Correcting Icelandic manuscripts in the second half of the fourteenth century

Techniques and context

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1. Introduction

A vital part of the production of any book, whether it be a medieval manuscript or an e-book, is the correction process.[1] This procedure can occur at various points in time. Corrections can be made while the text is written or copied. For example, an author or scribe might intervene immediately after noticing a small mistake; the author, scribe, or separate corrector could also make changes after the writing is finished. Even users of books can make corrections long after their production. Modern editorial software offers the opportunity to 'invisibly' make these corrections and reprint revised and updated editions of a publication. Medieval manuscripts, however, remain the way they are, traversed by corrections.

These corrections "make visible [...] the craft of copying the text, by making part of the process less smooth than elsewhere" (Wakelin 2017: 115). Therefore, they are an invaluable aspect for understanding the flow and process of manuscript production, revealing information about actors involved and the point in time at which it was corrected. While the copying conventions of Icelandic manuscripts are a well-established and productive research field regarding their paleography and orthography, the correction

[1] This article is no exception. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback, Beeke Stegmann and Erik Kwakkel for their guidance, and Cassidy Croci and Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir for their help.

Pokorny, Lea D. 2025. Correcting Icelandic Manuscripts in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century: Techniques and Context.
Scripta Islandica 75: 123–166. https://doi.org/10.63092/scis.75.44545
ISSN 0582-3234 (tryckt); ISSN 2001-9416 (digitalt)

of these same manuscripts has not been closely studied. The topic of corrections has primarily been considered in the context of in-depth analyses of single manuscripts without diving deeper into implications for the overall book production, such as the order of production phases or the question of responsibility. This is particularly helpful for medieval Icelandic as there is comparatively little knowledge about the process and organization of manuscript making in Iceland during this period.

This article thus provides an overview of correction techniques used in Icelandic manuscripts dated to the second half of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, it contextualizes the medieval Icelandic correction process within contemporary Western European conventions as well as within the sequence of stages in book production. By investigating selected manuscripts dated between 1350 and 1400 AD, the study shows what correction practices were used in Iceland at the time. The individual ways used to rectify scribal errors, such as different methods of deletion and insertion, are analyzed and compared with their use abroad to highlight similarities to and differences from other scribal cultures. Where possible, it is assessed whether a main scribe, a collaborator or a separate corrector made the corrections and the possible moment during the production process at which corrections were executed.

The present study of corrections reveals valuable insight into Icelandic book production in the second half of the fourteenth century by highlighting the correction process as a separate phase. While the results show that Icelandic scribes usually followed a simpler pattern with a less varied and specific repertoire of correction signs and were freer to choose what technical signs to apply in which context compared to scribes from other parts of Europe, the techniques and signs used show similarities to other vernacular Western European traditions. The analysis uncovers first and foremost parallels to the British Isles, but also to German-speaking areas. In addition, it appears that Icelandic scribes, like their contemporaries abroad, were for the most part responsible for correcting their own work. Finally, the results suggest that the moment of correction preceded that of further work on the manuscript such as rubrication.

2. Corrections in medieval manuscripts

Generally, the word 'correction' can be understood as two different kinds of rectification. The term is sometimes used for changing the text based on its

contents and corresponds to emendations – textual revisions or rectifications, whereby the mistakes in question have implications for the authenticity of a text (Reynolds and Wilson 1974: 187) and subsequently its interpretation and any understanding of its content. Emendations are thus "concerned with the restauration of accuracy to texts that have deteriorated" (Rouse & Rouse 1991: 430). The second definition of the term 'correction' concentrates more on the writing process itself and is the one used in the present study:

> A correction is a textual alteration made to rectify a mechanical error, such as an unintentionally omitted word or a misspelling, in the writing or copying of a document. The term implies that the alteration simply amends a mistake and entails no textual rethinking by the author or scribe, nor any substantive change, such as verbal deletion or rephrasing, made to the text as originally intended. (Beal 2009: 93)

With this definition, it is not the content of the text as such but the mechanics behind its copying that are at the center of attention. While both emendations and corrections of mechanical errors aim towards providing the reader with an error-free text, the former tries to eliminate unfavorable variants, while the latter strives towards a text that is spelled correctly and is complete.

Some of the most common scribal errors include:

1. anticipation (the conflation of several words due to a lapse by the scribe, whereby letters or words are written too early, e.g. 'put putting' instead of 'but putting')
2. dittography (repeating letters or words)
3. eyeskip or *homoioteleuton* (also referred to as *saut du même au même*; the scribe moves to a wrong point in the exemplar, often leading to an omission)
4. *homoioarchon* (whereby two words are confused because they begin the same)
5. metathesis (whereby the order of letters is confused within a word)
6. transposition (the writing of words in the wrong order) (Beal 2009: 360–361).

Oftentimes, several different techniques of correction can be used to rectify a single error; for example, a dittography may be crossed over, erased, or otherwise marked as "to be ignored". Similarly, erasures could be used not only to delete a mistake but also to make room for an omitted word (Wakelin 2017: 107). While it is not always feasible to reconstruct the nature of

an error, it is often possible to define the method of correction used for its rectification, which is why corrections are at the center of this analysis rather than errors. Some of the most common correction techniques, and the ones that will garner attention in this study, include:

1. Deletion: Deletions are, broadly speaking, any form of correction whereby a letter, word or larger portion of text are rendered "deleted", not meant to be read. There are different ways to achieve making the reader's eye ignore a mistake. Erasure was probably the neatest way to remedy an error (Wakelin 2017: 102), where the scribe used a penknife to scratch off the ink from the parchment. The writing surface was thus clean and ready to be written on again. Traces of erasure in form of discoloration or roughness of the writing support, as well as traces of erased letters, are sometimes very well detectable, but not all of them remain visible to today's observer (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2019: 351). Crossing out was another very common method to rectify a mistake. Letters or words are deleted by placing a stroke through them. This quick way to edit out words is effective, as evidenced by its continued use to the present day. Due to its persistent use, it can be difficult to assert whether all corrections made in this manner stem from the time of production. The color of ink can be indicative, but caution should be heeded when encountering this method.[2] Another way to delete is subpunction, or expunctuation, a method where dots are placed beneath a letter or word to indicate that this word should be ignored (see, for example, Muzerelle 1985: 122). The number of dots can, but does not have to, correspond to the number of letters erased. Other techniques of deletion include underscoring, the underlining of incorrect words, and obliteration, whereby words or entire passages are blacked out completely (Petty 1977: 29).
2. Insertion: One of the most common ways to correct medieval manuscripts was to add something that had been omitted. Additions were achieved by either writing the omitted text between the lines (interlineation) or by placing the text in the margins. To ensure that the reader understood how to read these additions, signs indicated the correct location in the main text and were, occasionally, repeated in the margins. Broadly speaking, such markers are called *signes de renvoi*, 'signs of referral' (Ker 1960: 50; Muzerelle 1985: 125). Muzerelle

[2] In GKS 2365 4to, for example, Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson (2019: 351) found that corrections by crossing out are almost certainly younger.

(1985: 125) further specifies that a *signe de renvoi* in the main text is an *appel*, a 'call'. The *appel* corresponds to what Lowe (1946: 36) calls an "omission sign"; in this context, the corresponding marker in the margin is called "insertion sign" (Lowe 1946: 36). Other scholars do not make this distinction between "omission signs" and "insertion signs" and refer to any such markers simply as insertion signs or insertion markers (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 95; Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 47; Steinová 2019b: 163). In the following, the term "insertion sign" will be used both for signs that appear in the main text and signs that appear in the margins.

3. Separation: When words were written too closely together, there might be a need to clarify that these words are, in fact, not one. To indicate this, a separation or diastole was created, a vertical or oblique line separating the words (Muzerelle 1985: 127).
4. Transposition: The term transposition was not only used for an error where words were copied in the wrong order but also for their correction. The edited word order can be indicated by means of alphabetizing (placing "a", "b", "c", etc. over words to indicate the intended word order), or dots or slashes (Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 47).

Finally, the cross will find attention in the analysis. As the cross was used in different ways in the analyzed corpus, it will find attention in the discussions of the respective techniques listed above. The cross was "one of the most common annotation symbols [...] throughout the entire Middle Ages" (Steinová 2017: 47) and used for different purposes. According to Muzerelle (1985: 126), a cross is the result of a vertical and a horizontal line intersecting. Three variants found in the analyzed corpus can be distinguished: the Greek cross (*crux quadrata*) with arms of equal length (+), the Latin cross (*crux immissa*) with an elongated descending arm (†) (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2024), and a cross made of individual dots (⁘).

The use and popularity of certain types of correction, and particularly the symbols used during the process, could vary from region to region and from period to period. E. A. Lowe's influential study on the oldest omission signs in Latin manuscripts gives a comprehensive overview of these regional and chronological variations (Lowe 1946), spanning from the oldest Greek papyri over Visigothic manuscripts to Insular manuscripts. Recently, Evina Steinová has published extensively on regional variants of annotation and correction signs in early-medieval European manuscripts (Steinová 2019a; 2019b; 2021). Although Lowe's and most of Steinová's studies are based on

older material, they highlight the presence of regional variance in correction techniques, which is relevant for the discussion of Icelandic practices in the context of other vernacular Western European traditions.

The person tasked with the correction of a text in a manuscript could either be the main scribe or someone else who may or may not have contributed elsewhere during the production process. Occasionally, scribes would comment on the correction process or invite future corrections (Schneider 2014: 150–151; Wakelin 2017: 29). For instance, they might name themselves in a colophon and indicate that they were the ones responsible for rectifying mistakes. Without such distinct indications of task division, identifying the person responsible for corrections can be difficult, since "a scribe correcting himself often writes less fluently and much smaller than he usually does, and sometimes with different pens or ink, so that his writing might look different" (Wakelin 2017: 72). Furthermore, a collaborator might actively try to imitate the main scribe's ductus, which also hampers a possible identification of the corrector (Wakelin 2017: 72).

The consensus among scholars working with vernacular insular manuscripts is that, unless there are counter arguments, it was usually the main scribes who corrected their own work (Ker 1960: 55; Petti 1977: 28; Doyle and Parkes 1978: 166; Huws 2000: 32; Wakelin 2017: 71–72). Wakelin furthermore emphasizes the concept of the "thinking scribe" throughout his analysis of late medieval English manuscripts. By correcting their own work, scribes engaged in conscious thought processes (Wakelin 2017: 63–64) in a "moment of sharpened attention, often after a moment of inattention" (Wakelin 2011: 55). Those who corrected a text but were not its main scribe are referred to as a "corrector" (Ker 1960: 50) or more generally as "collaborators", i.e., other main scribes working on the same manuscript, or rubricators and others involved in later phases of production (Wakelin 2017: 75–76).

