

## THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR OF A DIPLOMATIC EDITION

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The basic role of the editor of an Old Norse text is that of a mediator. On the one hand he has the manuscript(s) of the work, on the other the readers, and his task is to mediate between the two. This mediation can, however, be executed in various ways and to various degrees, with the editor placing himself in different positions in relation to the two end points. To an extent his particular posture is dictated by the type of edition. For example, the editor of a facsimile edition performs in reality no mediation in the text itself, other than ensuring that the best possible reproductions are used. At the opposite end of the scale is the normalized Old Norse edition, where the editor's role as a mediator is performed to its utmost consequence. One might say that the editor of a facsimile edition places himself on the side of the manuscript, which he - by way of the camera - is true to in every detail; the editor of a normalized edition, on the other hand, places himself decidedly on the side of the user, consciously camouflaging details in the manuscript out of consideration for the reader.

Between these extremes of no mediation and complete normalization lies a large gray area encompassing editions which follow to some extent diplomatic principles. The fundamental concept of diplomatic editing is exacting reproduction of the original, but this concept can be adhered to in varying degrees. In a strictly diplomatic edition an attempt is made to copy even the smallest detail, whereas in an only moderately diplomatic edition the form of the original is still reflected, although some minor details may be lost.

In this classification of editions as facsimile, diplomatic (strict to moderate), or normalized, aspects are left out of consideration which would serve to characterize editions along other lines. Some editions are monographic, consisting of one single manuscript of a text, whereas others are critical and encompass all versions of value for textual criticism. Such aspects depend greatly on the extent of the manuscript tradition, and on the number and form of previous editions

of the text. The main concern in this paper is the way in which manuscripts are reproduced - in particular principles for diplomatic reproduction - not the extent of a specific tradition, or whether only a part of that tradition is presented.

Manuscripts can be reproduced exactly only through photography. Two inherent elements preclude entirely faithful reproduction in any printed edition, even one adhering very strictly to diplomatic principles, namely: the constraints of the process of printing, and the subjectiveness of the process of editing. Standardization of the multitude of scribal variations in the size and exact form of individual letters, the amount of space between words, the particular placement of diacritical marks, etc., is an inherent consequence of the transfer from handwritten to printed form. The process of regularization is often difficult, as a broad spectrum of scribal variants has to be assigned to a very limited number of printed values, and any form at or near the dividing line between standard values will provide the conscientious editor with headaches. Some even introduce a third, middle value into binary systems, as does Oscar Albert Johnsen with respect to word division in his edition of the (Legendary) Óláfs saga hins helga, where he operates with full space, half space, and no space. Such a solution provides the editor with a means of approximating the original more closely, but it does not solve the underlying problem of standardization.

Standardization is similarly a consequence of editorial definition. What are, for example, the distinguishing features between 'u' and 'v', or between 'i' and 'j', and how should hybrid forms be treated? To illustrate the question concerning 'i' and 'j' one might consider two editions of texts copied by Þorleifur Jónsson í Grafarkoti (early 1600's). Peter Foote in his rendering of a section of Sth. papp. 4to nr. 4 in the festskrift for Benedikt S. Þórarinnsson transcribes -*ŷi* and -*ni* with '-dj' and '-nj', and *ʃ* with 'J', whereas Kr. Kálund in his edition of Fljótsdœla hin meiri (= Droplaugarsona saga) according to AM 551c 4to describes the latter grapheme as something between 'I' and 'j', but transcribes it with 'i', since, according to him: "i ellers

ikke forekommer i hdskr." Thus editors can define letters differently and can identify scribal graphemes with different printed letters.

The diplomatic edition can then, within the constraints of the standardization imposed by printing and the subjectivity of editorial definitions and identifications, basically preserve the form of the original manuscript - but should it? Prior to 1930, when the facsimile of Flateyjarbók appeared, facsimile editions of Old Norse texts were a rarity, notable examples being the photolithographic printing of Elucidarius in 1869 and the phototype edition of Codex Regius of Eddic poetry in 1891. In diplomatic editions at that time an attempt was often made to approximate the paleography of the original as a kind of substitute for non-existing facsimile editions. Verner Dahlerup's edition of Ágrip, where both abbreviation symbols and line length are preserved, is an extreme example. Since the commencement of various series of facsimile editions, and especially in more recent years the general availability of photographs and microfilms of manuscripts for scientific research, this function for diplomatic editions has lost importance.

