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AN OLD ICELANDIC DIALECT FEATURE: IÆ FOR Æ

THIS paper discusses a somewhat unusual Old Icelandic spelling, viz. *iæ*, *ie*, etc. for 'æ'. Example: *viænn*, *vienn* for 'vænn'. The phenomenon will here be referred to as *iæ*-spellings. It will be seen below (i) that the *iæ*-spellings are basically limited to the fourteenth century documents and manuscripts connected with the north of Iceland, and to a lesser extent with the Breiðafjörður region, and (ii) that the *iæ*-spellings allow us to surmise an incipient and eventually abortive diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ*. The phenomenon is strictly Icelandic in the sense that it is not observed in Old Norwegian documents and manuscripts.

The pertinent philological material will be discussed in section 1, and considerations from the standpoint of historical phonology will follow in section 2.¹

I. I proceed to the enumeration and discussion of the relevant aspects of the Old Icelandic written material containing *iæ*-spellings, beginning with the documents (section 1.1), and continuing with the located (section 1.2) and not located (section 1.3) manuscripts. Section 1.4 contains the general conclusions of the philological part of the paper. — My sources: Stefán Karlsson's private collection of examples, the files of AMKO, introductions to text editions, my own excerpts of the manuscripts and edited texts.

1.1. There follows the treatment of the documents, in chronological

¹ During the preparatory work on the present paper I had the privilege to discuss its subject matter extensively with Stefán Karlsson of the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, Reykjavík. Stefán Karlsson has offered essential advice, as well as supplied a number of the examples that are adduced below. I hereby extend to him my warm thanks for his kind help. My thanks are also due to Jonna Louis-Jensen and to Ólafur Halldórsson for their help, and to Margaret G. Davis for the correction of my English. The responsibility for the contents of the paper is, however, my own.

order. The documents deserve special attention because they can be pinpointed in place and time. The collection of the examples for the time before 1450 is exhaustive, whereas the examples from later documents have been found by chance.

(1) Document no. 13II in ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963. (Earlier published in DI II no. 509.) Most probably issued in Þingeyjarsýsla, northern Iceland. Written in 1344. Contains *kliæde* 13II.11, *biækr* 13II.18, *tuiærr biækr* 13II.20, *briædr* 13II.22 (and *viætt* 13II.5).² The manuscript is AM 273 I 4^o.

(2) Document no. 33 in ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963. (Earlier published in DI III no. 111.) Issued in Skálholt, Árnessýsla, southern Iceland, in 1360. Contains subj. *viære* 33.6. To be sure, according to Hægstad 1941:135 the document is in Norwegian, but this is hardly convincing, as pointed out by Stefán Karlsson 1963:XXV. The document is a financial settlement between the bishops of Hólar and Skálholt, and may thus have been written either by a Hólar (northern) or a Skálholt (southern) scribe. The document belonged to the archives of the Hólar diocese. The manuscript is AM Fasc. II 11.

(3) Document no. 112 in ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963. (Earlier published in DI III no. 535.) Issued in Saurbær, Eyjafjörður, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland, in 1400. Contains *saur biæ* 112.3. The manuscript is AM Fasc. V 28.

(4) Document no. 259 in ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963. (Earlier published in DI IV no. 604.) Issued in Grenjaðarstaðir, Reykjadalur, Þingeyjarsýsla, northern Iceland, in 1437. Contains *sniæbiorn* 259.1. The manuscript is AM Fasc. X 4.

(5) Document no. 108 in DI V. Issued in Grenjaðarstaðir, Reykjadalur, Þingeyjarsýsla, northern Iceland, in 1454. Contains *liækiargil* in line 11 of the printed text. The manuscript is AM Fasc. XIII 18.