In some regions of Western Europe, there seems to have been a difference between who corrected manuscripts written in the vernacular and Latin manuscripts. As Schneider (2014: 150) points out, codices written in the German vernacular were typically corrected by the main scribe, while Latin texts (especially when produced for libraries) were corrected by others, as such productions that required a higher degree of coordination and care. Similarly, Wakelin (2017: 71) asserts that manuscripts written in the English language in the late Middle Ages were mostly self-corrected, due to a lack of organization and collaboration during the book production process.[3]

[3] Occasionally, "some supervisory correcting" can be found in connection with English

Understanding when during the production process of a manuscript its copied text was corrected provides significant insight into medieval book production. Generally, medieval manuscript production consists of multiple steps, starting with the production of the writing support, its arrangement into gatherings and its preparation for the writing through pricking and ruling. Once the page is prepared, the copying can take place, which is typically followed by the rubrication and illumination processes.[4] Finally, the gatherings can be bound together. Some of these steps, such as the rubrication or illumination of a manuscript, are occasionally skipped. The correction process could happen at any point during or after the writing process.

While there are many scholars participating in the discussion on the possible people responsible for correcting texts (e.g. Huws, Petti and Schneider), the question in which phase corrections took place is primarily addressed by Wakelin. He argues that especially "interlinear and marginal additions reveal the time delay and retrospection involved in correcting" (Wakelin 2017: 248). Additions in the margins highlight that a scribe was attentive to the text "beyond the initial moment of copying" (Wakelin 2017: 249). The same may be said for interlinear additions, since by the time of adding omitted words or text, the ink may have become too dry to scrape out the main text (Wakelin 2017: 138), making it impossible to accommodate the addition in the principal text (Wakelin 2017: 248). Erasing and writing anew is thus presumed as a correction technique done primarily during the initial copying act rather than later. A different supporting argument for erasure happening primarily during the writing process is the space that would be created by scraping off ink. Erasures executed after the initial writing process might not provide enough (or too much) space for the correction, resulting in an odd appearance compared to the rest of the main text (Wakelin 2017: 108). What Muzerelle (1985: 121) calls "repentir" ('to repent'), a correction made by a scribe who realizes the error immediately, could, for example, be an erasure which was written over. Methods such as crossing over or the overwriting of a single letter without erasing could further be an indicator of correcting in haste, whereby a scribe notices the error immediately but

religious houses (Wakelin 2017: 83). Due to the high loss of Latin manuscripts produced in Iceland, the fragmentary nature of the surviving specimen and a prevailing lack of scholarship on their production, it is currently not possible to say whether they were treated differently with regard to the correction process than manuscripts written in the Icelandic vernacular (see also Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2017).

[4] Gumbert (2009: 322) briefly mentions the possibility of initials being executed immediately during the writing of the text.

does not want to break the flow of his copying and thus decides against the more laborious erasing. This phenomenon is described as "*currente calamo* ('with the pen still moving')" (Wakelin 2011: 55). Yet, most corrections happen in retrospect – because something unwritten cannot be the subject of the process.[5]

The level of organization of Icelandic book production is not well documented. Occasionally, scribal collaboration will be either addressed in a colophon or preface (as is the case in GKS 1005 fol., Flateyjarbók) or uncovered through detailed scholarly analysis (Stegmann 2018). The discussion of corrections in medieval Icelandic manuscripts mostly takes place as part of detailed descriptions of individual codices. The most noteworthy are Alex Speed Kjeldsen's (2013) study of GKS 1009 fol., Morkinskinna, Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen's (1993) description of Isl. perg. 15 4to, the Icelandic Homily book, and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson's (2019) analysis of GKS 2365 4to, the Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda. Furthermore, the topic of the corrector is briefly touched on by Beeke Stegmann (2018) in her analysis of scribal collaboration in AM 468 4to, Reykjabók. These studies are certainly valuable because they reflect the techniques used to correct the respective manuscripts; however, they are also limited because they are case studies of individual codices without further contextualization.

Two more comprehensive studies on Icelandic and Norwegian manuscripts drawing on larger corpora by Didrik Arup Seip (1954) and Hreinn Benediktsson (1965) describe correction techniques, albeit not in much detail. Seip investigated Norwegian and Icelandic manuscripts dated before 1225 until after 1300. He describes the use of certain correction practices, such as expunctuation and specific signs (Seip 1954). Hreinn Benediktsson identifies the caret mark as the insertion sign used most often in Icelandic manuscripts dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but mentions that other signs were used for this purpose as well (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 95). Finally, a selection of correction techniques is discussed by Odd Einar Haugen (2019) in the handbook of the *Medieval Nordic Text Archive* (*Menota*), and although the goal of these descriptions is the encoding of errors for digital editions of texts, the selection of techniques may be reflective of some of the most common mistakes in Nordic manuscripts.

[5] However, it is also true that a scribe can also adjust the text of the exemplar as the text is copied, by correcting scribal errors found in the exemplar in the respective copy. This is a more pro-active correction method and hidden from later users unless the used exemplar is known and still extant. A correction of this kind is, however, beyond the scope of the present study.

Descriptions in the scholarship of correction methods in medieval Icelandic manuscripts are limited to brief sections in general surveys on the script or general recommendations for the encoding the most common types of corrections. A systematic examination of correction techniques in a corpus of different scribal hands is, therefore, still lacking.

3. Corpus

The present study analyzes a cross-section of Icelandic manuscripts from the second half of the fourteenth century for visual signs of corrections. The corpus consists of leaves and fragments of 22 original manuscripts, written in the vernacular and dated between 1350 and 1400. Today, some of these are preserved under more than one shelfmark, meaning that the leaves are found in a total of 28 shelfmarks. The specimens were examined both in-situ and from digital images.

The corpus includes some of the most impressive representatives of their time, such as the manuscripts SÁM 1 (also known as Codex Scardensis) and AM 350 fol. (also named Skarðsbók Jónsbókar). In fact, 16 of the original manuscripts – now under 22 shelfmarks – belong to the so-called "Helgafell group", a set of manuscripts commonly connected to the Augustinian house of Helgafell on the Snæfellsnes peninsula in West Iceland (Ólafur Halldórsson 1966; Stefán Karlsson 1967).[6] The remaining six original manuscripts were chosen to complement the Helgafell group: they are contemporaries, but from different origins and written by unrelated scribes.

Some of the manuscripts in the corpus are attributed to the same scribe, while others are the products of hands not identified elsewhere. Thus, the study allows for not only inter-scribal variation but also intra-scribal variation. The content spans from law texts and religious texts to sagas. The selected specimens are not limited to any one type of text but rather represent the variety of vernacular literature preserved from the second half of the fourteenth century.

Tab. 1 lists the examined manuscripts by their current shelfmarks; those belonging to the same original codex are presented using a + sign. Additions

[6] The relation of the manuscripts belonging to the "Helgafell group" is currently being reexamined and reassessed. A volume edited by Beeke Stegmann (SÁM) and Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir (SÁM) on this topic is forthcoming.

Tab. 1. Corpus of Icelandic manuscripts dated to between 1350 and 1400 used in this study. Dating according to the Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog (ONP). Scribal attribution according to ONP and handrit.is unless otherwise stated.

Shelfmark	**Date**	**Main scribe**	**Fol.**
AM 53 fol.	c. 1375–1400	53.1	1ra–72vb
AM 61 fol.	c. 1350–1375	H2	1va–109vb
AM 66 fol.	c. 1350–1375	66.1	2r–51v31; 52r–141v
		Magnús Þórhallsson	51v32–33
AM 73 b fol.	c. 1370–1390	H1.A	1r–4v
AM 122 a fol.	c. 1350–1370	122a.1	1–43r
		122a.2	43v–62v
		122a.3	63r–69v; 95r–109v
		122a.4	70r–94v
AM 180 c fol.	c. 1400	180c.1	1ra–73vb
AM 219 fol.	c. 1370–1380	H1.B	1ra–17vb
+ JS fragm. 5			1rv
+ JS fragm. 6			1rv
+ SÁM 2			1rv
+ Þjms. 176			1rv
AM 226 fol.	c. 1360–1370	H1.A	1ra–61vb; 70ra–117ra; 117rb9–158ra; 158rb5–41
		226.1	117rb1–8
		226.2	158rb1–5
AM 233 a fol.	c. 1350–1375	H1.A	1va–12vb; 28ra–29vb
		233a.1	13rv[a]
		233a.2	14r7
		H2	15va–27vb
AM 238 VII fol.	c. 1350–1375	H2	1rv
AM 239 fol.	c. 1350–1400	H1.A	1v–2r6; 2r8–35v
		239.1	2r6–7[b]
		239.2	36r–85v; 96r–109v

Shelfmark	Date	Main scribe	Fol.
AM 347 fol.	c. 1350	347.1	1r–94va
		347.2	27rb:1–18, 40ra:16–32, 41rb:9–22, 41va:1–13, 43v, 77vb, 78rb:13–26, 79rb, 79vb:1–10, 80ra, 80vb, 81rb, 81vb, 82vb, 83va; 84vb:8–23
	c. 1350–1370	H1.C	94vb–98v
AM 350 fol.	c. 1363	H1.A	1r–17v; 24r–150va
AM 156 4to	c. 1350–1375	H2	1v–79r
AM 325 VIII 3 a 4to	c. 1370	H1.B	1rv
+ AM 325 X 4to			1r–14v
AM 344 a 4to	c. 1350–1400	344a.1	1r–21r3
		344a.2	21r3–24v
AM 383 IV 4to	c. 1370–1390	H1.B	1r–4v
AM 653 a 4to	c. 1350–1375	H2	1r–9v
+ JS fragm. 7			1r–2v
AM 48 8vo	c. 1375–1400	48.1	2r–53v
	c. 1400	48.2	53v16–25; 56r
Isl. perg. 5 fol.	c. 1350–1360	5.1	1v–48ra5
	c. 1360–1370	5.2	48ra6–48rb
		5.3	48v–64r
		H1.A	54ra23; 57ra5–8
		5.4	64v–68vb31
		5.5	68vb32–71r
Isl. perg. 34 4to	c. 1350–1400	34.1	1–7r7
	c. 1370	H1.B	91r–128r
SÁM 1	c. 1350–1375	H2	1v–81v
		1.1	82–83ra4
		1.2	83ra4–94va18
Investigated mss. total	***22***	**32**	

Notes

[a] According to Ólafur Halldórsson (1966: 31). *Handrit.is* and ONP do not contain this information.