With these other - and better - means to fulfill the need for exact reproduction of manuscripts, the strict application of diplomatic principles in printed editions should be considered critically. The editor, by deciding to make a diplomatic edition rather than a facsimile edition, has already chosen to deviate somewhat from the manuscript, and other considerations speak for even greater deviation in the direction of partial normalization, considerations based generally on the editor's role as a mediator. The editor should not automatically ally himself with the manuscript, against the reader, but rather must try to mediate the manuscript to the reader in the best possible way. The primary reason for editing a text ought to be to make the contents of the text available, rather than the quirks of the scribe. The editor is most likely the one who knows the text and the manuscript best, and by interpreting the manuscript rather than simply copying it, he can impart his knowledge to the reader.

Adequate and reasonable demands on the editor who moderates diplomatic principles are that he explain the degree of

partial normalization, describe any details which are omitted, and indicate clearly any important deviations from the manuscript. Such information may be included in the introduction to the edition, especially information concerning general normalization or recurring deviations, or at the point in the text where the departure occurs, specifically in the case of individual changes. Important details must not be lost, and it must be entirely clear what the editor is responsible for.

The following consists of a discussion of various individual areas in which an editor might decide to moderate strict diplomatic principles. Each area is presented, main problems and various considerations are mentioned, and possible solutions are offered. The presentation reflects the personal opinions of the writer of this paper and the conclusions he has drawn from his work with Old Norse manuscripts.

Capitalization. Scribes were notoriously inconsistent with respect to capitalization, and it is frequently difficult to discern what the scribe meant to be capitalized. In general one might say that scribes used few capitals in the Middle Ages, whereas they used many capitals, somewhat at random, after the Reformation. Attempts to retain scribal capitalization practices in an edition fulfill no real function. On the other hand, capitalizing proper nouns helps the user to find his way around, as does introducing capitals at the beginning of new sentences, whereas the removal of superfluous capitals assists in the identification of the beginning of sentences and prevents the reader from misinterpreting a capitalized common noun as a name. The only real problem one encounters is the interpretation of place names consisting of common nouns, e.g. 'vagrinn' which might be 'Vågen' in Bergen or 'the bay', but this same problem the editor has to solve when preparing the index. Capitalization of proper nouns ought to be the rule in an edition; total normalization in the use of upper and lower case could perhaps be practiced.

Word division. Scribes were often no better concerning word division, and it is likewise frequently difficult to determine what is written together and what separately. The introduction of half space in an edition does not solve the problem.

Individual words may be run together due to: a) lack of space at the end of a line, b) scribal correction, c) semantics, d) function (words functioning closely together), e) prosody (patterns of accentuation), f) no apparent reason. The separation of elements of a word might reflect the perception of them as semantic entities, or it may only reveal graphic practices or simply where the scribe moved his hand. The picture is complicated, for a scribe who did not employ hyphens, by words divided at a change of line in the manuscript. At least a partial editorial normalization of word division would seem reasonable, especially dividing individual words which are written together, whatever the reason, also prepositions and objects; the scribal practices can be sketched in the introduction. If word division is not normalized entirely, the treatment of words divided at line shifts in the manuscript should reflect scribal practice with the same word or similar words elsewhere in the manuscript. The main problem one will encounter in the case of complete normalization is whether to treat a noun in the genitive followed by another noun as a compound or as two words.

Punctuation. Scribes were frequently just as bad concerning punctuation, some using no punctuation, others being quite erratic. The treatment of punctuation in an edition is complicated by the fact that the most common punctuation mark, the period, was also used as an abbreviation symbol for suspension, e.g. 's.' or '.s.' = segja / son etc. Periods could also serve as graphic separators to indicate Roman numerals (.iii. = 3) or, less frequently, to single out individual letters which are entire words (.j. = 1); some scribes tended to tag proper nouns with periods. On the other hand, punctuation marks were not the only way to mark phrasing. The scribe of AM 327 4to (Sverris saga), for example, placed no period at the end of a sentence when the next one began with a capital, or when the end of the sentence coincided with the end of a line; these graphic indications must have been sufficient for him as basically all other sentences end with a period.

