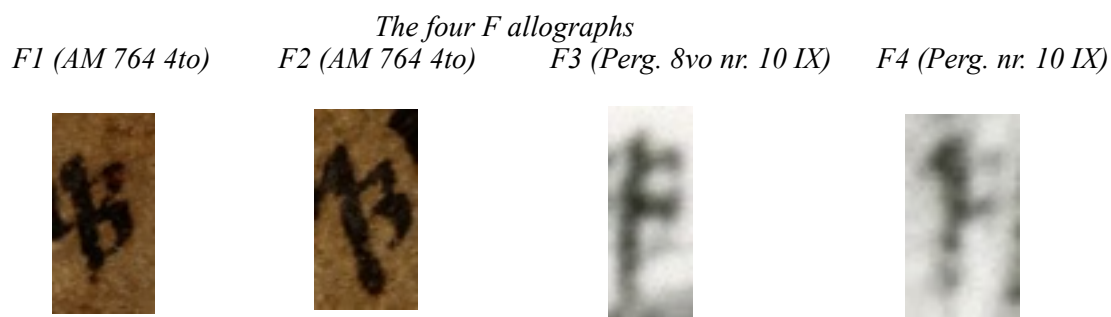
This distribution does not necessarily suggest that we are looking at the work of different scribes, but rather perhaps that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX is of an earlier provenance than the other two excerpts, or perhaps that the script in the exemplar was quite archaic

relative to the script of the scribe at the time, perhaps subconsciously influencing him to employ archaic allographs more frequently than he would have otherwise.

### 2.3 The Letter F

The insular form of the letter f appears sporadically in Icelandic manuscripts as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century, but became practically universal beyond the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>24</sup> By the second half of the fourteenth century, the letter f had two closed lobes in the majority of hands, and in virtually all hands by the fifteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

According to my schema, four allographs of the letter f appear in the manuscript excerpts under study. It is worth noting that each of these allographs is merely a variant of the Anglo-Saxon / insular f, with the shaft extending beneath the baseline. According to Derolez' classification, the shaft of the letter f descending beneath the baseline is, strictly speaking, a hallmark of Gothic Cursiva,<sup>26</sup> though this is a common feature of Icelandic manuscripts from this period, not least because it is the insular rather than the Latin form (to which Derolez is referring) of the letter that is employed most often in Icelandic manuscripts.



Each of the four allographs appear to have been executed using the same pattern of strokes, and the distinctions between the variants could be called unconscious. The variants seem to owe more to an inconsistency in execution on the scribe's part than any real difference in the manner in which the letter was formed or what it represented. The main distinctive feature seems to be whether the lobes are open or closed, even if only

<sup>24</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 41.

<sup>25</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 411.

<sup>26</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 130.

partially. The four f allographs could be regarded as ‘unconscious allographs’ as the variation between them was likely unintentional, yet an analysis of such variation could prove useful in scribal identification.

Even if produced with the same pattern of strokes (as are three of the four f allographs in this study) represents a variance in execution; even if we are to assume that certain features became more prevalent in the script over time, such as forked ascenders or loops, it is worth examining how consistent the scribe was in execution.

Particularly when determining whether the script in several manuscripts belongs to the same scribe, it is worth looking at the distribution sub-features, as it is, in my view, reasonable to suspect that the same scribe would, mostly unconsciously and through his own idiosyncrocies, create the same distribution of unconscious sub-features throughout his career, unless (s)he were consciously policing her / his own script. More succinctly and specifically, even when carrying out the same pattern of strokes for the lobed Anglo-Saxon f, I would suspect that the distribution of sub-features would remain relatively constant. That is to say, he would more or less always execute the letter in a certain manner in the majority of cases, perhaps consistently another way in the minority of cases, and perhaps in another way somewhere in between.

	<b>Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX</b>	<b>AM 573 4to</b>	<b>AM 764 4to</b>
<b>F with both lobes closed (F1)</b>	42%	74%	56%
<b>F with only top lobe closed (F2)</b>	8%	22%	41%
<b>F with only bottom lobe closed (F3)</b>	42%	2%	2%
<b>F with both lobes open (F4)</b>	8%	2%	1%

Of the three excerpts under study, Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX features the lowest frequency of the allograph with both lobes closed, and, not coincidentally, the highest frequency of the allograph with both lobes open. If this is indeed the same hand as is found in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to, this suggests that this scribe had not yet begun writing the ultimate form of the Anglo-Saxon f, with both lobes closed, in the majority of cases, which in turn suggests an earlier providence. If this is *not* the same hand as the other two excerpts, than it is possible that the scribe’s career did not last long



enough for his execution of the letter f to feature two closed lobes in the majority of cases.

If we are to assume that the same scribe wrote each of the three excerpts, we certainly see a consistency in practice in his execution of the letter f, and the distribution of what I deem its four allographs in the samples. As the percentage values in the tables for Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX are inflated due to the small sample size, an underwhelming two leaves, I will note that the letter f with both lobes open occurs only once in the sample, despite the 8% statistic in the table. This directly correlates with the statistics for the other two manuscripts; the allograph under discussion appears twice in my sample of AM 573 4to, and once in *Reynistaðarbók*. Similarly, the allograph with both lobes closed is predominant in each of the three texts, though it is worth noting that in the case of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, the allograph with only the bottom lobe closed is equally common as the aforementioned variant, both checking in at forty-two percent, respectively.

#### **2.4 The Letters b, h, k, þ, and l**

These characters have several constituent parts in common, and their forms were affected by many of the same developments in script. Namely, the ascenders acquired loops during the development of Gothic Textualis to Gothic Cursiva,<sup>27</sup> in much the same manner that the ascenders went from club-shaped to forked during the emergence of Pregothic script from Carolingian script.<sup>28</sup>

It is no doubt worth noting that in the cases that more than one allograph is used for these letters, that is to say, for all of the statistics on these letters other than those for the letter b in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, we see a very similar distribution of these allographs. Across the three fragments under study, the most frequently employed allograph of the letters b and l is consistent, as is the least frequently employed allograph for the letters h, thorn, and þ. While this distribution was unlikely to have been completely intentional, it supports the notion that we are looking at the work of the same scribe, as we see the consistent presence of an idiosyncrocy that was likely unconscious, and can be used as a piece of evidence to identify the scribe.

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<sup>27</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 125.

<sup>28</sup> Haraldur Bernhardsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 81.

AM 764 4to displays a remarkably consistent distribution of allographs with regard to the letters under discussion; if we are to group allographs together as merely looped versus unlooped, the data suggests that for the letters b, h, k, þ, and l, the unlooped allographs are employed in about forty-percent of all total instances in my sample. We may be able to identify other such similar trends in the other manuscripts, such as the fact that the scribe of AM 573 4to employed unlooped allographs of the letters h, k, thorn, and l in 65% +/- 5 of instances, yet the inconsistency we see in the execution of letters with ascenders in the work of Scribe G of *Reynistaðarbók* is unparalleled in the rest of the sample.

AM 764 4to is somewhat anomalous relative to the other two excerpts in question, as 55% +/- 2 of the letters b, h, k, þ, and l appear in their looped variants, as opposed to Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and AM 573 4to, in which the looped variants are consistently in the minority, except for the letter h, which appears in the majority of cases in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. This statistic of AM 764 4to to suggest a later provenance, or perhaps a more innovative scribe, if scribe G of *Reynistaðarbók* is not the same one responsible for Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and / or AM 573 4to. If it is indeed the same scribe as the excerpts from the other two aforementioned manuscripts, then perhaps AM 764 4to showcases a later stage in his career, in which his script may have acquired more innovative features associated with later stages of script development, as opposed to some of the more conservative allographic distribution that we see in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and AM 573 4to.

Forked ascenders are almost completely absent in my sample, and perhaps it is surprising that they are present at all, as this feature is more of a hallmark of Carolingian or even Proto-Gothic script. Regardless, the consistent near-total absence of this feature across the three excerpts would support the notion that we are looking at the work of the same scribe.