[b] Cf. Pokorny (2023: 183).

to the manuscripts dated after 1400 are excluded from the subsequent discussion. The table further identifies the main scribes (here defined as any scribes appearing in the main text of a manuscript or fragment). Those that occur in more than one manuscript are referred to as H1.A, H1.B, H1.C and H2, respectively, following common practice in scholarship on the Helgafell group, though also observing the newest research by Katrín Lísa L. Mikaelsdóttir and Haraldur Bernharðsson (both forthcoming).[7] Other scribes are referred to using a corpus-internal system, whereby a signa consisting of the shelfmark number and the order in which they appear is used.

In total, 32 main hands occur in the 22 original manuscripts. Corrections and additions were documented for each manuscript by noting down the page, line, and nature of the respective correction.[8] An effort was made to distinguish between ones that are (likely) contemporary and those that are (likely) later additions. Deciding factors were script type (ductus and aspect), ink color and overall appearance. Corrections were counted independently from the number of letters: for example, a single letter erased is counted as one correction; likewise, a deletion of several letters or words in one go is counted as one correction.

In the following, deletions, insertions, separations, and transpositions are discussed based on the results of the analysis. Simultaneously, the discussion is broadened to show how the observed Icelandic tradition compares to broader Western European patterns. By doing so, parallels and possible connections between Icelandic conventions and other contemporary practices from abroad become apparent. Subsequently, questions of responsibility and possible placement of the correction process in the sequence of manuscript production phases are addressed.

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[7] See Haraldur Bernharðsson (2014), who gives a detailed paleographical analysis of this scribe.

[8] The codicological features of all listed manuscripts were catalogued following Patrick Andrist, Paul Canart and Marilena Maniaci's *Syntaxe du codex* (2013) in the scope of two projects "Bókagerð í Helgafellsklaustri á fjórtándu öld", led by Beeke Stegmann, and the doctoral project "Bookmaking in late-fourteenth-century Iceland. A codicological study on the production of manuscripts in the European context" (Rannís-grant-nr.: 228433-051), of which this article is a part. Production units, entities produced in one continuous process, were defined to reconstruct and comprehend the manuscripts' production history. Due to the ambiguity of when some of the corrections were added to a text (an issue discussed at length below), production units will not be considered in the present study unless implicitly stated. For more information about the production units of the "Helgafell-manuscripts", see https://hirslan.arnastofnun.is/.

4. Corrections in Icelandic manuscripts dated 1350–1400

Of the 22 investigated original manuscripts, all but two contain corrections. It is therefore safe to assume that it was customary in Icelandic vernacular manuscript production to correct manuscripts, as the two specimens in which no corrections were found are short fragments (AM 73 b fol. and AM 383 IV 4to) that provide only a limited opportunity for examination. In fact, almost all examined manuscripts contain some leaves on which no corrections are visible, making it likely that now lost leaves of those two former manuscripts had been corrected.

Tab. 2 provides an overview of the different correction techniques found in the 20 manuscripts in which corrections were detected. Techniques are divided into five categories: erasures that were written over, other modes of deletion (incl. erasures which were left blank), interlineation, marginal corrections (with a subcategory of matching insertion signs in the main text and margin) and combinations of techniques and 'others' (e.g. individual letters that were redrawn or changed without any mode of deletion and transpositions).

4.1 Deletions

The most widely used modes of deletion in the analyzed corpus are erasure, crossing out and subpunction (or expunctuation).

Most of the manuscripts contain identifiable erasures.[9] AM 226 fol., for example, presents an extremely frequent use of erasure over other correction methods. Here, most corrections are individual letters and words that were scratched out and written anew, while only a handful of insertion characters and other signs could be found (see Tab. 2).[10] Crossing out can also be found widely in the examined corpus.

Subpunction (or expunctuation) also appears, although it is used slightly less frequently than a simple stroke over a word or letter. This technique

[9] The cases in which no erasures could be detected are usually one-leaf fragments in a condition where the text has suffered substantial damage. For more on material issues in this regard, see below.

[10] Letters are occasionally also simply turned into another one through simple overwriting of the original letter without erasures. In AM 226 fol., in H1.A's part, for example, an 'h' is turned into an 'd' (see fol. 88rb3).

Tab. 2. Corrections in Icelandic manuscripts dated between 1350 and 1400 according to shelfmarks. Younger additions are excluded.

	Total no. of corrections		Erasure & written over		Deletion (crossing out, subpunction, erasure)		Interlineation		Correction in margin (thereof matching insertion signs in main text and margin)		Combination / other*	
AM 53 fol.	51	100%	5	10%	12	24%	15	29%	15 (7)	29%	4 (4+0)	8%
AM 61 fol.	271	100%	4	1.5%	50	18%	150	55%	59 (1)	22%	8 (4+4)	3.5%
AM 66 fol.	59	100%	1	2%	26	44%	22	37%	4 (1)	7%	6 (5+1)	10%
AM 122 a fol.	140	100%	7	5%	29	21%	79	56%	19 (0)	14%	6 (4+2)	4%
AM 180 c fol.	69	100%	3	4.5%	11	16%	30	43.5%	18 (2)	26%	7 (4+3)	10%
AM 219 fol.	4	100%	3	75%	–		–		1 (0)	25%	–	
AM 226 fol.	313	100%	185	59%	75	24%	12	4%	2 (0)	0.5%	39 (3+36)	12.5%
AM 233 a fol.	39	100%	1	3%	20	51%	14	36%	4 (0)	10%	–	
AM 238 VII fol.	2	100%	–		–		1	50%	1 (0)	50%	–	
AM 239 fol.	341	100%	14	4%	53	15.5%	217	63.5%	40 (7)	12%	17 (14+3)	5%
AM 347 fol.	59	100%	3	5%	25	42%	27	46%	3 (1)	5%	1 (1+0)	2%
AM 350 fol.	64	100%	36	56%	9	14%	4	6%	12 (4)	19%	3 (1+2)	5%
AM 156 4to	64	100%	–		7	11%	26	41%	25 (2)	39%	6 (3+3)	9%
AM 325 X 4to	1	100%	–		–		1	100%	–		–	
AM 344 a 4to	52	100%	–		16	31%	33	63%	3 (2)	6%	–	
AM 653 a 4to + JS fragm. 7	12	100%	–		3	25%	4	33.5%	4 (0)	33.5%	1	8%
AM 48 8vo	10	100%	1	10%	4	40%	1	10%	3 (2)	30%	1 (1+0)	10%
Isl. perg. 5 fol.	87	100%	4	5%	16	18.5%	30	34.5%	28 (1)	32%	9 (7+2)	10%
Isl. perg. 34 4to	21	100%	7	33%	13	62%	1	5%	–		–	
SÁM 1	228	100%	13	6%	76	33%	119	52%	7 (0)	3%	13 (9+4)	6%
Total	**1,887**	**100%**	**287**	**15%**	**445**	**24%**	**786**	**42%**	**248 (30)**	**13%**	**121**	**6%**

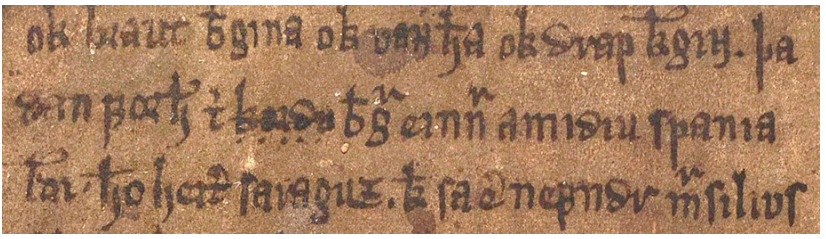

Fig. 1. Word crossed out and subpuncted in AM 180 c fol., fol. 8va2. Photo: handrit.is.

was only found to delete entire words in the examined corpus rather than single letters, and the number of dots placed underneath the deleted word does not always correspond to the number of letters in the word. In AM 122 a fol., expunctuation is the predominant method of deletion used in the part written by the manuscript's first scribe (122a.1). The following parts written by other hands in this manuscript do not show expunctuation; instead, words are either crossed out or erased. Occasionally, subpunction and crossing out were found together. This combination is especially common in AM 66 fol. (written by 66.1), but examples also occur in Isl. perg. 5 fol. and, as can be seen in Fig. 1, AM 180 c fol. (written by 180c.1).[11]

Underscoring occurs more rarely than the other methods of deletion in the investigated corpus. Apart from the standard underscoring with a straight line, a single occurrence whereby a repeated word was underlined with a zig-zag-like line was found in AM 226 fol. on fol. 80vb20.[12] Obliteration was only found twice in the analyzed manuscripts; once, a letter was blacked out in AM 239 fol., fol. 85r19, and once, a word was obliterated in AM 350 fol., fol. 116vb22.

Finally, crosses were found in connection with deletions. At the end of line 12 on fol. 9ra in SÁM 1 (written by H2), something was obviously erased and a Greek cross was drawn over the erasure (see Fig. 2). The preceding word appears to have undergone correction as well. Whether the cross was supposed to function as a line filler or to mark a deletion is difficult to determine. However, this form of line filler was not found elsewhere in the investigated corpus, making it more likely a deletion marker.

[11] Here, the sentence reads: "Þadan for hann t*il* kordu b*orgar* einn*ar* amidiu spania l*an*di" ('From there, he went to kordu a city in the middle of Spain'). The deleted word is difficult to make out because of the stroke placed through it, but likely either reads or "kordu" or "keidu".
[12] The second occurrence of the verb "er" ('is') is underscored thusly.

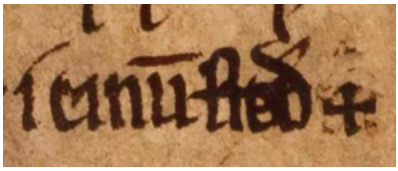

Fig. 2. Greek cross drawn over an erasure. SÁM 1, fol. 9ra12. Photo: handrit.is.