² Examples such as *viær* 'vér', where *iæ* possibly represents an *iæ*-spelling of 'æ' (the development *vér* > *vær* being well known, and *vær* > *viær* thus conceivable) are not considered in the present paper, because their *iæ* can stand for *ie* < *é*. This means, for instance, that the manuscript AM 61 fol. (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*), which contains only such examples of *iæ*-spellings (*viz. hand víættv* 76.10 and *viælum* 104.3 in ed. Ólafur Halldórsson 1961) has been excluded from consideration here. The *iæ*-spellings occasionally observed in *venda* 'turn' have been similarly disregarded, although they occur in AM 53 fol. (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, see 337.36 in ed. Ólafur Halldórsson 1961) and in AM 66 fol. (*Hulda*, for the references see ed. Louis-Jensen at press), both northern manuscripts.

(6) Document no. 420 in DI VII. Issued in Skriða, Fljótsdalur, Múlasýsla, eastern Iceland, in 1498. Contains *liækjar dal* on the verso page, written with the same hand as the recto page, or with a simultaneous hand. The manuscript is AM Fasc. XXXIII 28. As the document belonged to the archives of the Munkaþverárklaustur, Eyjafjörður, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland, and concerns the transfer of some land from the Skriða monastery to Munkaþverárklaustur, the document and its verso page may have been written by a scribe pertaining to the latter — northern — institution.

(7) Document no. 111 in DI VIII. Issued in Helgastaðir, Þingeyjar-sýsla, northern Iceland, in 1506. Contains *liækiamote* in 123.17 of the printed text. The manuscript is AM Fasc. XXXVIII 4.

(8) Unpublished document. Issued in Saurbær, Rauðasandur, Barða-strandarsýsla, western Iceland, in 1578. Contains *saurbiæg, briansliæk-ar*. The text of the document is preserved in the Arnamagnæan apograph no. 4885.

(9) Unpublished document. Issued in Hof, Höfðaströnd, Skagafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland, in 1598. Contains *stranga liækjar*. The manuscript is AM Fasc. LIX 23.

(10) Unpublished document. Issued in Skarð, Skarðsströnd, Dalasýsla, western Iceland, in 1612. Contains *saurbiæiar sveit*. (The Saurbær referred to here is in Dalasýsla, western Iceland.) The text of the document is preserved in the Arnamagnæan apograph no. 5278.

Conclusions concerning the documents. All in all, ten documents have been shown above to contain instances of *iæ*-spellings. The oldest document of this kind dates from 1344, the youngest from 1612. Two of the documents were issued in the fourteenth, four in the fifteenth, three in the sixteenth, and one at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Six of the documents were issued in northern Iceland (in Þingeyjar-, Eyjafjarðar- and Skagafjarðarsýsla); (2) and (6) are not necessarily northern in origin, but they do display strong ties with the north; (8) was issued in Barðastrandarsýsla, western Iceland, and (10) in Dalasýsla, western Iceland. (Barðastrandarsýsla and Dalasýsla are both in the Breiðafjörður region.)

Thus the impression is that the *iæ*-spellings of the documents are basically connected with the north, and to lesser extent with the Breiðafjörður region. The impression could be wrong in view of the circum-

stance that the number of non-northern Icelandic documents preserved at any rate from the time before 1450 is essentially smaller than the number of the northern documents (Stefán Karlsson 1963:XX); hence the lack of *iæ*-spellings in non-northern documents could be due to chance. However, the scrutiny of the manuscripts, to be undertaken below, corroborates the non-southern character of the *iæ*-spellings.

While the two oldest documents, (1) and (2) above, display *iæ*-spellings in common words of the language, the remaining documents have *iæ*-spellings in names only, with one exception (*viz.* *sniæbiorn* in (4)) in two place-name elements, *bær* and *lækr*. It is as if the *iæ*-spellings had been alive in the fourteenth century only, and thereafter were preserved in a few (place) names for a time.

1.2. I continue with the presentation of the Icelandic manuscripts that contain *iæ*-spellings, beginning with the manuscripts that can be located. The order of treatment is arbitrary.