#### **2.4.1 The Letter H**

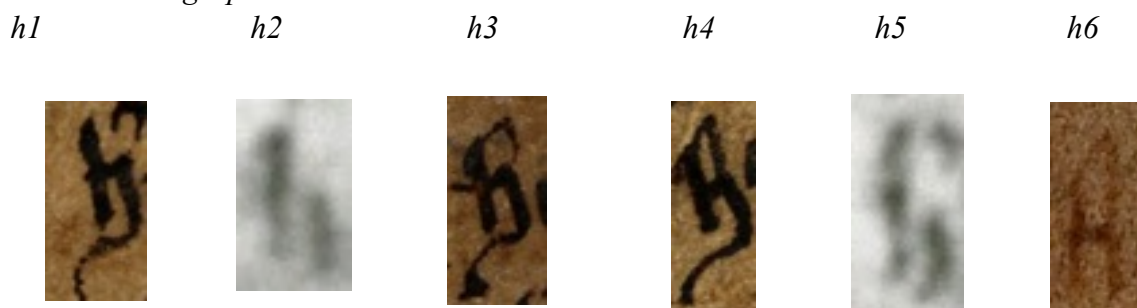
Across the three manuscript excerpts, we encounter six allographs of the letter h. The main distinguishing features between these allographs are the presence or absence of a loop on the ascender and a tail extending from the shaft beneath the baseline. The difference between h3 and h4, as with h5 and h6, depends on whether the loop on the

ascender was open or closed, and can be called an unconscious variation. The relative distribution of these related unconscious allographs may not be particularly informative in itself, yet may be useful in the identification of the scribal hand, if one is to assume that the distribution of unconscious features will remain similar throughout one's life.

	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>h unlooped, with tail descending beneath the baseline (h1)</b>	24%	51%	39%
<b>h unlooped, tailless (h2)</b>	14%	9%	4%
<b>h open looped with tail descending beneath the baseline (h3)</b>	17%	15%	19%
<b>h closed loop with tail (h4)</b>	31%	21%	38%
<b>h open loop, tailless (h5)</b>	12%		
<b>h closed loop, tailless (h6)</b>	14%	9%	4%

In fifty-seven percent of instances in my sample, allographs of the letter h with loops and tail descending beneath the baseline are present. More specifically, thirty-eight percent of instances feature a closed loop, while nineteen percent feature an open loop. In forty-three percent of instances, the letter h appears as an unlooped allograph, though the tail descending beneath the baseline is absent in just four percent of all instances in my sample.

*The six h allographs:*



While the distribution of h allographs among the three manuscripts may seem quite incongruent at first glance, there are many trends to be found upon closer inspection. We encounter allographs that are altogether ordinary for a late fourteenth

century manuscripts, and when we group these allographs together in terms of shared individual features, such as the presence of a loop or tail, the trends and consistencies in the data become more apparent.

	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
looped allographs	74%	40%	57%
tailed allographs	60%	77%	92%

The tried, yet not quite proven, principle of the increased presence of loops and decorative feature suggesting a later date of providence would indicate that Perg. nr. 10 IX is the youngest, while AM 573 4to would be easily the oldest, with sixty percent of all h allographs being unlooped, nine percent of which have neither a looped ascender nor a tail descending beneath the baseline.

The letter h in AM 764 4to features more tails descending below the baseline, while while Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX has more looped ascenders, which problematizes plotting these excerpts chronologically with regard to decorative features. While Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX has more looped allographs, it also has far more tailless allographs; forty-two percent versus AM 764 4to's eight percent. *Reynistaðarbók* also has the greatest prevalence of the looped allograph that we might expect to be most common, the allograph with the tail reaching below the baseline.

#### 2.4.2 The Letter B

Regarding the letter b, AM 573 4to and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX coalesce quite well, as both employ the same allograph of the letter, b1, in over ninety percent of instances. This allograph is essentially just a more narrow incarnation of the Carolingian b, as the ascender is club-shaped, not forked, nor is there any kind of loop on the ascender.

In my schema, there are three allographs of the letter b, though b2 and b3 should be called 'unconscious allographs', as the difference between an open and closed loop on the ascender was likely not something that the scribe paid great attention to. The letters are executed with the exact same pattern of strokes, making the letters identical in practical terms.

The three *b* allographs:

*b1* (Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX)

*b2* (AM 764 4to)

*b3* (AM 764 4to)



	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>b unlooped (b1)</b>	100%	96%	40%
<b>b with open loop (b2)</b>		3%	40%
<b>b with closed loop (b3)</b>		1%	20%

Though the distribution of looped allographs is incredibly low in AM 573 4to relative to AM 764 4to, it seems to suggest that the scribe had begun to adopt more innovative and decorative features in his script, if we are to assume that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX dates to an earlier stage in her / his career. If we are looking at the work of a common scribe, than perhaps this excerpt displays something of an intermediate period, in which his execution of the letter *b* was not as consistent and plain as in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX (*b1* in all instances), yet not nearly as riddled with looped ascenders as in *Reynistaðarbók*.

#### 2.4.3 The Letter *K*

Perhaps the most striking fact to be gleaned from the statistics on this letter is that we see a very similar relative distribution of the three allographs within Perg. nr. 10 IX and AM 573 4to. That is to say, the unlooped allograph is most common in both excerpts, while the allograph with a closed loop on the ascender is the least common.

	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>k unlooped (k1)</b>	50%	69%	36%
<b>k with open loop on ascender (k2)</b>	23%	10%	15%
<b>k with closed loop on ascender (k3)</b>	27%	21%	49%

*The three k allographs:*

*k1 (Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX)*

*k2 (AM 764 4to)*

*k3 (AM 764 4to)*



This seems like quite a contrast to the distribution we see in AM 764 4to, for instance, as the allograph that is least common in the other two excerpts is the most common allograph in this excerpt. Regarding the issue of a supposed common scribe, the distribution of k allographs that we see in AM 764 4to is problematic at best. As with several other letters in this study, the amount of circumvention one would have to engage in in order to explain this apparent anomaly away would essentially remove any potential credibility such an argument could have.

#### **2.4.4 The Letter p**

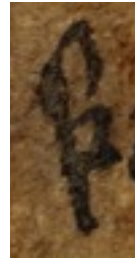
The allographs of this letter are quite similar to those of the letter k in my study; the primary division of the allographs is premised on the presence or absence of a looped ascender, and the variants with a looped ascender are further divided according to whether the loop is open or closed

Unlike the allographs of the letter k in my study, there is an allograph of the letter thorn with a forked ascender, a feature that I frankly did not expect to see given both the approximate dating of these manuscripts, as well as the absence of this feature in the samples from AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to. Digressions aside, this allograph appears only once (two percent of all occurrences of the letter) in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, while being entirely absent from my samples from AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to.

	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>p loopless (p1)</b>	63%	64%	35%
<b>p with forked ascender (p2)</b>	2%		
<b>p with open loop on ascender (p3)</b>	21%	14%	21%
<b>p with closed loop on ascender (p4)</b>	14%	22%	44%

### *The four p allographs*

*p1 (AM 573 4to)   p2 (Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX)   p3 (AM 764 4to)   p4 (AM 573 4to)*



While AM 573 4to and Perg. nr. 10 IX feature the plain, unlooped allograph of thorn in almost the same percentage of cases, the allograph with a closed loop on the ascender, p4, is more common by a margin of eight percent in AM 573 4to, perhaps suggesting a later providence. However, looped allographs on the whole are only one percent more common in AM 573 4to than in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX.

Looped allographs preominate in AM 764 4to, appearing in forty-three percent of instances, which reinforces the notion that this is manuscript features the most innovative and likely latest script of the three manuscript excerpts under study.

AM 573 and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX share a very similar distribution of this letter, while AM 764 shows a much more progressive practice, as only thirty-five percent of occurrences are the plain, unlooped variant; if there is a common scribe, it would be difficult to accomodate this large discrepancy, unless we are to assume that his work in *Reynistaðarbók* represents a much later stage of his career, and / or the exemplars for the other two excerpts were particularly archaic, perhaps prompting him to emply a much more conservative script than he normally may have. However, such an explanation is dubious at best given that this supposed common scribe has not been consistently identified with other manuscripts, of which study of might be able to accomodate this apparent discrepancy in his scribal practice.

#### **2.4.5 The Letter L**

This letter warrants only a limited discussion, as it appears in one of two conservative forms in the vast majority of instances, across the samples from each of the respective excerpts. Even in the work of Scribe G of AM 764 4to, the excerpt that we could even preliminarily refer to as the most innovative with regard to script, the letter l appears in one of two unlooped allographs in eighty percent of instances.

Somewhat notably, however, is the fact that in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, the variant with a triangular serif on the top-left and foot on the bottom-right of the ascender (14) outnumbers the allograph with no decorative features (12). However, this is more revealing concerning the manner of execution of the letter than script type or developments therein.