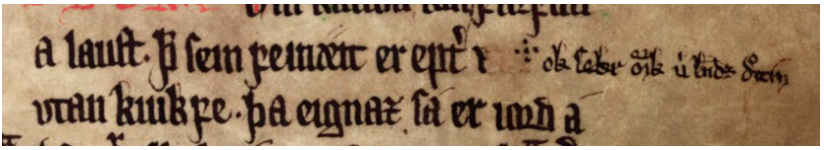

Fig. 3. Dotted cross in AM 350 fol., fol. 36rb26. Photo: handrit.is.

One occurrence of a dotted cross ·:· was found in the text attributed to H1.A in AM 350 fol., fol. 36rb26 (see Fig. 3). Like in the previous case of SÁM 1 (in the part written by H2), the cross was drawn over an erasure and is followed by the correction, strengthening the argument that it could be used to mark deletions.[13] According to Már Jónsson (2004: 164), this addition was written by somebody other than the main scribe, an assessment also made by Ólafur Halldórsson (1981: 47), discussed further below.

In SÁM 1, fol. 17rb, the scribe H2 mistakenly copied the same passage twice, resulting in a dittography of several lines. The first and correct occurrence of the passage spans over lines 21–24 and marks the end of a chapter. The second, incorrect occurrence spans over lines 27–30. To indicate the deletion of this mistake, two Latin crosses (†) were added, judging by the color of the ink most likely by the main scribe himself. One is found at the beginning of the miscopy in line 27 and the other at its end in line 30, essentially declaring this portion 'dead' (see Fig. 4). The cross' function in this example is thus clearly that of a deletion sign.

Overall, deletion was used widely throughout the investigated corpus – in particular erasure, crossing over and expunctuation. In 18 of 20 manuscripts,

[13] Interestingly, the erasure seems to be incomplete, as one minim remains. Már Jónsson, who addresses this correction in his edition of Jónsbók (2004: 164), does not further facture in this minim in his transcription, which reads "þat sem fémætt er eftir utan kvikfé, þá eignast sá er jörð á" for the main text. Már (2004: 164) places the addition thereafter ("og sekur mörk við landsdrottin"). If this reading is correct, it would mean that the passage should have been inserted after "kvikfé" and not after "eftir", and that the dotted cross should be placed two words later.

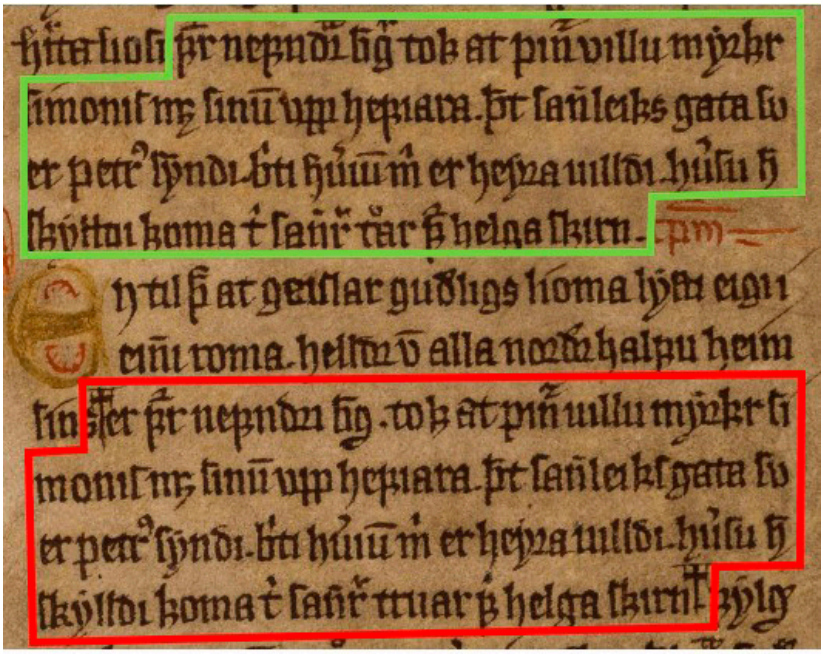

Fig. 4. Latin cross used to delete dittography (marked in red) in SÁM 1, fol. 17rb. Photo: Sigurður Stefán Jónsson

one or a combination of these three techniques was found; they appear in the work of 20 of 32 of the main scribes. These three methods of deletion were also the most popular ones in Western European book production (Beal 2009: 116).[14] According to Schneider (2014: 149), expunctuation was a frequent method in the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century in Germany; however, simple crossing out of mistakes became increasingly the norm during the fourteenth century. Crossing out is also preferred over subpunction in the examined corpus of Icelandic manuscripts, mirroring the ongoing trend in German manuscripts.[15] The observation that words were deleted using both subpunction and crossing out could point towards a change of techniques; possibly, expunctuation had already started to lose its meaning and correctors (or later users) deemed it safer to cross over a passage to ensure the correct reading of the text.

[14] While it is likely that crossing over was already a popular practice in the late fourteenth century, it should be kept in mind that corrections made thusly could stem from a younger date.
[15] A scribe could of course use both crossing out and subpunction, however, usually not with the same frequency (Wakelin 2017: 109).

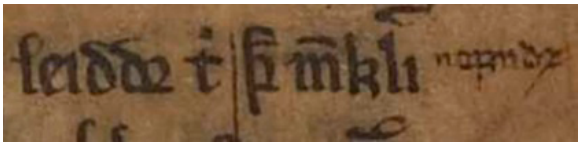

Fig. 5. Vertical stroke as insertion sign. AM 233 a fol., fol. 25vb31. Photo: handrit.is.

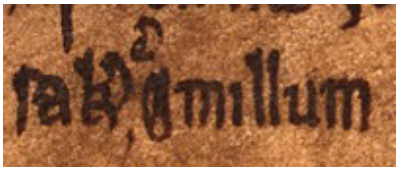

Fig. 6. Comma-like insertion sign in AM 180 c fol., fol. 15ra24. Photo: handrit.is.

4.2 Insertions

The most frequently used insertion signs found in the examined corpus were vertical strokes and virgules of different lengths. The strokes can be either straight (see Fig. 5), slightly tilted or bent, or drawn as single or double strokes. Strokes that occupy the full height of the line may resemble a slash or sometimes, if they are slightly bent, a bracket. Shorter strokes resemble commas (see Fig. 6 or small hooks, if they curve at a sharper angle. The occurrence of strokes is more commonly tied to an interlinear correction, rather than a correction added into the margin, but, as Fig. 2 illustrates, this was also used for marginal additions.[16]

Another common insertion sign used for interlineation and corrections in both European manuscripts and the investigated corpus are caret signs (see Fig. 7). From lat. *carere*, caret means "it lacks" or "it needs". According to Johnson and Jenkinson (1915,1: 78), the earliest form of the caret was a slash or two parallel lines, before the sign evolved into its typical shape ^, which Muzerelle (1985: 126) describes as capital lambda. In the examined manuscripts, the caret can also appear open towards the top of the line, thus resembling a 'v'. Just like slashes and commas, its function is to indicate where an interlinear addition should be inserted.[17]

Other insertion signs that appear less frequently, but still are found in the corpus, include an x-shaped mark, which sporadically occurs in AM 53 fol.,

[16] For example: AM 48 8vo, fol. 20v20; AM 180 c fol., fol. 42va24; AM 347 fol., fol. 82rb21.
[17] For example: AM 66 fol., fol. 133r24; AM 122 a fol., fol. 4va6; AM 347 fol., fol. 86vb15.

Fig. 7. Caret insertion sign in AM 347 fol., fol. 86vb15. Photo: handrit.is.

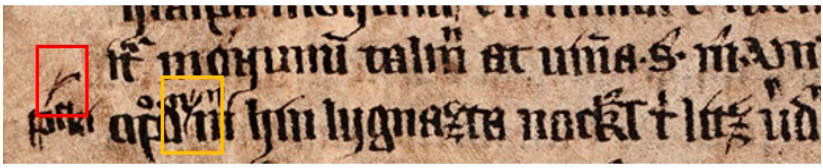

Fig. 8. Psi-like or m-rune-like insertion sign in main text (marked in yellow) and broomstick of f-rune-like sign in margin (marked in red). AM 239 fol., fol. 82vb. Photo: handrit.is.

AM 66 fol., AM 180 c fol. and AM 350 fol. The function of the x-sign is no different from other insertion signs encountered in these manuscripts – it can be used for both interlinear and marginal insertions. A common trait of the use of 'x' as an insertion marker in the three named manuscripts (be it for an interlineation or a marginal addition) is, that it is typically repeated in front of the respective insertion.[18]

One insertion sign could only be found in a single analyzed manuscript – a symbol that resembles both the Greek letter psi Ψ and the Germanic rune ᛘ (**m**) (see Fig. 8). The sign appears in the main text written by the scribe 239.2.[19] It is used as insertion sign, occasionally for interlineations in the main text (e.g. fol. 56v), but more often it is found in the context of insertions placed in the margins (e.g. fols. 104v, 108v and 109v). It commonly appears in pairs, with one insertion sign placed in the main text and the other in the margin. Occasionally, the sign will be repeated, but most often, the two insertion signs used for the same correction do not match up (see, for example, image 5). The execution of the sign suggests that it was written without great care, which raises the question of whether the scribe was consciously writing a psi, a rune, or simply placed strokes that gather at the middle or bottom. The most carefully executed specimen

[18] For example, an 'x' is used in the main text and repeated in the outer margin in AM 66 fol., fol. 38v15, and for an interlineation in AM 53 fol., fol. 62ra33.
[19] For a detailed codicological analysis of AM 239 fol., see Pokorny (2023).

of the sign can be found on fol. 82v6. In other cases, the sign resembles something between a psi (or m-rune) and a "broomstick" or even the rune ᚠ (**f**) (see the insertion sign in the margin, Fig. 8).[20]

The origin of the psi-like symbol found in AM 239 fol. is unknown. Functions in the European application of psi included an abbreviation for *psalterium* or *psaltere*, or a discrepancy marker for Gk. ψεύδος ('lie, falsehood') (Steinová 2019a: 219). Steinová further describes psi as an insular sign that may have functioned as a marker for "passages with textual problems" (Steinová 2019a: 219). Its use in AM 239 fol., however, is firmly that of an insertion sign because it always occurs as part of a correction inserting a word that has been (accidentally) omitted. Whether any connection between this application and the insular one exists remains uncertain. The runes ᛘ (**m**) and ᚠ (**f**). are mentioned by Seip as abbreviations found in Icelandic manuscripts dated to between 1225 and 1300 for the words *maðr* ('man') and *fé* ('money, sheep'), respectively (Seip 1954: 101). ᛘ (**m**) to shorten *maðr* is furthermore used in Norwegian manuscripts from the same time (Seip 1954: 81). In AM 239 fol., however, the function of these symbols is not to abbreviate *maðr* or *fé*, but to mark that something is to be inserted. Should the origin of the insertion characters be the runic alphabet, Fuþark, it would indicate a previously undescribed use of runes during manuscript production.[21] A third possibility cannot be discarded, namely that the signs' resemblance to psi and the runes is purely coincidental. Further research is needed, but at present, the unique use could also point towards an individual-based origin, which in turn would suggest that Icelandic scribes were at liberty to invent or adapt insertion signs at their leisure.