(11) AM 53 fol. (fragment of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*). Written at the end of the fourteenth century (ed. Bjarni Einarsson 1977:xxxvi). Contains *-viænligsti* 229.35, *viæntum* 233.36, *orviænt* 236.36, *viæni* 243.32, *viænst* 259.27, *vienstr* 344.36, *vienti* 354.40, *viænst* 356.20 (the references are to ed. Ólafur Halldórsson 1958), *bieði* and similar spellings 230.26, 244.30, 246.36, 303.26, 325.24, 334.36, 341.24, 341.28, *auruieñt* 253.34, *vbieñtílig* 255.23, *viænna* 255.26, *viætti* 294.30, *bie* 310.27 (the references are to ed. Ólafur Halldórsson 1961). Ólafur Halldórsson, the authority on *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, is of the opinion (*viva voce* 1981) that 53 is most likely a northern manuscript, possibly from *Skagafjarðarsýsla*.

(12) AM 66 fol. (*Hulda*). Written in the fourteenth century, most likely in its latter part (Louis-Jensen 1979:237 fn.13), in one hand (Louis-Jensen 1968:12–13). Contains *viæni*, *viæntí* (7 exx.), *viænta*, *viæntum*, *viæntv* (2 exx.), *orviæntiz*, *viættí*, *viætta*, *viænn*, *viænna* (4 exx.), *Viæni* (2 exx.), *Vienir*, *Vieni*; for the references see ed. Louis-Jensen (at press). The manuscript was most probably written in the monastery at *Munkaþverá*, *Eyjafjarðarsýsla*, northern Iceland (ed. Louis-Jensen 1968 *ibidem*, cf. also ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963:LVI).

(13) AM 122 a fol. (*Króksfjarðarbók*, fragment of *Sturlunga saga*). Folios 70–94, of importance here, are hardly older than the 1360's (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:47). Folio 70 bis contains a marginal notice

under *va*, *bie* (= 'bæ') *j* *kroxfirdi*. The notice has been dated to c. 1400, but it could easily be contemporaneous with 122 a itself; it was probably written in the West (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:24 fn. 6, 47). 'The fact that the entry in question (fol. 70 bis v) and the two other entries in the same hand (fols. 85v and 94v) are all found in the part written by Hand 4, might suggest that they were written before this part was incorporated in the codex, and this could further imply that the scribe of Hand 4 lived near Króksfjörður.' (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:47 fn. 26; Króksfjörður is situated in Barðastrandarsýsla, western Iceland). Folios 70–94 of 122 a were written by a hand that appears in Perg. fol. nr. 5 (ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon 1878:CLXXIV, ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:46), which originates from the Breiðafjörður region, see (20) below.

(14) AM 132 fol. (Möðruvallabók). Written in the middle of the fourteenth century, in one hand (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:28). Contains *viænn* 170va14 = 108.9, *biæ* 173rb2 = 127.11, *biær* 173rb3 = 127.11, *viænta* 175ra13 = 139.19, *vienti* 177vb10 = 158.12, *siemd* 178rb14 = 162.10, *vienn* 178vb24 = 167.7, *bie* 185ra12 = 212.8 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Kålund 1889, cf. also *ibidem* pp. V–VI), *viæntum* 198vb40–41 = 7.10, *viænst* 200va6 = 39.15, 200va22 = 40.14, *vien* 201vb18 = 53.5, *vienn* 201vb20 = 53.7, *viena* 40r5 = 99.19, *viænti* 48r5 = 126.13 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Björn Karel Þórólfsson 1925–27); the last two examples are from AM 566 b 4^o, a copy of a lost section of Möðruvallabók executed by Ásgeir Jónsson (c. 1657–1707). The expected 'bæ, væ' are sometimes written *bé*, *vé*, respectively, in Möðruvallabók (ed. Guðmundur Þorláksson 1880:VIII), and this may indicate 'biæ, viæ', e. g. *vuęnt* 83vb28 = 187.12, *v uęnt* 86rb11 = 215.16, *vęnti* 87rb1 = 223.6 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Finnur Jónsson 1886–88). 132 was written in northern Iceland, maybe at the monastery of Möðruvellir (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:28–29, cf. also *ibidem* pp. 26–27).