*The four l allographs:*

*L1 (AM 573 4to) L2 (Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX) L3 (AM 764 4to) L4 (AM 764 4to)*



	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>I plain (L1)</b>	39%	63%	43%
<b>I with triangular serif and foot, loopless (L2)</b>	55%	25%	37%
<b>I with open loop (L3)</b>	6%	7%	10%
<b>I with closed loop (L4)</b>		2%	10%

## 2.5 The Letter R

As each of the three manuscripts originates from the fourteenth century, the distribution of the r-rotunda falls somewhere between the earliest period, in which the r-rotunda appeared only after the letter o in the earliest Icelandic manuscripts, and the later period, in which the r-rotunda might appear after the letter a, any round letters, or even in word-initial position.<sup>29</sup>

The prevalence of the r-rotunda, or to use the nomenclature of Hreinn Benediktsson, the round r<sup>30</sup>, and the conditions in which it appears, is one of the most important criterion for relative dating and subsequently for debating whether we are looking at a common scribal hand.

<sup>29</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 49.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 48.



The chart below illustrates which letters the r rotunda appears after, as well as their distribution. The values in the table are percentage values reflecting the frequency of the r-rotunda after particular letters in my finite samples. Due to the small size of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, only two leaves, the percentage values for that manuscript reflect a sample size of only twenty-six; however, the samples from AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to consist of about one-hundred instances of the r-rotunda appearing.

r rotunda after:	a	b	d	e	g	h	k	m	o	p	u	y	æ	þ
holm. perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX			19	3	8	3	3	8	31	3		1	3	17
AM 573 4to	4	3	20		8	1	1	17	17	1	3	8		17
AM 764 4to	25	7	15		12			7	12		3	7		12

Perg. 8vo nr 10 IX features the most conservative use of the r rotunda, while AM 764 4to is the most innovative, albeit not by as large a margin that we may have expected relative to AM 573 4to. Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX features the r rotunda after eleven letters, while the other two manuscript excerpts feature it after twelve different letters, though not quite the same ones.

If we look at the data for all three excerpts together as a cohesive whole, investigating whether there are trends that may point to a common scribe, we see, perhaps unsurprisingly that the r rotunda is employed most consistently and indeed frequently after the letter o. Looking at the data for the other allographs, we see that there is approximately an 11:1 ratio of r rotunda to other allographs of the letter r after the letter o across the three excerpts. Concerning the presence of the r rotunda after any other letter than o, we see a much lower ratio relative to the other r allographs, and it is difficult to identify any consistent patterns. Following the notion that AM 764 4to features more innovative script elements than either Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX or AM 573 4to, the r with a hairline at the bottom of the vertical shaft, characteristic of Gothic Cursiva, is found in AM 764 4to. Admittedly, this allograph is found in only two percent of appearances of the letter r in my sample from AM 764 4to. Yet its presence, however small, suggests that the scribe's script had been influenced more heavily by the emergence of Gothic Cursiva Antiquor in Iceland. Additionally, it is possible that the scribe's regular and habitual execution of Gothic Textualis was becoming increasingly

influenced by Cursive script, exhibiting features that are more typical of later stages of script development.

## **2.6 The Letter S**

In each of the three manuscripts, the long s is virtually ubiquitous. This is what we would expect to find, as this form of the letter was far more common than the capital or round s in Icelandic manuscripts, the latter form being used arbitrarily and seldomly.<sup>31</sup> The letter s, in its long form, never features a descender or a stroke reaching beneath the baseline, and this agrees with with one of Albert Derolez' key points for classifying a script as Gothic Textualis.<sup>32</sup>

The capital or round s appears sporadically, generally at the beginning of a new sentence or section of text, though the long s appears in this position as well. For example in 'Synir' on 10v6 of AM 573 4to or 'Sidan' on 11r35 of AM 764 4to.

*The round / capital s, as seen on 11r of AM 764 4to:*



## **2.7 Graphic Economy**

### **2.7.1 Ligatures**

As suggested by Albert Derolez, it is of vital importance to maintain the distinction between ligatures with an independant phonemic reference and those without.<sup>33</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson adds to this point that while ligatures of the first type have linguistic relevance, ligatures of the second type were employed primarily through motivations of graphic economy.<sup>34</sup> That being said, there are precious few ligatures of either variety in each of the three manuscript excerpts under study, though the use of ligatures is remarkably homogenous, and would support the notion of a common scribe.

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<sup>31</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 49.

<sup>32</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 51.

It is difficult to say whether the low frequency of ligatures is surprising or not; on one hand, Gothic Textualis generally featured few ligatures,<sup>35</sup> while on the other hand, we are faced with the fact that one of the hallmarks of Medieval Icelandic manuscripts is that they were heavily abbreviated.

Across the three excerpts, there is only one ligature to be found that has an independent phonemic reference, the letter æ. This letter proliferates the orthography in each of the excerpts under study, and appears to have been used ubiquitously to denote the vowel that resulted from the merging of /æ/ and /ǫ/, yielding /æ/, later diphthongising to [aI] in subsequent centuries.

According with the observations of Hreinn Benediktsson, the av ligature, in its sporadic appearances in my sample, is used to denote the /ö/ vowel that resulted from the merger of /o/ and /ö/.<sup>36</sup> This ligature appears in such words as ‘fögrum’ (the dative form of the adjective ‘fagr’) on 2r24 of Perg. nr. 10 IX. This ligature does not appear in either AM 764 4to or AM 573 4to, perhaps weakening the case for a common scribal hand in each of these manuscripts.

*The av ligature, as seen in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX:*



The aa ligature is used to denote etymological long a, seemingly only in word-final position in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to. As we do not find evidence of the vá > vó change in the orthography,<sup>37</sup> it is difficult to argue that the use of the aa was prompted by a phonological development, namely the diphthongization of etymological /á/ to [au].<sup>38</sup> We find the aa ligature in word-final position only in words such as ‘saa’ (first person present indicative active of the verb ‘sjá’ or the pronoun ‘sá’)

<sup>35</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 91.

<sup>36</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 65.

<sup>37</sup> This phonological / orthographic development will be discussed in detail in section 3.4.1.

<sup>38</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 167.

on 12r11 and 12v1 in AM 573 4to, and ubiquitously for the preposition ‘á’ in both manuscripts; see for example 12v2 in AM 764 4to and 38r15 in AM 573 4to.

The st ligature seems to be the only ligature used for a consonant cluster, and features a form of the letter t that is not found elsewhere. According to Hreinn Benediktsson, this is also the most common ligature in Medieval Icelandic manuscripts.<sup>39</sup> While the allograph found elsewhere ubiquitously features a vertical shaft that does not reach above the horizontal crossbar, the t found the st ligature does indeed reach above the crossbar, meeting the uppermost part of the preceding / combined s. As noted by Hreinn Benediktsson, it was common for the letter t in the st ligature to feature a longer vertical stroke than the allograph with the vertical cut short at the horizontal crossbar.<sup>40</sup>

*The st ligature, as seen on 12r of AM 764 4to:*



### **2.7.2 Abbreviations**

One of the most salient characteristics of Medieval Icelandic manuscripts is that they feature a wide variety of innovative abbreviations, often extensively; the three manuscripts currently under study do not deviate from this trend. Each of the manuscripts feature the four types of abbreviations outlined by Hreinn Benediktsson<sup>41</sup>:

1. Suspensions: The latter part of a word is omitted or ‘suspended’, and this is marked in some way on a preceding letter, often with a circle or horizontal crossbar.
2. Contractions: The medial part of a word is contracted and not written; this is marked somehow, generally on the first letter of the word.
3. Superscript Letters: A superscript letter is used to denote a certain letter or a cluster of letters, often letters that have been suspended or contracted.
4. Special Symbols: Particular symbols, often derived from Classical systems of writing, are used to denote certain clusters of letters.

There is nothing particularly unique about the abbreviations we find in the three manuscript excerpts, as we see symbols and abbreviation marks that are remarkably

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<sup>39</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script As Illustrated in Vernacular Texts from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 85.

common for manuscripts of the fourteenth century. However, some of the special symbols that we encounter in AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to are not found in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, though this may be due to the extremely small sample size, only two complete leaves.