Both the Greek and Latin variants of the cross appear as insertion signs in the investigated corpus, although they are used less frequently than slashes or the caret.[22] Often, the Greek cross is used for marginal insertions; however, it also occurs with interlineations. When used for the former, the sign is typically repeated in the margin (Fig. 9).

The Latin cross is also found as in the corpus. For example, in H1.A's AM 350 fol., fol. 57ra, it was used to mark an insertion at the beginning of

[20] Here, the text reads: "S*imon* m*ælti*: Und*r*umz ek hin godi ces*ar* þ*at* e*r* þ*ér* ætlit of*roðan* *fiski m*ann* hin lygnazta nock*urs* t*il* litz u*er*dan." ('Simon spoke: I am surprised, the good emperor, if you consider an ignorant fisherman, the most lying of all, worthy of consideration.').

[21] Runes in medieval Icelandic manuscripts are known as part of the text or marginalia (Þórgunnur Snædal 2023: 55).

[22] For example: AM 344 a 4to., fol. 1v3; AM 180 c fol., fols. 46rb35 and 70rb22, and AM 53 fol., fol. 70va10.

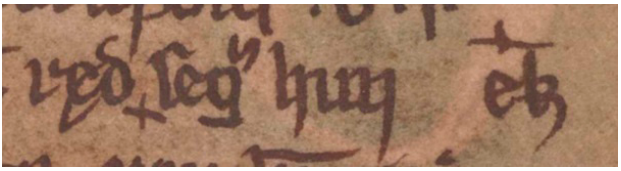

Fig. 9. Greek cross as insertion sign in main text and margin. AM 344 a 4to, fol. 1v3. Photo: handrit.is.

line 7, written into the inner margin.[23] Three other occurrences of the Latin cross as insertion signs can be found in AM 350 fol., all of them on fol. 32r and in the same hand, which likely did not belong to the main scribe H1.A.[24] The cross appears here as an insertion sign in the main text, while little x-markers were used in the margin (see fol. 32rb18).

Apart from these occurrences in AM 350 fol., all Latin crosses were found on leaves in manuscripts attributed to H2. In AM 61 fol., fol. 9rb, a Latin cross was added to the main text in line 37 to indicate a missing portion of text, which was then added below line 38, the last line of the column. Further occurrences of † in AM 61 fol. also show that the sign was used as an insertion character,[25] but contrary to the use on fol. 9, the sign is not repeated in the margins but only in the main text as an indicator of where the missing word is to be placed. The Latin cross is used in AM 653 a 4to, fol. 3v15 to mark where the word added in the outer margin is to be placed. Finally, examples of this variant as an insertion sign are found in AM 156 4to.[26] Like in AM 61 fol., there is one instance where a † was added to the main text and again below the last line of the page, supplying an omitted portion of text (see Fig. 10). Judging by the ink color and the script, it appears that it was H2 himself who was at work here and tended to use the Latin cross for inserting larger portions of texts rather than single words, for which the typical insertion sign in his works is a comma.

Both interlineations and additions to the margins were used widely in the examined corpus. All investigated manuscripts with corrections contain insertions of words or passages (see Tab. 2 above); they appear in the work of

[23] See below for a discussion on the possible scribe responsible.

[24] While the ink's color is highly similar to that of the main text, the ductus of the scribal hand appearing in the margin is more cursive than that of the main scribe. The script is also significantly smaller and the pen thinner (which might hamper the comparison, as discussed above). Ólafur Halldórsson (1981: 47) remains silent on the matter.

[25] For example, fols. 52ra38, 52rb14, 54rb7.

[26] For example, fols. 24r2, 51r22, 52r11, 58v15.

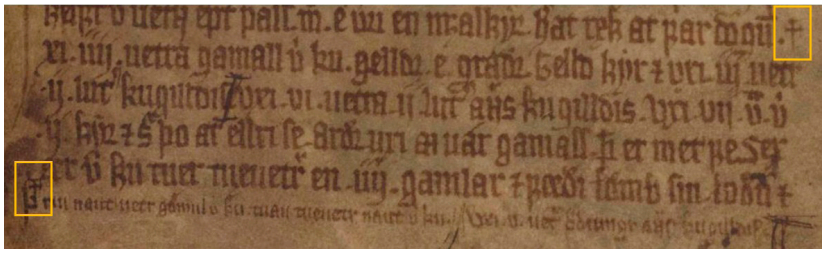

Fig. 10. Line added using Latin crosses as insertion sign in main text and lower margin. AM 156 4to, fol. 61r. Photo: handrit.is.

24 of the 32 main scribes. The most frequently used insertion signs, strokes of various lengths and shapes, are also common in German and English vernacular manuscripts (Schneider 2014: 150; Wakelin 2017: 113). Their popularity could be explained by their simplicity: they were convenient and timesaving. The caret sign, which may have evolved from slashes or virgules, was used in European manuscripts at least from the thirteenth century onwards, if not earlier (Beal 2009: 59). The caret was overwhelmingly used specifically for interlineation in the analyzed corpus, an observation that corresponds with the European use of the sign (Ker 1960: 51; Wakelin 2017: 113). Its application could, nevertheless, also extend to marginal additions (Muzerelle 1985: 126); yet, this use of the caret was less employed in the manuscripts examined for this study. While Hreinn Benediktsson (1965: 95) describes the caret as the most frequently used insertion sign in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Icelandic manuscripts, a shift towards simpler vertical strokes of various lengths appears to have occurred by the time of writing of the present corpus. The Greek and Latin variation of the cross are both found to mark insertions, however, the use of the cross is not limited to this type of correction, as shown above. Furthermore, the Greek cross was also found to function as an attention sign. In AM 61 fol., fol. 67vb4, a cross in the inner margin is followed by "h*er* v*ant*ar or blad" ('Here, a leaf is missing'), which, according to Ólafur Halldórsson (1982: 22), is likely written in the hand of the main scribe (see Fig. 11). He asserts that this call for attention refers to a missing leaf from the exemplar. The remark is the only one in the investigated corpus where a scribe commented on the physical state of the manuscript that was copied from.

The cross' functions as a sign of deletion, attention marker and correction sign in the investigated corpus are all attested in Western European manuscripts as well (Beal 2009: 116–117; Wakelin 2017: 111; Steinová 2019a:

Fig. 11. Greek cross as attention marker in AM 61 fol., fol. 67vb4. Photo: handrit.is.

209). Thus, the versatile use of the cross was not specific Icelandic but equally common in Western Europe. Its most common shape in the analyzed corpus is that of a Greek cross, featuring a horizontal and vertical stroke of equal length +, sometimes ending with serifs. One occurrence of the dotted variant, ·⁝·, was found. Steinová in her overview describes this as a shape connected to early medieval Northumbria (Steinová 2019a: 209). The Latin variant of the cross, with its elongated descender, was observed in several investigated manuscripts and used in different scenarios, similarly to the Greek cross. It appears that one scribe, H2, had a predilection for using the Latin over the Greek variant.

4.3 Separations

Only two cases of separation were found in the corpus, both in texts attributed to H1.A. The diastole, used to separate words, does not necessarily have to be a continuous line, as the examples from AM 350 fol., fol. 33va27, and AM 226 fol., fol. 24ra23, show, but could also be broken up. In the first example, the two words "við konung" ('to the king') could be mistakenly read as one, due to the missing space between them. Therefore, a separation marker was inserted, <vid⁞k*onung*> to ensure the correct reading (see Fig. 12).

The second example could confuse the reader, as "engan erfingian" ('no heir') is written without a space between the two words (see Fig. 13). Here, a line was inserted: <engan|erfingian*n*>. There are hints in AM 226 fol.'s example that another scribal error preceded it and made the diastole necessary: the <er> in "erfingian" is written in a slightly smaller script that both looks a little thicker and 'rougher'. The text could have originally read "engan fingian" (which would be nonsensical), but the error was noticed and "er" was squeezed in – now reading "enganerfingian". Subsequently, the diastole was needed to establish that here, two words should be read. Judging by the color of the ink, it could have been the main scribe who corrected the

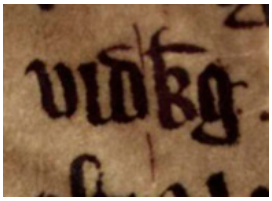

Fig. 12. Separation in AM 350 fol., fol. 33va27. Photo: handrit.is.

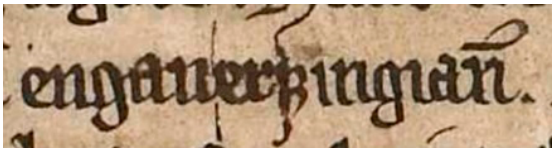

Fig. 13. Separation between words in AM 226 fol., fol. 24ra23. Photo: handrit.is.

mistake; however, the added "er" is written in a slightly thicker pen and the ductus of "r" does not quite match that of the main scribe H1.A.

The rare instances of missing space between two words indicate that this was not a common error. It is worth mentioning that prepositions before nouns were commonly written as enclitics in Icelandic manuscripts and, thus, they were usually left uncorrected (Haugen and Stegmann 2023). Scholarship dealing with Western European corrections is silent on the use of diastoles; however, based on their nature and Muzerelle's definition, it can be expected that they were used in the same manner as in Iceland.

4.4 Transpositions

Only a handful of cases of changed word order were detected in the examined manuscripts. One example is in the part of SÁM 1 written by H2, on fol. 36vb22. Here, vertical lines are used between the words to indicate that they are in the wrong order: <gaf | h*onu*m | h*an*n> ('gave him he'). The edited word order would be <gaf hann honum> ('gave he him') (see Fig. 14). Another such case, using vertical strokes, can be found in the same manuscript on fol. 52va4; here the scribe wrote <þan*n* | likam | sæla> ('the body blessed') but the edited order would have been <þann sæla likam> ('the blessed body').