(15) AM 162 f fol. (fragment of Bjarnar saga Hítödelakappa and fragment of Kormáks saga). Written in the latter half of the fourteenth century (Kålund). Contains *uíænn* 2v24 = 80.31, *auruiænt* 2r28 = 79.29, 2v6 = 80.8 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Boer 1893), *uiæni* 3r7 = 7.9, *ouiæknum* 3v28 = v. 1. ad 11.16 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Möbius 1886:75). The last

example was emended to *óvægnum* (dat. of *óvægin*) by eds. Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Powell 1883:65. — The hand of 162 f is related to the hands of AM 764 4^o, on which see (19) below, so that 162 f is in all probability of northern origin (Stefán Karlsson per litteras, 1982).

(16) AM 173 c 4^o (fragments of the ecclesiastical law). Written in the middle of the 14th century (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:27). Contains at þui viðtti (= 'vætti' "witness, testimony") 9v9 = 290.1; the reference is to the manuscript and to ed. Finsen 1883. 173 c has been written by the same scribe as Möðruvallabók (ed. Kálund 1883:162, ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:27), hence is like the latter a northern manuscript, see (14) above.

(17) AM 420 b 4^o (Lögmans-annáll). Written in the latter half of the fourteenth century (ed. Storm 1888:XXI). Contains bier 5va10 = 260.13, bie 4vb21 = 256.19 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Storm 1888). Most of 420 b, including the part in which these forms occur, has been written by the Rev. Einarr Hafliðason (ed. Storm *ibidem*), a northern man who held sundry offices in Húnavatns- and Skagafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963:XXXIX).

(18) AM 573 4^o (Trójumanna saga, Breta sögur, and the beginning of Valvens þátr). Most likely written about the middle of the fourteenth century, by two hands; hand I, which has written the portion containing iæ-spellings, seems to indicate the third quarter of the century (ed. Louis-Jensen 1963:XXXI). Contains viðndiss liði 74.32, viðenn 10.31 (the references are to ed. Jón Sigurðsson 1849), viðenstr 56.13, viðenn 68.11, viðenz 69.20, viðénligt 86.16, viðénir 108.17, -viðénlight 127.16, oruiænt 132.13, viðénar 147.21, viðénnti 182.17, ongu viðéta 216.19, viðénntí 220.19, viðénst 221.13, viðénir 236.20 (the references are to ed. Louis-Jensen 1963, cf. also *ibidem* p. XXXII). Hand I of 573 is related to some of the hands in AM 764 4^o (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:26), see (19) below, and is thus like the latter clearly connected with northern Iceland.

(19) AM 764 4^o (miscellaneous contents, including annals). Written in the 1370's (Ólafur Halldórsson 1963:100). Contains viðeir 43r, last line = 228.18, viðei 43r18 = 227.35, viðéindr 43r17 = 227.33 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Storm 1888), viðén 36r2, viðéntir 32v35, viðénleik 8r37–38, viðénst 7v19, viðénta 8v31, aurviðenna 8r32. 764 was written in Skagafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland (Ólafur

Halldórsson 1963:99, 102; ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963:XXXIX; Stefán Karlsson 1970:127–28), or — at least the annals of 764 — in Möðruvallaklaustur, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, northern Iceland (ed. Storm 1888:XX). Thus 764 is clearly a northern manuscript.

(20) Perg. fol. nr. 5 (bishops' sagas and other material belonging to church history). Hand 1's part, of relevance here, can be dated 'with a high degree of certainty' to 1350–60 (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:47). The part contains *viænan* 33ra10, *uiænligarr* 33rb34. A check of ten pages before, and ten pages after, 33r, where the above examples occur, brought no other pertinent material to light. The home of 5 is the Breiðafjörður region (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:46).

(21) Perg. 4:o nr. 16 (Nikuláss saga erkibiskups II; for other material see below). Written about 1400 (Gödel). Contains *nærliægum* 15r2, *biæiar* 16v29, *siækia* 23r27, 56r31, *biægja* 27r18, *liægja* 27v17, *liækium* 42r6–7. From inventories and other material written in 16 about 1400 and in the fifteenth century it can be seen that 16 was the property of the church at Helgastaðir, Reykjadalur, Þingeyjarsýsla, northern Iceland (Gödel:57, ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963:IL, L), so that 16 is very likely of northern origin.