### *Suspensions*

The suspensions are noted with a horizontal crossbar, dot, or circle, and are regularly employed to abbreviate words such as ‘*hann*’, ‘*segir*’, ‘*þat*’, ‘*sip̃an*’

### *Contractions*

Contractions are typically marked with a horizontal crossbar, and are featured in words such as ‘*haf̃i*’, ‘*borg*’, ‘*honum*’

### *Superscript Letters*

This type of abbreviation seems to have been used most commonly in conjunctions and prepositions, and was used frequently in each of the excerpts, and indeed many Icelandic manuscripts from this time, to denote words such as ‘*firir*’ and ‘*t̃il*’.

This abbreviation technique is also commonly used to denote suspensions and contractions, as we see in abbreviations such as ‘*hon*’ on 1r of Perg. nr. 10 IX, ‘*brot*’ on 11r of AM 764 4to.

### *Special Symbols*

In each of the three excerpts under study, we find a fairly ordinary inventory of special symbols as abbreviation markers with a specific graphemic reference.

We find the Tironian or ‘ok’ symbol, derived from the Latin abbreviation for ‘et’, in each of the three manuscripts. It appears in its post-thirteenth century form with a horizontal crossbar.<sup>42</sup> However, there seems to be an alternation between variants of this sign, the distinctive feature being the decorative stroke extending to the left; this feature does not seem to have any lexical or semiotic relevance, though the presence of the extraneous decorative stroke would seem to suggest a later providence or more innovative script. We also find a few appearances of this conjunction being written out, and the ramifications of certain spellings suggesting the phonetic change of a velar stop to a velar fricative will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

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<sup>42</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 92.

*Two variants of the Tironian sign:*

*(AM 764 4to)*



*(AM 573 4to)*



The *-us* symbol is found in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to, albeit only in lexical items that are Latin or Greek in origin, such as ‘gorbonianus’ on 12v of AM 764 4to, or ‘centusio’ on 2v of AM 573 4to. This symbol appears in word-final position in the majority of its appearances, though it may also appear in word-internal position. The absence of this symbol in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX may be due to the fact that this fragment is so small, only two leaves. Additionally, the letter combination ‘us’ is reasonably uncommon in Icelandic, as evidenced by the fact that the abbreviation for this letter combination was found just once in each of the significantly larger samples from the other two manuscripts.

In the same fashion, the ‘ra’ abbreviation is found only in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to. Like the *-us* abbreviation, the ‘ra’ abbreviation can appear in either word-internal or word-final, though the latter position is far more common. We find it in words such as ‘*drap*’ in 2r11 of AM 573 4to, and ‘*fra*’ on 11r of AM 764 4to.

Like the ‘us’ symbol, the ‘-ur’ abbreviation is found in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to, but not in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, and quite possibly due to the same reasons. The presence of this abbreviation would seem to suggest an epenthetic vowel upon first glance, yet the lexical item in which it appears in AM 573 4to would have had a form with a ‘-ur’ ending as part of its regular morphology, and the presence of this ‘u’ has nothing to do with the subsequent phonological development.

The ‘ed’ abbreviation or ‘m;’ appears in each of the manuscripts, and is regularly used in writing the conjunction ‘með’.

The ‘er’ symbol is used in each of the three manuscripts, and fitting with the wider use of this abbreviation, is used to denote ‘-er’, ‘r’, or ‘ir’ depending on context. For example ‘*segir*’ on 2r or Perg. nr. 10 IX, or ‘*eftir*’ on 12v of AM 764 4to and 2r8 of AM 573 4to.

The nasal stroke appears in all three excerpts to denote a nasal consonant (either /m/ or /n/), usually following a vowel. For example ‘um’ on 1v of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and 10v of AM 764 4to, or ‘honum’ on 2r9 of AM 573 4to.

## 2.8 The Script

Derolez outlines three main criteria for identifying both Gothic Textualis and Gothic Cursiva, and subsequently for telling them apart. The fact that the three excerpts do not all neatly fit into one script type may obfuscate the reasonably plausible notion that they were all written in the same hand. The main criteria for Textualis are: the two-storey a, loopless ascenders, and the insular f and straight s standing on the baseline.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, the criteria for identifying Gothic Cursiva are: two-storey a, looped ascenders, and insular f and straight s descending below the baseline.<sup>44</sup> As I will discuss further in the relevant letter-specific sections, none of the excerpts under study fit particularly neatly into either of these categories, exhibiting a mix of features of both Textualis and Cursiva, yet not exhibiting quite enough features of Gothic Hybrida to be placed into this category.

Despite the fact that Albert Derolez advocates a more statistical approach in paleographic studies,<sup>45</sup> he fails to provide exact criteria for distinguishing between script types when there is a mix of certain features; based on the number of manuscripts that feature a mix of script traits, I do not think it is reasonable to merely label all of these as some sort of Hybrid script. If one is to follow Derolez’ proposed methodology through, one is left in want of a schema for analyzing statistics, despite Derolez’ repeated assertion that a more statistical approach represents the potential future of paleography studies. While there is the Proto-Gothic script as a convenient grey-area between Carolingian script and Gothic Textualis, we are left with ambiguous terms such as ‘Textualis with Cursive influence’ or ‘Cursiva with Textualis influence’; terms that are just as subjective as Derolez’ ‘paleographer’s eye’,<sup>46</sup> which he seems to simultaneously advocate for and discourage other paleographers from using.

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<sup>43</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 2.

In this discussion, I do not wish to dichotomize Gothic Textualis and Gothic Cursiva Antiquor anymore than is necessary and indeed possible. In the study of fourteenth century Icelandic manuscripts from the latter part of the century, there seems to be a homogenizing tendency with regards to the script, more succinctly, that because it is the accepted notion that Textualis was the predominant script type in Iceland during this time, that we can circularly assert that ‘this script is Textualis because its a fourteenth century manuscript’, and conversely that ‘this is a fourteenth century manuscript because the script is Gothic Textualis’. However, as has been aptly observed by Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “[m]ost of the manuscripts from...the fourteenth century are written in Textualis libraria, and some of them are under Cursive influence”, and subsequently that “[m]ost of the manuscripts written in Cursiva (are in) Antiquor libraria.”<sup>47</sup>

Though AM 764 4to, AM 573 4to, and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX have, in previous scholarship been passively identified as sharing a common hand, a statistical analysis of the script suggests that the section of AM 764 4to dealt with in this study displays a more innovative, and likely later, script than that found in AM 573 4to and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. I would suggest that Scribe G of AM 764 4to employed a later form of Gothic Textualis, more heavily influenced by Gothic Cursiva Antiquor, while the scribe(s) of AM 573 4to and Perg. nr. 10 IX employed a fairly typical, more conservative form of Gothic Textualis. While the script of all three excerpts could be classified as Gothic Textualis influenced by Gothic Cursiva Antiquor, AM 573 4to and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX arguably display no more than the usual amount of Cursive elements that we might expect to find in an Icelandic manuscript of the latter half of the fourteenth century, while AM 764 4to displays considerably more innovation.

Despite the fact that AM 764 4to seems to feature a much more innovative script, it would be incorrect in most schemes to label this script as anything but Gothic Textualis; the script lacks the definitive one-storey a’s, and strictly speaking, it does not

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<sup>47</sup> Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “The Origin and Development of Icelandic Script”, *Régionalisme et Internationalisme – Problèmes de Paléographie et de Codicologie du Moyen Age. Actes du XVc Colloque du Comité International de Paléographie Latine* (Vienne, 13-17 September 2005). Edited by Otto Kresten and Franz Lacker, 87-97 (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Wien, 2008). 91.



seem that the letter forms were executed in the manner that they were for facility's sake.<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, the distinction between different forms of the Gothic script in Medieval Icelandic manuscripts generally involves a tough judgement call. Following the practice of Lars Svensson in his book *Nordisk Paleografi*, we may simply state that between the fourteenth century and the mid-sixteenth century, Gothic script, of several varieties, predominated in Iceland; it is perhaps more fruitful to begin with the general term of Gothic Textualis, and then move on to discussing particulars on a case-to-case basis.<sup>49</sup>

That being said, the fact that we see considerable variance in the script does not necessarily mean that we are looking at the work of different scribes, or that there is necessarily a chronological gap between the manuscripts. Section G of AM 764 4to may very well represent a later period in the career of the same scribe that worked on AM 573 4to and Perg. nr. 10 IX.