Vertical strokes as an indicator for reversed word order were also used in the part of Isl. perg. 5 fol. attributed to scribe 5.3. On fol. 51ra36 the text

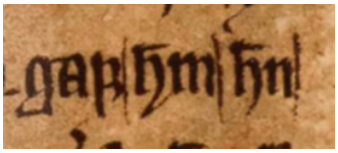

Fig. 14. Transposition in SÁM 1, fol. 36vb22. Photo: handrit.is.

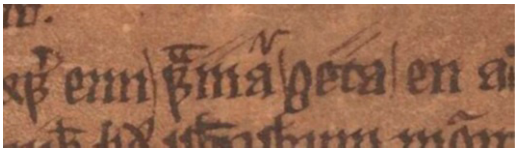

Fig. 15. Transposition with vertical strokes and double accent markers in Isl. perg. 5 fol., fol. 51ra36. Photo: manuscripta.se.

reads: <enn | *fra*m*ar* | geta | en> ('still further can than'), while it should be <enn geta framar en> ('still can further than'). In addition to the vertical strokes between the words, double slashes were inserted above two of the words to indicate that these are the two that should be read in reversed order (see Fig. 15).

A few examples of vertical strokes to indicate a change in the word order are also found in AM 61 fol. written by H2, for example, on fol. 33ra17. The most intriguing case is the one on fol. 103r in column b, where a passage was placed between two vertical strokes and the letters 'a' and 'b' were added superscript in column b, line 26 (see Fig. 16).[27]

It appears that vertical strokes are a popular choice for transpositions in the investigated corpus, possibly because of their simplicity, quick execution and neatness compared to interlinear alphabetizing or numbering. Alphabetizing, dots, and accents are described as transposition methods in earlier scholarship dealing with Icelandic material (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 47; Kjeldsen 2013: 91). In the manuscripts investigated here, one case of alphabetizing and one case of accents was detected; dots as transposition markers were not found. Like in the examples described above, slashes were

[27] The text reads: "Siþ*an* skaut Asm*undr* spioti t*il* Asb*iorns* selsb*ana ok* ko*m* aa h*ann* miðian / s*ua* at[b] fast stoð i fota fiolini *ok* flaug[a] þeg*ar* i gegnu*m* h*a*nn./" (Then Ásmundr threw a spear at Ásbjörn selsbani and hit him in the middle so that it got stuck in the foot board and it flew through him.') The edited and flipped word order would be: "Siþ*an* skaut Asm*undr* spioti t*il* Asb*iorns* selsb*ana ok* ko*m* aa h*ann* miðian *ok* flaug þeg*ar* i gegnu*m* h*a*nn s*ua* at fast stoð i fota fiolini." ('Then Ásmundr threw a spear at Ásbjörn selsbani and hit him in the middle and it flew through him so that it got stuck in the foot board.')

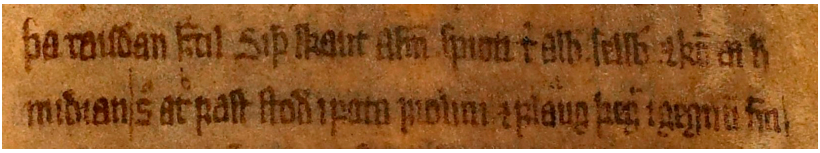

Fig. 16. Transposition with vertical strokes and superscript "b" and "a". AM 61 fol., 103rb26. Photo: handrit.is.

used in English vernacular manuscripts, in addition to letters, to indicate the changing of the word order (Wakelin 2017: 116–117).

4.5 Summary

The examined corpus indicates that certain techniques for correcting were widespread in Icelandic book production in the second half of the fourteenth century. As Table 2 above illustrates, the correction method encountered most often was insertion through interlineation (42%). Insertion signs consisting of strokes especially found frequent use. Deletions make for a total of 39%, whereby crossing out and erasing are most commonly found. Subpunction, while present, is less observable. The cross had several functions, namely, to delete, insert and alert. It appears as if transpositions were mainly indicated by vertical strokes rather than numbering or alphabetizing. Overall, different signs and markers are seemingly used in the corpus without a fixed connotation: for example, a scribe could switch between using a comma and a caret for interlineations without running the risk of confusing a potential user. What is more, marginal additions are often indicated using two different insertion signs in main text and margin; only 30 of the 248 marginal additions are marked using a pair of identical insertion signs (see Tab. 2). Overall, no set standard for correcting texts can be identified from the presented findings.

What is absent in the investigated corpus are specialized signs with a prescribed function, such as the *require* sign, the *obelus* or the *hic sursum / hic deorsum* signs, which have a long tradition in Greek, Latin and Western European manuscripts (Lowe 1946; Steinová 2017; 2021). Their purpose was to indicate omissions, deletions, and other corrections. What is more, *require* signs result from explicit correction rounds and indicate the need for another deliberate round of correction, perhaps on the basis of another copy (Steinová 2021: 477–478). However, these technical signs have neither been found in the present investigation nor been mentioned in previous studies

on Icelandic material considering corrections. The absence of these symbols in Icelandic manuscripts could be interpreted as a simplification of signs used during the correction process. Another possible explanation could be the influence from insular, or other vernacular, practices. According to Wakelin, Irish scribes working during the early Middle Ages "preferred crosses, asterisks, lines and dots, and later English scribes from the fourteenth century on preferred these and other abstract symbols" (Wakelin 2017: 118).

5. Parallels to other vernacular traditions

Some of the observations made in here and in previous studies addressing corrections in Icelandic manuscripts suggest parallels with other vernacular writing conventions. Examples from the present corpus include the use of slashes as markers of transposition, which is also described as a transposition technique in English manuscripts. The dotted variant of the cross, which was found once in AM 350 fol., and has otherwise not been observed in the Icelandic context (as of yet), is otherwise known from scribal conventions in Northumbria during the seventh and eighth century, as previously mentioned. No particular meaning or use is attached to the dotted cross; presumably it was used universally like the standard cross (Steinová 2019a: 209). Finally, the possible origin of Ψ in the insular writing tradition as a marker for a problematic passage might point towards a connection between Iceland and the British Isles; psi's other connotation in the European context, the abbreviation for psalter, can be discarded as a possible origin. Additionally, two parallels with the German vernacular tradition can be drawn from the examined corpus, namely the use of slashes as insertion signs and the potential chronological development from subpunction to crossing over.

Previous studies make mention of symbols and signs that further support the hypothesis that Icelandic correction methods parallel insular methods. The occurrence of signs like the trigon ∴ (Kjeldsen 2013: 90–91; Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2019: 447) and a sign resembling the number 7 or a closing bracket preceded by one or two dots (Kjeldsen 2013: 90) are examples from manuscripts dated to the late thirteenth century. The latter has a potential connection to the insular writing tradition, as it strongly resembles the insular quotation marker (Steinová 2017: 48); yet, its use in Morkinskinna is described as that of a correction sign (Kjeldsen 2013: 90). The trigon is

known from insular practices; however, its use is not restricted to this region alone: it can also be found in Carolingian manuscripts not produced on the British Isles (Steinová 2017: 48; 2019a: 222–223). Its use is described as highly versatile, without any fixed meaning (Steinová 2019a: 222).

Insular connections with Iceland with regards to manuscripts and writing reach as far back as the settlement period, when the *papar* are said to have left behind Irish books when they left the island (*Íslendingabók* 1968: 5). The English missionary bishop Hróðólfr founded Iceland's first (documented) religious house, Bæjarklaustur, in 1030 (Gunnar Harðarson 2016: 313; Patzuk-Russel 2021: 77–110). The insular writing tradition's influence on the Icelandic conventions is specifically mentioned in the First Grammatical Treatise, which is dated between 1125 and 1175 (Hreinn Benediktsson 1972: 31). As the treatise's author explains, he follows the example of the English in proposing an alphabet for the Icelandic language based on Latin (Hreinn Benediktsson 1972: 208–209). Paleographers have long considered the effects of conventions from the English scribal milieu on Norwegian and Icelandic script, such as the use 'ð' and 'ƿ' (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2005: 255–256). Furthermore, the Insular abbreviation system made its way into the Icelandic script (Haugen 2002: 830), and it appears that a certain degree of this influence may also have extended to correction methods.

The earliest surviving manuscript with an English connection found in Iceland is dated to the early twelfth century (Etheridge 2021: 29). There further are mentions of English books in Icelandic *máldagar* (church inventories): Three of them, all from 1318, [28] highlight the English origin of graduals, psalters and missals (*DI* II: 435, 439, 448). These books may have been shipped as cargo, come back with Icelanders who went abroad, or been brought to Iceland by foreign visitors, for example, clergymen coming to the island. According to Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson (2017: 171), of the 218 extant Latin fragments which are related to Iceland, three are from England and one originates from Ireland. In addition, two fragments likely to be of German origin and one of potentially French provenance have been found (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2017: 171).

Scholars of different disciplines have further highlighted cultural connections to and influences from the British Isles on Iceland. Christian Etheridge, who explores intellectual connections between Iceland and Lincoln in the twelfth century, stresses that "a strong influence from England on the intellectual climate in medieval Iceland, most noticeably during the second half

[28] From the churches Múlakirkja, Hálskirkja and Laufáskirkja.

of the twelfth and the early thirteenth centuries" existed (Etheridge 2021: 29). According to Patzuk-Russell (2021: 196), there is "significant evidence that English, and possibly other vernaculars, had a profound impact on the development of Icelandic intellectual culture and vernacularity" as evidenced by loanwords and translations of Old English texts, which "all point to the use of OE in the development of the Icelandic church and ON sermon writing." Parallels and influences of insular art in Icelandic book painting has been discussed by Selma Jónsdóttir, who identified a psalter-fragment from East Anglia, dated c. 1290–1320, as an early influence for Icelandic book painting (Selma Jónsdóttir 1971: 36–42). Lena Liepe (2009: 220) also highlights influences that thirteenth-century English illuminations had on Icelandic book painters.