It is standard practice to drop periods which function as abbreviation symbols when abbreviations are expanded; when, however, the abbreviated word comes at the end of a sentence, or in any other context where punctuation is the scribal prac-

tice, the period should be kept even when the abbreviation is expanded (the scribe surely meant for the period to function both ways). Scribal periods flanking Roman numerals serve a worthwhile function and are traditionally printed, but there seems to be no reason to copy other systematic graphic scribal practices which have nothing to do with punctuation in the sense of phrasing. The editor should try to uncover such systems, and eliminate them; the editor must look for tendencies and accept scribal inconsistencies, dropping, for instance, periods marking proper nouns although not all names are thus marked. The introduction of periods at the end of sentences, either tacitly or explicitly (<.>), will ease the reader's task. In cases of uncertainty the editor could note the manuscript punctuation, as A. Kjer does in his edition of Skálholtsbók yngsta, e.g. p. 275,3-5: "For hann jnn til þaiar. Annan dagh wikunnar lögðu Baðlar wth til Holms ([Note:] Hðskr. interpungerer: jnn til þaiar. annan dagh wikunnar. lögðu bl')." Such instances, which are basically the sole argument for maintaining scribal punctuation, are usually surprisingly few.

Within the foreseeable future details of scribal capitalization, word division, and punctuation will be of limited interest as objects of research, word division being perhaps the most interesting of the three, both for examinations of prosody and of compound words. But the strong element of editorial subjectivity present in determining word division diminishes the value of the printed edition for such investigations and will most likely force scholars to the manuscript itself. A degree of normalization in all three areas would increase readability tremendously and should be acceptable, as long as the editor outlines scribal practices and his editorial procedures in the introduction, and notes any specific cases where the interpretation of the text is affected, preferably at the particular place, not in the introduction. These three areas are closely related, and moderating one will frequently necessitate moderation of the others.

Graphemes. Graphemic variants can be linguistically relevant ('r' = /r/, 'R' = /rr/) or linguistically irrelevant ('r'/'ɹ' = /r/). Linguistically relevant distinctions should be maintained in the edition; other distinctions may be disregarded, but discussed then in the introduction, especially

when they are important for manuscript dating. It is pointless to keep small capitals, unless they are linguistically relevant, as is the case with for example 'N' = /nn/; uncial 'Ń', usually reproduced with a small capital, is among the linguistically irrelevant variants. It would be desirable to represent 'ſ' with 's', but problems arise if round 's' is used for /ss/. The round variant could in that case be printed as a small capital (as in Magnus Rindal's edition of Barlaams ok Josaphats saga), but the two printed variants are then difficult to distinguish. Other alternatives are: a) printing round 's' as a capital, b) regarding round 's' as an abbreviation and printing 'ss', c) accepting the loss of distinction (thus printing 'þesi' for 'þesi' and 'þessi' for 'þessi').

Simplification of unusual or complicated graphemes can be practiced, for example reproducing 'ð' in the first part of Skálholtsbók yngsta (e.g. sǫgdu) with 'q', or the linguistically irrelevant variants 'ϕ', 'ϕ' and 'ϕ' in AM 327 4to with 'ϕ'. "Normalizing" the form of the grapheme does not normalize the spelling of the word. Ligatures such as 'ct' and 'pp' are generally separated, and the same could well be practiced in general with other ligatures, including 'æ' and 'ǽ'. If, however, 'ǽ' is used exclusively for /q/ (/ϕ/) whereas 'ǽv' is used for the diphthong /au/, separation of the ligature would obliterate a distinction and should not be performed. Substitution may be practiced as long as the substitution is unambiguous, for example substituting 'ϕ' for 'σ' if 'ϕ' otherwise does not appear.

Accent marks should generally be maintained; for younger manuscripts the simple acute can well be substituted for both the double acute and the umlaut. Accent marks on 'i' ought to be dropped when accenting corresponds to the modern practice of dotting 'i'; one should not expect scribal consistency in this practice. Editors usually correct the aim of scribes who were poor shots and missed their vowels, but there seems to be no solution – short of dropping – for Eirspennill hand 2's erratic adornment of consonants with acute marks, for example: sialfr̃, Erlingr̃, a|p̃tr̃, ñ|ætr̃, skiót̃.

Expansion of abbreviations. Using italics to indicate the expansion of abbreviations has a tradition of over 100 years

in the diplomatic editing of Old Norse texts. They are often employed, but perhaps just as often not. Having a system to indicate abbreviations is in reality of little consequence when editorial uncertainty does not exist, i.e. when it is entirely obvious what word the scribe intended to abbreviate and also how he would have spelt it. It makes then no difference whether he wrote, for instance, 'hann', 'hañ', 'hñ' or 'ñ'. A more refined system for indicating the expansion of abbreviations, which allows for an indication of uncertainty, is also employed: italics for abbreviation symbols with set values (e.g. *gerði*, *hestir*, *hann*; these italics are frequently dropped in editions) and parenthesis for abbreviations indicated by a period or by a symbol without set value (e.g. s(açði), s(ystur), Har(alldr)). Norwegian scribes tended to abbreviate sparingly, and uncertainties as to how to expand abbreviations are as a rule not great, except perhaps in connection with vowel harmony. Icelandic scribes abbreviated extensively, but were often quite consistent with respect to both their system of abbreviation and their orthographic system, so expansions are usually relatively certain.