The Icelandic cultural treasure *Flateyjarbók* exemplifies this contemporary co-existence of script types and variance in letter forms, as well as the often extremely minute differences between 'Textualis with influence from Cursiva' and 'Cursiva with influence from Textualis'. As has been suggested by Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson regarding *Flateyjarbók*, "[s]krift Jóns er textaskrift en skrift Magnúsar virðist vera árléttiskrift".<sup>50</sup>

The variation in script classification may simply mean that the scribe's practice evolved over time. If we apply a statistical approach to Derolez' division of Cursiva and Textualis, the trend that we see in the data is that one of the manuscripts is considerably more conservative, the next an intermediary, while AM 764 4to could be called a much more innovative, and likely later, form of Gothic Textualis.

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<sup>48</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 130.

<sup>49</sup> Lars Svensson, *Nordisk Paleografi: Handbok med Transkriberade och Kommenterade Skriftprov* (Studentlitteratur: Lund, 1974), 170.

<sup>50</sup> Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, *Sýnisbók Íslenskar Skriftar*. 2. Útgáfa. (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í Íslenskum Fræðum: Reykjavík, 2007), 68.

### III. ORTHOGRAPHIC AND PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

#### 3.1 The Fricativization of Unstressed Voiceless Stops

##### 3.1.1 Word-Final Fricativization /t/ > /ð/

Over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, /t/ in unstressed positions was fricativized to /ð/. This change primarily affected the neuter nom. / acc. singular ending -t, in words such as ‘pat’, resulting in ‘pað’, though it was also common in participles, affecting both strong verbs, as in *farit* > *farið* (of *fara*), and weak verbs, as in *kallat* > *kallað* (of *kalla*).<sup>51</sup>

Following the methodological precept that evidence of an environmental sound change, even in the minority of cases in which it may eventually manifest itself, suggests that the sound change had taken place, at least in the language of the scribe in question, I can suggest without much reservation, and contrary to the orthography of Íslenzk Fornrit, that the scribe supposedly responsible for the three excerpts in question almost undoubtedly said ‘pað’ and not ‘pat’.

The following table illustrates the orthographic variants we encounter in environments in which the sound change eventually took place. The percentage values are based on a sample of one hundred instances in which the sound change could have, and eventually did, take place.

the orthographic representation of the change /t/ > /ð/	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>t</b>	28%	20%	57%
<b>d</b>	17%	78%	43%
<b>p</b>	55%	2%	

In both Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and AM 573 4to, the data from my sample shows that the orthography reflects what was most likely the phonological reality in the vast majority of cases, 72% and 80%, respectively. It is not surprising that this phonological change would have proliferated the language of a late fourteenth century scribe, rather the orthographic representation of such change is somewhat peculiar.

Regarding this phonological innovation, the orthography of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX presents some anomalies that do not quite accord with a perfectly linear model of the

<sup>51</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 181.

relationship between scribal practice and phonology. While the change from  $t > \delta$  in word-final position manifests itself seventy-two percent of the time in my sample from Perg. nr. 10 IX, this innovation is represented by the letter þ fifty-five percent of the time. This seems counter-intuitive, as the period in which the fricativization of voiceless dental stops in unstressed positions spread through the language supposedly came well after the period in which dental fricatives were ubiquitously denoted by the letter thorn in the orthography.

One possible explanation for this practice in this excerpt is that the exemplar was from a stage of transmission in which the letter thorn was used to denote all of the dental fricatives, presumably about a century before the word-final fricativization of stops proliferated the orthography. The data supports such a notion, albeit circumstantially, as etymological word-final and word-internal dental fricatives, that have nothing to do with the phonological development of unstressed  $/t/ > /ð/$  are denoted by the letter thorn in ninety-seven percent of cases in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. Thus, it is a logical suggestion that the copyist of this manuscript mimicked the orthographic practice of his exemplar and generalized, denoting the majority of dental fricatives with the letter thorn, even those that had arisen through a phonological innovation that was likely decades or perhaps even a century removed from his exemplar. Thus, according to my argument the exemplar likely would have featured spellings such as ‘at’, which in the majority of cases, our scribe, in his practically archaic yet phonologically innovative orthography, would have rendered ‘aþ’ in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX.

AM 573 4to could be described as an ideal model for the gradual proliferation of this phonological change in the orthography. This innovation manifests itself 80% of the time, and of these cases, the letter thorn is employed in only two percent of instances. As discussed previously, it is likely that spellings such as ‘aþ’ were a scribal innovation in terms of spelling out non-etymological dental fricatives.

Given that AM 764 4to arguably displays the most innovative and latest features in terms of paleography, it may come as something of a surprise that in AM 764 4to, the orthography reflects the likely phonological reality in only minority of instances, forty-three percent of instances in which the change could / eventually did occur. However, as outlined in the introductory chapter, it is important not to attempt to correlate

paleography, orthography, and phonology in terms of estimating a date until each set of features has been examined on its own terms; so, at least for now, we must admit that AM 764 4to is the most conservative of the three excerpts with regard to the change of word-final fricativization of voiceless dental stops.

### 3.1.2 Word-final Fricativization of /k/ > /g/ [ʁ]

The fricativization of /k/ in unstressed positions began in the thirteenth century, and became increasingly prevalent in the orthography over the course of the fourteenth century; however, spellings with k or c, rather than g, suggesting a velar stop rather than a fricative, lingered in the orthography into the sixteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

In taking statistics for this feature, I have included all words in which the phonological change could, and eventually did, take place. Thus, my data includes words such as ‘ok’ and ‘miok’, so as to accurately gather how often the change from /k/ to /g/ surfaced in the orthography. As with many phonological changes that lead to a change in orthographic practice, a minority of instances in which the change surfaces still suggests that the language of the scribe featured this innovation, that this phonological development was likely a feature of his / her language that they acquired as a child in the language acquisition stage.

orthographic representation of the change [k] > [ʁ]	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>k</b>	29%	22%	70%
<b>c</b>		6%	
<b>g</b>	71%	72%	30%

Complementing the statistics for the fricativization of /t/ in unstressed positions, the fricativization of /k/ in unstressed positions is evidenced the least in AM 764 4to, while it is most common in AM 573 4to.

AM 573 4to and Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX display this phonological change orthographically almost exactly the same amount of the time, seventy-two and seventy-one percent of the time, respectively. This statistic would support the notion of a common scribal hand, yet from a methodological and epistemological perspective, it is problematized by the fact that we do not see such a congruency in most other features,

<sup>52</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 182.

whether orthographic or paleographic. Additionally, AM 573 4to sporadically employs the letter ‘c’ to denote the voiceless velar stop, while this orthography is not found in the albeit small fragment of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX.

It is difficult to reconcile the disparity of paleographic innovation and orthographic conservatism that we find in AM 764 4to. One could make a case for blaming an archaic exemplar, as the thirty-percent of instances where the change of [k] > [ŷ] shows up in the orthography of *Reynistaðarbók* still strongly suggest that this phonological development was fully realized in the language of the scribe; that even though (s)he sporadically wrote ‘ok’, (s)he would have almost certainly said ‘og’.

### **3.2 The Denotation of Etymological Word-initial and Word-internal Dental Fricatives**

While the letter thorn was used ubiquitously to denote dental fricatives in all positions in the earliest Icelandic manuscripts, the Anglo-Saxon letter ð began to take its place in word-final and word-internal positions during the first half of the thirteenth century, which in turn was supplanted by the uncial d over the course of the fourteenth century. This trend in the orthography resulted in general spelling developments such as *þaþan* c.1200 > *þaðan* c.1250 > *þadan* c.1350.<sup>53</sup>

I have deliberately omitted word-initial dental fricatives from my sample for this feature, mainly because the voiced allophone was essentially only ever represented by the letter thorn in Icelandic manuscripts (as opposed to Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, in which we may very well encounter spellings such as ‘ðæt’, cognate with Old Icelandic ‘þat’ / ‘það’), and including these instances in my data sample would distort the correlation between chronology and scribal practice with trends in general orthographic practice.

I have also omitted non-etymological dental fricatives, such as those that we might find in word-final position in later spellings of words such as ‘það’ or ‘skrivað’. As a methodological principle, I assumed that including words like ‘at’ or ‘þat’, that fell prey to the word-final fricativization of dental stops, would skew the orthographic data in favour of the letters d and ð; by the time that this phonological change took place, it

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<sup>53</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 84.

was not a common scribal practice to use thorn as an orthographic representation for anything but the word-initial variant of this sound.