Suffice it to say, historical connections between the British Isles and Iceland are not the only possible source for influences on the Icelandic learned milieu. Other connections, for example to German-speaking areas, Norway and Paris (Etheridge 2021: 53) should not be left unmentioned. The role of the Augustinian house of St Victor is especially mentionable for the Nordic countries: its influence spread over Denmark, Norway and Iceland (Gunnar Harðarson 2016: 136), where the Augustinian house of Helgafell has been presumed to be part of the Victorian order (Hermann Pálsson 1967: 90). Furthermore, the "transmission of knowledge of vernacular grammatical writing from German-speaking areas" to Iceland "is [...] a real possibility" (Patzuk-Russell 2021: 199). In his study on the development of education in medieval Iceland, Ryder Patzuk-Russell (2021: 68) traces influences on the Icelandic learning tradition, which were likely connected to the archbishoprics Hamburg-Bremen, Lund and Niðarróss.

In total, the discussed parallels in correcting manuscripts fit well with the broader historical context and other known connections between Iceland and the regions in question. In particular, the observed preference for a symbol-based repertoire of correction signs mirrors the insular conventions at the time. Moreover, should the occurrence of the insular quotation marker, the trigon and the psi-like symbol indeed have roots in the insular tradition, it could mean that Icelandic scribes were to some degree influenced by conventions from today's Ireland and Great Britain. The case of the dotted variant of the cross, if in fact related to the Northumbrian tradition, would further imply that they were employing some symbols that were centuries old, if not outdated, by the fourteenth century. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that the Icelandic scribe in question independently chose to bring some variation to the basic cross-shape. Yet, the appearance of a sign re-

sembling the insular quotation marker as well as the particular usage of psi in manuscripts from Iceland could be taken to suggest that Icelandic scribes were not (or were no longer) aware of the symbols' original meaning. This in turn could speak for some kind of indirect influence, where symbols seen elsewhere were merely used as inspiration but applied freely and in different contexts. At the same time, the parallels to some German-speaking tendencies for correcting manuscripts might indicate that Icelandic scribes in the second half of the fourteenth century were aware of at least some contemporary continental practices and that Iceland's correctors may have adopted practices from abroad while developing and adapting them for their own needs.

6. The corrector

The difficulties of attributing corrections to certain people have already been discussed above. In the analyzed corpus, no colophons or other comments could be found that clearly connect a scribe to the correction process. The ductus and aspect of the script, however, lead to the assumption that the main scribes were first and foremost the correctors of their own work.

Paleographical similarities between correction and the main text are often unambiguous in the analyzed corpus. This observation holds true both for corrections located in the text area (interlineations and erasures that were written over) and for corrections added into the margins. Erasures that were written over provide perhaps the best opportunity to evaluate whether they are the product of self-correction, because the size of the script does not change (contrary to interlineations), and, as mentioned above, they are often done during the initial writing act, which is why the ductus and the thickness of pen are less likely to change from the main text around them. Particularly good examples can be found in AM 156 4to (H2), AM 61 fol. (H2), AM 239 fol. (both in text written by H1.A and scribe 239.2), AM 66 fol. (in text by scribe 66.1), AM 226 fol. and AM 350 fol., (both written by H1.A).[29]

Non-textual corrections, that is, corrections that consist of expunctuation, crossing out or erasing without writing over the blank spot, are almost impossible to connect to a particular scribe with any certainty. In the cases of subpunction and crossing out, the ink color is the most indicative factor:

[29] See, for example: AM 156 4to, fol. 61r25; AM 61 fol., fol. 9rb37; AM 239 fol., fol. 77v1; AM 66 fol., fol. 31v12; AM 226 fol., fol. 5vb38; and AM 350 fol., fol. 12va5.

if it matches the ink used for the main text, it might be a hint, but it can by no means be taken as proof that the main scribe was at work. An exception may be manuscripts like AM 122 a fol., in which subpunction is only present in the main text written by scribe 122a.1. Either this scribe corrected his own work or had a different corrector from the other three main scribes. Judging by the color of the ink, the first scenario is a possibility. What is more, some of the main scribes show a tendency to use insertion signs that were not or rarely used by others in the corpus, e.g., scribe 239.2, who uses the psi-like symbol, or H2, in whose texts the Latin variant of the cross is predominant. As previously mentioned, judging by the ink color and their frequent occurrence in connection with H2, it is likely that they are the product of this scribe rather than another person who corrected his work. These signs' use suggests that the people correcting were at liberty to choose or adapt signs at their convenience.

There are, however, cases in which it is not completely clear who rectified an error, particularly when the script size or ductus changes, as mentioned above. One such instance is a marginal correction found in AM 66 fol., fol. 38v (image 17 below). Whether it was the main scribe who added the correction, or another contemporary, cannot be said for certain. The color of the black ink does match; however, the ductus appears to be slightly more relaxed in the marginal addition (see the minims of 'm, n'). At the same time, the looped descender of 'y' is highly similar to that of the main scribe, as is the round shoulder of the 'h'. The tip of the quill seems to be sharper and thinner than that of the main text, which could explain the slight difference in appearance of the script.

Tab. 3 shows how frequently the five correction technique categories discussed above appear in the respective scribes' work. Certain tendencies and trends become apparent when looking at individual scribes. For example, the main texts ascribed to H1.A contain a much higher number of deletions than those of other scribes, where 57% are erasures that were written over and 23% are other techniques of deletion. In contrast, the percentage of interlineations in H1.A's writings is extremely low: they make for only 5% of corrections. While the connection between the so-called "Helgafell scribes" is not unambiguous, it is worth comparing them both to one another and to other scribes not closely connected to Helgafell. Texts written by H1.A and H1.B show a much higher use of deletion techniques (80% and 92%, respectively) than H2 (28.5%). In turn, H2's writings contain significantly more insertions (67%) than texts written by H1.A (9%) or H1.B (8%). Overall, the distribution of correction types found in main texts written

Tab. 3. Corrections in Icelandic manuscripts dated between 1350 and 1400 according to main scribes. Younger additions are excluded.

Scribe	Total no. of corrections appearing in main texts		Erasure & written over		Deletion (crossing out, subpunction, erasure)		Interlineation		Correction in margin (thereof matching insertion signs in main text and margin)		Combination / other*	
H1.A	407	100%	233	57%	93	23%	21	5%	15 (4)	4%	45	11%
H1.B	25	100%	10	40%	13	52%	1	4%	1 (0)	4%	–	
H1.C	1	100%	–		–		–		1 (0)	100%	–	
H2	600	100%	17	3%	153	25.5%	303	50.5%	99 (3)	16.5%	28 (17+11)	4.5%
53.1	51	100%	5	10%	12	24%	15	29%	15 (7)	29%	4 (4+0)	8%
66.1	59	100%	1	2%	26	44%	22	37%	4 (1)	7%	6 (5+1)	10%
122a.1	63	100%	2	3%	18	28.5%	35	55.5%	3 (0)	5%	5 (4+1)	8%
122a.2	26	100%	–		7	27%	14	54%	4 (0)	15%	1 (0+1)	4%
122a.3	19	100%	2	10.5%	2	10.5%	10	53%	5 (0)	26%	–	
122a.4	32	100%	3	9%	2	6%	20	63%	7 (0)	22%	–	
180c.1	69	100%	3	4.5%	11	16%	30	43.5%	18 (2)	26%	7 (4+3)	10%
226.1	0		–		–		–		–		–	
226.2	0		–		–		–		–		–	
233a.1	0		–		–		–		–		–	
233a.2	0		–		–		–		–		–	
239.1	0		–		–		–		–		–	
239.2	314	100%	3	1%	46	15%	212	67.5%	39 (7)	12.5%	14 (14+0)	4%
347.1	57	100%	3	5%	24	42%	27	47%	2 (1)	4%	1 (1+0)	2%
347.2	1	100%	–		1	100%	–		–		–	
344a.1	51	100%	–		16	31%	32	63%	3 (2)	6%	–	
344a.2	1	100%	–		–		1	100%	–		–	
48.1	9	100%	1	11%	3	33%	1	11%	3 (2)	33%	1 (1+0)	11%
48.2	1	100%	–		1	100%	–		–		–	
5.1	72	100%	3	4%	12	17%	21	29%	28 (1)	39%	8 (7+1)	11%
5.2	0		–		–		–		–		–	

Scribe	Total no. of corrections appearing in main texts		Erasure & written over		Deletion (crossing out, subpunction, erasure)		Interlineation		Correction in margin (thereof matching insertion signs in main text and margin)		Combination / other*	
5.3	7	100%	–		2	28.5%	4	57.5%	–		1 (0+1)	14%
5.4	5	100%	–		1	20%	4	80%	–		–	
5.5	3	100%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	–		–	
34.1	1	100%	–		–		1	100%	–		–	
1.1	2	100%	–		–		2	100%	–		–	
1.2	11	100%	–		1	10%	9	80%	1 (0)	10%	–	
Total	**1,887**	**100%**	**287**	**15%**	**445**	**24%**	**786**	**42%**	**248 (30)**	**13%**	**121**	**6%**

by H2 is much more similar to other scribes in the examined corpus than H1.A and H1.B.

The overall observation made in the examined corpus, that most of the examined manuscripts appear to have been self-corrected, points towards a situation similar to the one Wakelin describes for late medieval English vernacular book production and what Huws implies for medieval Welsh vernacular manuscript making (Huws 2000: 32), namely, that the level of organization typically did not include a designated corrector review of another scribe's work. This conclusion also falls in line with an assessment made by Stegmann in her analysis of scribal collaboration in AM 468 4to, Reykjabók, namely that the main scribe was responsible for the majority of corrections in the main text (Stegmann 2018: 38).

There are a few instances in the corpus where it can be argued that a collaborator or corrector were involved in reviewing the text.[30] The dotted cross and the following insertion in AM 350 fol., fol. 36rb, discussed above, were likely written by someone other than the main scribe. According to Ólafur Halldórsson (1981: 47), the same person added this and two further comments on fols. 56v and 57r. Ólafur also believes that this person compared AM 350 fol. to other law codices and that it might be the scribe of SÁM 1,

[30] Here, in turn, different forms of deletion might be the key to the identity of the corrector, but as previously pointed out, it is not possible to attribute simple lines that cross out a word or text portion to someone in particular.

H2. The commenting function of the additions might be true for the marginalia on fols. 56v and 57r. The case of fol. 36r, however, involves an erasure that was partially written over and might be considered more of a correction than an emendation. The hand that wrote these three additions is not found elsewhere in the manuscript and was perhaps not otherwise involved in the production of AM 350 fol.[31] This would then spark the question of what role this second person had: whether it was somebody tasked with the correction of the manuscript or an early user. The main argument against the first possibility is that many of the corrections in AM 350 fol. can be attributed to its main scribe. Were the person an additional corrector, it would mean that one and the same manuscript was reviewed more than once by two different people. The possibility of an early user of the codex would disconnect the person from the original production process entirely and put them into another category – users – which is beyond the scope of this study.