The value of a text for various linguistic studies will be diminished if expansions of abbreviations are not marked. An editor may, however, make italics superfluous by including good linguistic descriptions in his introduction, thus performing the necessary examinations of the material himself and then presenting the material in two parts: as a more readable text and as a scientific study. Hallvard Magerøy, for example, did not employ italics in the transcription of *Möðruvallabók* in his edition of *Bandamanna saga* in the Samfund series, but listed in the introduction all words written out in full on which his expansions were based.

Of utmost importance, especially when abbreviations are not indicated, is that the editor expand abbreviations correctly and consistently. Correct here means such that the expansion conforms to the language and orthographic system of the scribe. This in turn requires that the editor determine the scribe's writing patterns and follow them himself — no mean demand. The scribe's orthographic system should then take precedence over the particular abbreviation symbol; for example, the *er/ir* symbol ought to be expanded *eyr* in

'g<sup>o</sup>ī' if the scribe otherwise writes out 'geyrōi'. Scribal orthography should also take precedence in the resolution of interlinear letters; thus interlinear 'c' should be resolved ik in 'm<sup>l</sup>um' if the scribe writes out 'miklum', and interlinear 'e' might in some contexts stand for re, in others, according to the scribe's spelling system, for ræ. It does not seem necessary that the editor employ small capitals in the expansion of abbreviations, not even in the case of 'M' in Codex Frisianus, where the main hand writes out 'han'.

Scribal corrections. Scribal corrections are usually mentioned in diplomatic editions — whenever the editor notices them — and can be important witnesses in textual criticism. A great number of them are, however, totally uninteresting in this respect, such as the fact that a scribe repeated a word at a shift of line, or that he noticed a superfluous letter and deleted it. That a letter is "corrected from something else" is generally of no value, and even knowing what it is corrected from may be insignificant. It would seem reasonable that the editor exercise judgment with regard to mentioning scribal corrections; perhaps only those that conceivably might have text-critical value should be provided.

Editorial corrections. The editor should impart his knowledge to the reader not least of all concerning the mistakes he discovers in the text, both spelling/grammatical blunders (but not linguistic variants) and mistakes of meaning. Errors can either be pointed out by a note, for example "sic" or "mistake for ---", or a correction can be made in the text. Since one has adequate systems for indicating editorial corrections, it would seem more advisable to print a marked correction than to print an incorrect form with a note to that effect, for example either '\*honum (Note: ms honu)' or 'honu<m>' rather than 'honu (Note: Mistake for honum)'.

Summary. If special considerations do not argue strongly for the strict application of diplomatic principles, moderation may be recommended. In general the editor should then go as far as possible in trying to make his edition readable, maintaining letter-for-letter accuracy, but evaluating the importance of details. Unimportant details may be dropped, perhaps with a discussion of them in the introduction, whereas important details must not be lost, regardless of how they

are presented. The editor must be accountable for his actions and should describe his procedures. Three model editions, among many, might be singled out and commended for judicious moderation of diplomatic principles: the edition of Skálholtsbók yngsta by A. Kjar and Ludvig Holm-Olsen (where the introduction is unfortunately still wanting), and the two editions of Tröjumanna saga by Jonna Louis-Jensen.

There are two series in progress which consist of diplomatic editions of Old Norse texts: the Arnamagnæan Institute's Editiones Arnamagnæanæ in Copenhagen and Kjeldeskrift Institute's Norrøne tekster in Oslo. Neither has adequate guidelines to assist aspiring editors. Perhaps the presentation in this paper can, at least partially, compensate for this lack. The paper is at any rate intended to provoke a general discussion of the principles for diplomatic reproduction of Old Norse texts.

At the same time this paper is meant as a challenge to a number of colleagues to consider critically the strict diplomatic principles which they champion. Editing diplomatically should not be a question of simply reproducing a manuscript as exactly as possible. For that goal the camera is a much better tool than the editor, and the picture a much better product than the printed text. More important is actually that the editor understands the scribe and his work, interprets the handwritten document, and fulfills his role as a mediator.