The table below illustrates how etymological word-internal and word-final dental fricatives are represented orthographically in each of the three excerpts.

etymological word-internal and word-final dental fricatives denoted with:	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
<b>t</b>			3%
<b>uncial d</b>	87%	79%	93%
<b>þ</b>	13%	21%	4%

Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX is by far the most conservative and possibly archaic with regards to this feature, as the letter thorn is used ninety-seven percent of the time to denote it. This represents not only orthographic conservatism and / or archaism, but also paleographic archaisms, as the plain, unlooped and unforked allograph of the letter thorn was used to denote this feature in seventy-five percent of instances.

Of the three excerpts, the work of Scribe G in AM 764 4to is the most innovative regarding this feature, as (s)he represents the etymological dental fricatives with the uncial d in the vast majority of instances, ninety-three percent of instances in my sample. The three percent minority of spellings with the letter t were likely reverse spellings, while the spelling with thorn could have been done through analogy to the letter thorn being used throughout for the word-initial dental fricatives (in words such as ‘þeir’). It is interesting that while AM 764 4to seems to be the latest and most innovative regarding this feature, it is the only one of the three excerpts to feature reverse spellings with the letter t.

The four percent of instances in which the letter thorn is used to denote an etymological word-internal dental fricative in *Reynistaðarbók* represent various morphological forms of the word ‘dauðr’. As we see in 10v17, for example, the word is spelt ‘dauþr’, perhaps in an attempt to avoid using the same letter, d, to denote two different phonemes within the same word. Given that the uncial d and letter ð were not distinguished entirely thoroughly at this time (that is to say, that the letter ð was for all intents in purposes, not in use, despite the graphemic similarity between ð and certain

allographs of the letter d), a spelling such as ‘daudr’ could have hypothetically led to a nonsensical misreading such as [daudr] or even [Θauðr]. The spellings ‘dauþr’, or even ‘daupa’, for one of the oblique forms found in 11v28, make a distinction between the two phonemes. For these reasons, I tend to doubt that the use of the letter thorn in these instances is some kind of reverse or deliberately archaic spelling; it is fairly plausible that the scribe saw the phonological unambiguity in this spelling, which was possibly also employed in the exemplar from which (s)he was copying.

In AM 573 4to, we also encounter this orthography for the word ‘dauþr’, though the scribe has also employed the letter thorn in words such as ‘hundruþu’ on 27r30, as well as preterite forms of verbs, such as ‘hofþu’ (‘höfðu’, preterite plural of *hafa*) in 2r1, and *gþi*, an abbreviated form of ‘gorþi’ (‘görði’, preterite singular of *göra* / *gera*) in 2r18. An abbreviated form of ‘síðan’ also appears as *sip*, so it is possible that including the letter thorn in the abbreviations of certain words was part of this scribe’s habit, while he may not have used this letter if he were to write out the word in full.

### 3.3 Vowel Mergers

In this study, my discussion of these phonological changes will centre around the notion of a common scribe, particularly the assumption that there would be a certain amount of orthographic consistency if certain vowels were not distinguished in the scribe’s language. An exception to this precept would be the often attempted orthographic distinction between etymological /æ/ and /ø/ that surfaced in some manuscripts through Norwegian influence long after these vowels had phonologically merged in Icelandic.

#### 3.3.1 The Vowel Merger: /æ/ + /ø/ > /æ/

Though this merger was likely complete at the time of the production of the manuscripts under study, it is worth a brief mention in this study, as an attempted distinction between /æ/ and /ø/ in certain scribe’s orthography was a feature that persisted into the fourteenth century, generally as a sign of approximating Norwegian scribal practice, as the two vowels that had merged in Old Icelandic were, and still are, phonemically distinct in Norwegian.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 157.

In each of the three manuscripts, the symbol ‘æ’ is used throughout to denote both etymological /ǣ/, formed through i-umlaut from /á/, and etymological /ǿ/, formed through i-umlaut of /ó/.<sup>55</sup> We do not find any orthographic evidence of an attempt to distinguish these originally distinct vowels, and can glean from this that there was no phonological distinction between them in the scribe’s language, nor was he attempting to mimick Old Norwegian scribal practice.

### **3.3.2 The Merging of /i/ + /ý/ > /i/ and /i/ + /y/ > /i/**

While sporadic evidence of the derounding of /y/ and /ý/ can be found as early as the thirteenth century, this phonological change did not spread beyond certain lexical items (such as ‘biskup’, ‘mikill’ and ‘skyldi’) until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, there is no evidence of these mergers in any of the three manuscripts under study.

We do encounter abbreviations of the word ‘fyrir’ with a superscript letter ‘i’ in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to, though this stock abbreviation is not generally regarded as evidence of any kind of phonological change.

## **3.4 Diphthongization of Etymological Monophthongs**

### **3.4.1 The Orthographic change of vá > vó and the Diphthongization of /ǣ/**

The vowel /ǣ/, which resulted from the merging of etymological /á/ and the vowel /ǿ/, a rounded form of /á/ that arose through u-umlaut, began to diphthongize during the late thirteenth century or early fourteenth century, likely first to [ɔu] and subsequently to [au],<sup>57</sup> as it is found in the modern language. However, this phonological change was only realized indirectly in the orthography, as the referents formerly used to denote [ɔ:] merely came to represent the newly forming diphthong, [ɔu] or [au].<sup>58</sup> Though, as Hreinn Benediktsson argues, and can indeed be observed in Modern Icelandic, this diphthongization did not take place after v, in words such as

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



‘svá’ and ‘vápn’.<sup>59</sup> This necessitated a change in the Medieval orthography, as the symbols formerly used to denote [ɔ:], a sound which remained unchanged after the letter v, were now used to represent the newly formed diphthong.<sup>60</sup> Thus the vowel [ɔ:] was now denoted with a new inventory of symbols, leading to spellings such as ‘svo’ and ‘vopn’ where previously we would have found ‘sva’ and ‘vapn’.<sup>61</sup>

The orthographic change from va > vo, prompted by the diphthongization of /á/ is not evidenced at all in the three manuscripts under study. For example, we see spellings such as ‘sva’ on 2v38 Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, 11v3, 11v18, 12r18, 40v3 of AM 764 4to, 12r9, 13r32 of AM 573 4to, ‘vapnana’ on 12r13 of AM 573 4to, ‘vapna’ on 12v29 of AM 573 4to, ‘vapnum’ on 13r32 of AM 573 4to.

It is difficult to say whether the /á/ phoneme was a diphthong in the language of the scribe(s) or not. It is somewhat surprising that we do not see any evidence of this change in the orthography, as the phonological change that prompted this orthographic development had begun, at least in certain regions, at least a century previously. While the scribe(s) seem(s) to use the letter ‘a’, and sporadically the aa ligature, to denote etymological /á/ throughout, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that (s)he had an archaic, perhaps idiosyncratic orthographic practice with respect to this vowel, and maintained the use of the letter ‘a’ for both [ɔ:] and the invasive [ɔu] or [au] diphthong that was replacing [ɔ:] in most environments. While speculative, it is possible that the scribe considered the diphthongization of [ɔ:] an encroaching degenerative feature, perhaps much the same way that ‘flámæli’ is frowned upon in Modern Icelandic, and not represented in the orthography.

It is also possible that the diphthongization of [ɔ:] was originally a dialectal feature that was delayed in certain areas, particularly in the area in which our scribe(s) was / were working. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir has linked *Reynistaðarbók* AM 764 4to to

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<sup>59</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson, *Linguistic Studies: Historical and Comparative*. Edited by Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir, Hoskuldur Þráinsson, Jón G. Friðjónsson, Kjartan Ottosson. (Institute of Linguistics: Reykjavík, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> Haraldur Bernhardsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 152.

<sup>61</sup> It was rare for vowel length to be distinguished in the medieval orthography, so one would not expect to encounter spellings such as ‘svá’ and ‘vápn’ in a medieval manuscript.

Northern Iceland, particularly the area around Skagafjörður.<sup>62</sup> If indeed all three excerpts share a common scribal hand, then it would not come as a surprise that the three of them share this somewhat peculiar orthographic practice, that may perhaps have reflected a lingering dialectal feature in Skagafjörður.