Several examples in the analyzed corpus suggest that a collaborator was somehow connected to the correction process. Rubricators, working primarily with red ink to insert chapter headings, are not only found to embellish corrections from time to time but also to actively act as correctors, either of their own contribution or of the main text. On fol. 143va in AM 226 fol., the rubricator (who was not the main scribe) omitted a word in the red chapter heading in line 25, which was then added into the middle margin, using a slash insertion sign in the main text without repeating it in the margin. Red was also used in the same manuscript on fol. 7ra19 to cross over and under a word in the main text. Another case of a correction in a rubric can be found in AM 653 a 4to on fol. 3r, where the rubricator inserted an omitted letter using a small comma insertion sign. In both instances, the rubricators likely noticed the mistake while still at work with the red ink – either immediately after writing the rubric, or as soon as the work on a page, leaf, or the overall rubricating was finished. Stegmann's study on Reykjabók shows that one correction to the main text was added by a second scribe, who was mainly responsible for the rubrics and adding stanzas to the text (Stegmann 2018: 38).

Occasionally, corrections are decorated in red. In AM 66 fol., several marginal additions were embellished or framed by what appears to be contemporary scribes. Three examples on fols. 38v, 88r and 134r show such frames, whereby the previously mentioned marginal addition on fol. 38v stands out

[31] The rubrics are highly likely written by the main scribe. The book painting is also suggested to be the product of the main scribe (Liepe 2009: 172).

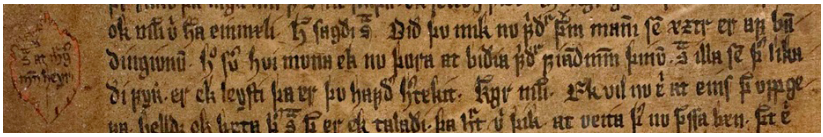

Fig. 17. Decorated marginal addition in AM 66 fol., fol. 38v15. Photo: handrit.is.

the most. The addition, which is to be inserted in line 15, as the x-like marker shows, is framed by a black and red shield (see image 17).[32] The adjacent Þ-initial is drawn in a very similar-looking bright red ink that almost "glows" on the dark vellum. The similarity of the red initial and the red frame might indicate that the same color was used, perhaps by the same person.[33]

In H1.A's text in AM 226 fol., on fol. 8v, there is another case of an addition in an embellished frame; however, there is no insertion marker anywhere. [34]

The sporadic occurrence of red in connection to corrections suggests that rubrication was done after the initial correction process, regardless of whether the rubricator was the main scribe or another person. This brings the discussion to the question where in the sequence of production steps the correcting of a text took place.

7. Time for corrections

Tab. 2 shows that the majority of correction instances in the investigated manuscripts, 42%, are interlineations.[35] Corrections added into the margins

[32] The added text reads: "s*ua* at marg*ir* m*en*n heyri", so that the sentence in its entirety goes as follows: "Bið þu mik nu fr*iðar* **sua* at margir menn heyri* þ*ei*m man*n*i se*m* æztr er af ba*n*dingiunu*m*." ('Ask me now for peace, so that many men hear the man who is requested by the prisoners.').

[33] At present, no color analysis for the red ink in AM 66 fol. is available.

[34] Other cases of red ink connected to corrections were found in younger parts in AM 350 fol. On fol. 152va22, the main scribe (working around 1500) added some omitted words into the outer margin, using a // insertion sign in the main text and a cross in the margin. One of the slashes and the cross were then traced in red, and the entire addition was enclosed in a red frame. AM 350 fol. furthermore contains one quire (fols. 18–23) dated to the fifteenth century. Here, the rubricator was evidently also acting as corrector, as can be seen from the usage of red ink during the process. From the ductus of the script, it is highly likely that the main scribe and the rubricator were one and the same person (see AM 350 fol., fol. 23ra24).

[35] Due to the fact that it is not possible to ascribe certain corrections such as a subpunction to specific hands, the manuscripts in Tab. 2 are not further divided based on their production units.

make for 13% of the total. Following Wakelin's hypothesis that these techniques indicate a certain time of delay (or at least not an immediate rectification of an error), these numbers suggest that correcting happened mostly after the copying of a text (or texts) was finished. Deletions that stand by themselves (crossing out, subpunction and erasures which were left blank) make up for roughly a quarter, or 24%, of corrections. When exactly these corrections were made cannot be assessed with any certainty, due to the possibility of certain deletions being made at a (much) later point in time. Seldomly, deletions were combined with either interlineations or marginal corrections. Erasures which were written over only make for 15% of the total, which seems peculiarly little. As discussed above, this technique was likely applied during the writing process. In Wakelin's corpus of medieval English manuscripts, the majority of corrections, or 42%, are erasures that were written over (Wakelin 2017: 107). The low proportion shown by the results in the present study must be taken with caution, as there might be a material reason behind it. The state of the writing support could play a critical role for recognizing erasures that were written over – the darker and more worn the vellum appears, the more difficult the recognition of this type of correction becomes. In manuscripts with a comparably "light" or "unworn" writing support, such as AM 226 fol. and AM 350 fol., a higher number of erasures were written over compared to other manuscripts. In summary, the high use of corrective methods associated with a post-writing process in the corpus process strongly suggests that it was customary in Iceland in the second half of the fourteenth century to correct most errors after the copying of one (or multiple) texts was concluded.

In addition to the methods themselves, the use of red in correlation with corrections is indicative of the sequence of correction. The decorated and highlighted corrections found in some manuscripts indicate that the corrections themselves were already in place when the red embellishments were added. For the sequence of steps of the book production process, this means that the main text was corrected before moving on to the next step: rubricating. At the same time, the occasional correction in red (that is, not a decoration, but a rectification of a mistake), shows that the rubrication process provided a second, perhaps sporadic, opportunity for corrections, where the occasional unnoticed error was remedied. In AM 180 c fol., an omission on fol. 14va25 was corrected in red ink. According to Agnete Loth (1980: 361), the rubricator of this manuscript was the main scribe. Not only did the main scribe correct the main text with black ink, but the rubrication process was used for a second round of checking for errors. Similarly, Steg-

mann's observation that the rubricator of Reykjabók added a correction to the main text supports the assumption that, sometimes, the texts of Icelandic manuscripts were checked for errors more than once.

Such a potential second round of correcting, however, implies that the person rubricating is not only filling in chapter headings, but also pays close attention to the text. In other words, corrections in red are as equally indicative of a "thinking scribe" as corrections in black ink. Thus, Wakelin's concept, which is primarily concerned with main scribes, may be extended to other collaborators whose tasks included perhaps more than to just decorate.

8. Conclusion

This study investigated correction techniques in Icelandic manuscripts dated to the second half of the fourteenth century and brought the correction process into context with the contemporary Western European conventions and the sequence of phases in book production. As shown, Icelandic scribes employed standard techniques such as deletion and insertion through interlineation and additions in margins, which are highly common in contemporary Western European manuscripts. However, the symbols used for rectifying omissions in the Icelandic corpus are less varied and appear to not have specific meanings tied to them. Interlineation and additions placed in the margins were predominantly indicated using various forms of vertical strokes, but also caret markers, crosses, and other symbols. Crosses could furthermore function as signs calling for attention or deletion. Crossing over appears more often than subpunction, yet, both techniques were applied, and sometimes used together. Erasures that were written over have been proven to constitute only a small part of the corrections; however, material reasons might be hampering their identification. Only seldomly was it necessary to place boundaries between to words that could otherwise be read as one, and transpositions were typically marked by vertical strokes between words. Indications that scribes could choose freely what signs they used for marking the right spot for an insertion could be found, as could tendencies that suggest that individualizing shapes of symbols was possible.

The results indicate that Icelandic scribes working during the second half of the fourteenth century were mostly responsible for correcting their own texts. Paleographic indicators as well as tendencies towards certain techniques suggest that self-correction was common practice. Possible reasons may be

convenience or a lack of organization during the book production. A lack of organization could explain why only few occurrences appear in the analyzed manuscripts in which a contemporary of the main scribe contributed to the correction process. In these cases, it was usually a collaborator, more specifically the rubricator of the manuscript in question, who added a sporadic correction and not somebody tasked exclusively with correcting the copied text. Whether a different degree of organization existed for Latin manuscripts from Iceland remains to be seen.

The main correction process is likely to be situated after the copying process and before the rubrication. Occasionally, embellishments in red ink were added to existing corrections, suggesting that that the initial correction process was concluded before the manuscript was exposed to colorful ink. The fact that the rubrication process was sometimes used to rectify errors suggests that the insertion of red details into a manuscript could be used as a second layer of correction.

The methods used to correct manuscripts in Iceland in the second half of the fourteenth century correspond to other contemporary vernacular traditions. Indicators like the preference of abstract symbols over descriptive markers and some of the signs found in the analysis might suggest that Icelandic correctors were aware of (if not influenced by) insular scribal conventions. Previous studies on the development of script and book painting in Iceland, as well as the English source of inspiration for the First Grammatical Treatise's author, have already shown that Iceland's book milieu took cues from its neighboring islands. Additionally, the discussed parallels to German vernacular manuscript culture are in line with historic ties between Iceland and Northern Germany. The similarities between Icelandic correction techniques and those from the insular as well as German traditions, thus, situate Iceland in the vernacular Western European contemporary scribal tradition.

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Summary

Writing is a task prone to errors and mistakes. While modern devices allow for invisible corrections, medieval scribes often had to use methods that would remain visible to a manuscript's future users. Previous studies on Western European manuscripts indicate that these methods can be indicative of the people responsible as well as the time of correction, thus revealing important information about the book production process. Yet, corrections in Icelandic manuscripts have hitherto not found much scholarly attention.

This article focuses on correction techniques used in Icelandic book production in the second half of the fourteenth century in the context of Western European conventions. It discusses the used methods in their context of the possible time of correction and the people responsible for correcting, embedding the correction process in the overall sequencing of book production. It is argued that Icelandic scribes were largely responsible for going over and correcting their own material. It appears as if they used a simpler set of symbols when correcting than elsewhere in contemporary Western European manuscripts. The main correction process highly

likely occurred after the copying of a main text was finished and before it went on to the rubrication and decoration.

Keywords: Corrections, errors, book production, Icelandic manuscripts, codicology, vernacular book culture

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