### **3.4.2 Diphthongization of [ɛ] > [ei] before -ng / -nk**

There is orthographic evidence of the diphthongization of [ɛ] to [ei] before -ng / -nk (in words such as ‘engi’) in AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to. We do not find evidence of this change in Perg. nr. 10 IX, though this could be due to the limited size of the fragment.

As evidence for the diphthongization of etymological [a] and [œ], to [au] and [œi] respectively, does not surface in the orthography,<sup>63</sup> it is difficult to argue whether these phonological changes had affected the scribe’s language or not.

The most common piece of orthographic evidence for the diphthongization of etymological short [ɛ] to [ei] before -ng / -nk is spellings with ‘ei’ where previously we would’ve expected to see merely ‘e’, as we do in earlier manuscripts and indeed Modern Icelandic. In AM 764 4to we see spellings such as ‘eingi’ for the pronoun ‘engi’ on 12r2, 12r27, 12v6, 40v3, and on 27r19, 38r5 in AM 573 4to. ‘leingi’ for the adjective ‘lengi’ 12r35, 38r26 in AM 764 4to, and on 38r5 and 38v14 in AM 573 4to. On 40v37 of AM 764 4to we even find the spelling ‘éingland’ for ‘england’ on 40v37.

As this orthographic development prompted by a phonological change became increasingly prevalent over the course of the fourteenth century,<sup>64</sup> it was practically to be expected that we should find orthographic evidence of it in the manuscripts currently under study. Indeed, the spellings suggesting diphthongs are ubiquitous in AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to for words such as ‘lengr’ and ‘engi’, rendered as ‘leingr’ and ‘eingi’.

### **3.5 Vowel Epenthesis**

The epenthetic u is evidenced in abbreviations in AM 764 4to, but not in AM 573 4to or Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. The ‘ur’ abbreviation is employed in each of the three

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<sup>62</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Development of Reynistaðarbók (AM 764 4to)”, 328.

<sup>63</sup> Haraldur Bernharðsson, *Icelandic: A Historical Linguistic Companion*, 184.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

manuscripts, it is often used to denote the etymological -ur ending rather than the epenthetic vowel followed by the earlier -r ending.

The absence of this feature is not particularly surprising; while it begins to surface in the orthography as early as the thirteenth century,<sup>65</sup> it does not become common until the late fourteenth century. As with the *vá > vo* change, the consistent lack of this feature across the three manuscripts strengthens the case for a common scribal hand. It is also possible that the lack of these features were dialectal traits, suggesting that they reached the area in which our scribe(s) was / were working later than other areas of Iceland.

It is unclear whether u-epenthesis is indeed evidenced in the orthography of AM 764 4to, as the only evidence for it is the use of the ‘ur’ abbreviation for the etymological -r ending; in this manuscript excerpt, there are no instances in which we find -ur in the orthography for an etymological -r ending. Though we find evidence in abbreviations in forms such as ‘sonur’ (where we would have previously seen ‘sonr’), it is problematic to deem this conclusive evidence of u-epenthesis, as this very same manuscript excerpt is riddled with spellings such as ‘daupr’ on 10v17 or ‘konungr’ on 11r7, or ‘nætr’ (gen. singular of ‘nátt / nótt’),<sup>66</sup> none of which suggest an epenthetic vowel.

### **3.6 The Denotation of the Middle / Reflexive Voice Exponent**

In the course of the thirteenth century, the middle voice ending changed from -sk to -st, a phonological change enacted through assimilation of place of articulation. This phonological change is an example of assimilation of place of articulation, as the latter consonant in the cluster, originally a voiceless velar stop, /k/, became a voiceless dental stop, /t/, in order to facilitate articulation following the voiceless sibilant, /s/. This change manifested itself in several variants in the orthography, and was denoted primarily with -z, -zt, and -zst. The -z orthography is predominant c. 1225-1400, while the -zt and -zst spelling predominate from c. 1425-1525.<sup>67</sup> Subsequently, these general

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 410.

trends in the orthography can be used as points of comparison regarding issues of chronology and providence.

The chart below illustrates the distribution of middle voice endings that we encounter in each of the three manuscript excerpts:

orthographic representation of the middle voice ending:	Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX	AM 573 4to	AM 764 4to
-z		100%	100%
-zt	100%		

As evidenced by the statistics, there is what one might call a more innovative orthography for this feature in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. However, while the -zt ending is, generally speaking, increasingly common during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the -z and -zt endings co-existed from the middle of the fourteenth century onward; indeed, according to the dating scheme of Haraldur Bernharðsson, the pre-dominance of either of these endings suggests that these manuscripts date from c. 1375 or later.<sup>68</sup>

While there seems to be a lack of congruency across the three manuscripts under study with regard to the orthographic representation of the middle voice ending, the difference between the -z and -zt endings is indeed minor. Such a discrepancy could be accounted for by an archaic exemplar, or perhaps the -z ending was used elsewhere in the portion of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX that was lost.

Phonologically speaking, there is no difference between the -z and -zt endings, as both represent the fact that the middle voice ending began to be pronounced -st rather than -sk. There is no particular reason to doubt that both endings, each representing the same phonological reality, could have co-existed in the personal orthography of a single scribe.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### *4.1.1 Some Remarks on Interpreting the Data*

In the introductory chapter, I outlined some of the key issues at the heart of this study: how do we interpret philological statistics? What kind of trends and congruency in the data do we need to see in order to make certain claims? While statistical approaches to philology may yield more reproduceable results, aren't the ultimate judgement calls still subjective? As I will discuss in this chapter, there are no clean answers to these questions.

In collecting the data for this study, I made some basic assumptions. First, that a Medieval Icelandic scribe's career likely lasted about twenty years. Secondly, that (s)he was likely active in more or less the same part of the country during said career, which to a certain extent, may have affected presence or absence of certain paleographic and orthographic developments and trends. And thirdly, that both his / her personal execution of letter forms and personal orthography would have undergone natural changes during an approximately twenty year period, while also being influenced by the given exemplar when copying a particular work. Essentially, I would argue that the same scribe would never copy the same work quite the same way twice.

One need only look at his / her hand-writing from several years ago to realize that even though (s)he is employing the same form of script, one's handwriting changes over time. Even if a Medieval scribe's handwriting may not have undergone the same amount of natural change as a modern person, we can allow for a certain amount of natural variation. With regard to orthography, accepted spelling conventions have more or less eliminated orthographic variations in modern writing, save for in children learning the standardized orthography.

That being said, interpreting the data in this study involves an educated yet subjective reading of what trends in the scribe(s)' script and orthography plausibly belong to a single person. In this sense, the interpretation of the philological data has a fair bit in common with Forensic Paleography, which not coincidentally, has never quite been considered an exact science despite its rigorous methodology.

These assumptions led me to look for trends in the data rather than exact congruencies, although we do find some instances of the latter. Given our lack of

externally dated manuscripts, *Reykjaholtsmáldagi* and *Flateyjarbók* being among the few exceptions, it is entirely possible that say Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX was completed twenty years or more before AM 764 4to, while still having had the same scribe(s) work on it.

#### **4.1.2 What Degree of Congruency Does One Need?**

Upon laying out some of my basic assumptions in harvesting and interpreting the data, I will now turn to the another of the obvious methodological questions: what kinds of trends and congruencies would one like to see in the data in order to make particular philological claims?

To the probable dismay of statisticians and mathematicians, there is no easy answer. We find ourselves in something of an endless regression of subjective judgement calls, as the harvesting of clear, numeric statistics merely presents us with another opportunity for a subjective judgement in the interpretation of said statistics. While a statistical approach to philology may add an air of scientific methodology, the ultimate interpretation and judgement calls have far more in common with Derolez' 'paleographer's eye'<sup>69</sup> than any kind of math or science.

#### **4.1.3 The Verdict**

I would argue, albeit provisionally, that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, AM 573 4to, and AM 764 4to share a common scribe. I suspect that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX showcases an early part of the scribe's career, while AM 764 4to showcases a later part of the scribe's career, possibly as much as fifteen or twenty years later. According to this scheme, AM 573 4to would represent something of a mid-point in the scribe's career between the other two manuscripts, though it displays features that are more similar, and likely chronologically closer, to AM 764 4to than Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX. Admittedly however, there are trends in the data that could even suggest that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX is the youngest rather than oldest of the three manuscripts.

The chart below illustrates certain trends and congruencies in the data for some of the particularly important paleographic, orthographic, and phonological features:

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<sup>69</sup> Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 2.

	<b>Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX</b>	<b>AM 573 4to</b>	<b>AM 764 4to</b>
<b>the two-storey a</b>	100% closed top compartment	92% open top compartment	90% open top compartment
<b>the letters b, h, k, p, l</b>	unlooped allographs predominate	unlooped allographs predominate	looped allographs predominate
<b>the Anglo-Saxon f</b>	92% lobed	98% lobed	99% lobed
<b>the uncial d</b>	50% looped	74% looped	86% looped
<b>fricativization t &gt; ð</b>	72%	80%	43%
<b>fricativization k &gt; g [ɣ]</b>	71%	78%	30%
<b>the denotation of etymological word-internal and word-final dental fricatives</b>	þ most common in all positions	uncial d most common	uncial d most common
<b>vá &gt; vo / [ɔ:] &gt; [au]</b>	no evidence	no evidence	no evidence
<b>middle voice ending</b>	-zt throughout	-z throughout	-z throughout
<b>u-epenthesis (maðr &gt; maður)</b>	no evidence	no evidence	minimal circumstantial evidence in abbreviations

While the data is by no means uniform for each of the three manuscripts, certain features are completely consistent, such as the consistent lack of both the vá > vo change and u-epenthesis. Even if we are not in fact looking at the work of a common scribe, this congruency in the data would seem to suggest that the hypothetical multiple scribes were quite possibly working in the same area, given that these features were apparently absent from their orthography and likely also their spoken language.

Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX displays the most innovative employment of the letter a, as the two-storey variant with a closed top compartment is used throughout. It is difficult to explain why AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to are seemingly more archaic with regard to this feature, as they display, on the whole, more paleographic innovations than Perg. nr. 10 IX.

If we plot the development of the scribe's execution of the insular f and uncial d linearly, the data suggests that Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX is the oldest while AM 764 4to is the youngest.

The fricativization of unstressed /t/ and /k/ is evidenced in each of the three manuscripts. The statistical differences for these features in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX and AM 573 4to might suggest that these phonological changes were represented increasingly frequently in the scribe's orthography as his / her career progressed. While I interpret AM 764 4to as showcasing a later part of the career of this common scribe, it displays these features least frequently. One possible explanation is that since AM 764 4to includes material of a religious didactic and somewhat sacred nature, that the scribe would have consciously made his orthography more conservative than usual in order to match the perceived higher register of the original text. The forty-three percent and thirty percent of instances, respectively, in which the fricativization of unstressed /t/ and /k/ surfaces in this scribe's work in AM 764 4to still strongly suggest that these phonological changes were a part of his language, and thus, by no means disqualify him / her as the same scribe found in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX or AM 573 4to. However, if we were to assume that an increased prevalence of these features in the orthography suggests a later provenance, than looking at these features in isolation, AM 573 4to would seem to be the youngest, and AM 764 4to would be the oldest or most conservative

The -zt ending is used to denote the middle / reflexive voice ending in Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX, while the -z ending is found throughout my samples from AM 573 4to and AM 764 4to. This may be due to the small sample size of Perg. nr. 10 IX, or perhaps that the scribe was mimicking the orthography of his exemplar, which according to this logic, would have also featured the -zt ending. However, the -zt and -z endings coexisted in the fourteenth century, so there is no particular reason to assume that one scribe could not have included more than one of them in her / his orthography or even used either of them completely interchangeably.

#### ***4.2 Some Remarks on the Career of the Scribe(s); How Generic Concerns May Have Affected the Level of Formality / Conservatism of the Letter Forms and Orthography***

The notion of a common scribal hand in each of the three manuscripts under study undermines the notion that a scribe would have been restricted certain types of text, as the fragment of Perg. 8vo nr. 10 IX contains part of *Laxdæla saga*, one of the *Íslendingasögur*, while AM 573 4to contains *Trójumanna saga*, an adaption of a



Classical text, and AM 764 4to contains a chronicle of Jewish dynasties, a brief account of the Trojan war, and excerpts from *Breta sögur*.<sup>70</sup>

We see three different types of text written in what, as I have argued, a common scribal hand. This suggests that a scribe was not necessarily restricted to say the *Íslendingasögur*, or the *Fornaldarsögur*, though it does not negate the possibility that certain scribes may have specialized in some capacity in certain types of text.

While the religious didactic material found in AM 764 4to could perhaps be called generically dissimilar to the content of AM 573 4to, both manuscripts feature *Breta sögur* in some form, as well as an account of the Trojan war. AM 573 4to is considered one of the principal manuscripts of both *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*, while the work of Scribe G in *Reynistaðarbók* features a heavily truncated form of *Breta sögur* in addition to what is essentially a brief summary of the story of the Trojan war.

The data seems to suggest that the scribe consciously made his script more ornate and orthography more conservative depending on the perceived formality of the text that (s)he was copying. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the sample from AM 764 4to, containing a religious didactic and thus somewhat formal text, features the most ornate script, with the highest frequency of decorative features such as loops, as well as the most conservative orthography. However, I will provide the caveat that though I consider a religious / historical text to be of a higher register than an *Íslendingasögur* or a translated story, it is entirely possible that this conception was not necessarily shared by the scribe.

However, this hypothesis is problematized by the fact that AM 764 4to and AM 573 4to share some of the same material. While the religious didactic material found in AM 764 4to could perhaps be called generically dissimilar to the content of AM 573 4to, both manuscripts feature *Breta sögur* in some form, as well as an account of the Trojan war. AM 573 4to is considered one of the principal manuscripts of both *Trójumanna saga* and *Breta sögur*, while the work of Scribe G in *Reynistaðarbók* features a heavily truncated form of *Breta sögur* in addition to what is essentially a brief summary of the story of the Trojan war.

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<sup>70</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Book of Reynistaðar (AM 764 4to)”, 331-5.

The fact that we find material from both *Breta sögur* and *Trójumanna saga* in two manuscripts that supposedly both originate from Northern Iceland strengthens the case for a common scribal hand. I will not rehash the paleographic data here, but rather say that it would be fitting that the same scribe would be employed to work with essentially the same material in multiple manuscripts being produced in what seems to have been the same area.

Given that we see a common scribal hand, and it is quite possible that AM 764 4to was produced at the Benedictine nunnery in Reynistaður,<sup>71</sup> it is possible that all three of the manuscripts were produced there. It is also possible that they were produced in the nearby episcopal library at Hólar, or one of the monastic libraries at Þingeyrar or Möðruvellir, all of which were within fairly close proximity, and had ties to the nunnery in Reynistaður.<sup>72</sup>

#### **4.3 Further Research**

One of the key ways in which this project could be expanded in the future would be to expand the sample size, though this would only be possible in the case of AM 573 4to, in which forty-five leaves are believed to belong to ‘our scribe’. Only two leaves of Perg. nr. 10 IX survive, while approximately only four leaves of AM 764 4to belong to the supposed common scribe, and all of them were examined as part of this project.

In my opinion, the method of enquiry employed in this study could also be utilized in other cases in which there is a supposed common scribal hand. As a point of comparison, it would be interesting to see how prevalent certain unconscious features, such as the shape of a looped ascender, or the degree to which the lobes of the insular letter f are closed, are among particular scribes. As they are in this study, the frequency of certain unconscious features may become increasingly common as a method of differentiating or identifying particular scribes.

Ultimately, the findings of this study, particularly the statistics, could be considered much more statistically valid if there were more potential sample material from Perg. nr. 10 IX and AM 764 4to. However, there is no particular reason to suggest

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<sup>71</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “Arctic Gardens of Delight: The Purpose of the Book of Reynistaður”, 281.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

that the data harvested from the extant leaves would necessarily be changed drastically through the inclusion of hypothetical data harvested from the lost or non-existent leaves.

In closing, I think this study and its conclusions reflect many of the fundamental problems we find in the emerging fields of statistical and / or digital philology. Even when statistics are provided as part of a study, we are, at this stage of development in the field, still largely left to a combination of our own subjectivity and referring to other studies that are likely also riddled with subjectivity to inform our interpretation of philological data. Though philology may aspire to the levels of statistical detail and reproducible findings that one might find in the fields of science or mathematics, it is seemingly unlikely, and indeed perhaps overly cynical to demand, that there will ever be a clear-cut, statistical boundaries separating different trends and stages of development in paleography, orthography, and phonology.

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To the letter Philology as a core component of Old Norse studies

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