(22) Lbs. fragm. 5 (fragment of Guðmundar saga). Written in the middle of the fourteenth century (Jakob Benediktsson 1951:183). Contains *viæna* (= 'úvænna') 2r29 = 187.12 (the reference is to the manuscript and to Jakob Benediktsson 1951; cf. also ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:24). The hand of 5 is that of Möðruvallabók (Jakob Benediktsson 1951:183), see (14) above, and thus 5 is like the latter of northern origin.

Conclusions concerning the manuscripts that can be located. All in all twelve manuscripts containing *iæ*-spellings can be located. Their contents are typical of Old Icelandic literature: many types of sagas, among them a number dealing with church history; law texts; annals; etc. All the manuscripts were written in the middle or in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

Most instances of *iæ*-spellings in the twelve manuscripts occur where stem-initial 'bæ' and 'væ' would be expected. In fact, ten of the eleven manuscripts contain such examples only. AM 132 fol. stands apart with its instance of an *iæ*-spelling in 'sæmd', and Perg. 4:o nr. 16 with *iæ*-spellings in '(nær)lægr', 'lægja', 'lækr', twice 'sækja'. Thus there are

three instances of *iæ*-spellings in 'sæ' and three in 'læ', as against over ninety in 'bæ' and 'væ'.

Ten of the twelve manuscripts were written in northern Iceland, the crucial entry of AM 122 a fol. in Barðastrandarsýsla, whereas Perg. fol. nr. 5 has been located in the Breiðafjörður region (which of course includes Barðastrandarsýsla). Thus *iæ*-spellings are basically a northern phenomenon; only three instances thereof have so far been found outside the north (the marginal notice in AM 122 a fol., two examples in Perg. fol. nr. 5), in the contiguous Breiðafjörður region.

1.3. Here follows the presentation of the manuscripts that have so far not been located. The order of treatment is arbitrary.

(23) AM 180 b fol. (a saga manuscript containing mostly edifying material). Written about 1500 (ed. Árni Björnsson 1969:xxx–xxxi with references, cf. also Hreinn Benediktsson 1977:33). Contains *biænum* 34r6, *biæn* 34r11, 35r12, 36r8, *biænar* 34r23, all instances in the Vitus saga. The manuscript is probably in two hands; hand 2 begins with the Vitus saga on folio 34r, and also wrote the fragment of the Laurentius saga (ed. Árni Björnsson 1969:xxviii ff.); the latter contains *þiær* 69.35, *biædr* (uncertain reading for 'bændr') 131.34 (the references are to ed. Árni Björnsson 1969). It thus seems possible that the *iæ*-spellings in the Vitus saga and the Laurentius saga of this late manuscript stem from the scribe's exemplar. There are some indications of the northern origin of 180 b. The manuscript contains the Dunstanus saga, composed by Árni Laurentiusson, who was for a time connected with the monastery at Þingeyrar and with the school at Hólar (ed. Fell 1963:LIX ff.), and a fragment of the Laurentius saga Hólabiskups, composed by Einarr Hafliðason (ed. Fell 1963:LXI), a northern man (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963:XXXIX). Árni Magnússon probably obtained the fragment of the Vitus saga and the Laurentius saga from Skagafjörður, northern Iceland (ed. Fell 1963:LXV). It can be surmised that 180 b was at Hólar in the early seventeenth century (ed. Fell 1963:LXVIII).

(24) AM 396 4° (fragment of Guðmundar saga). Written about 1400 (Kålund). Contains *niær* 11r11. As far as 396 goes, its contents follow the version of the saga in Perg. fol. nr. 5, on which see (20) above; in fact 396 and 5 have been surmised to be copies of the same manuscript (ed. Stefán Karlsson 1967:14 with further references), and thus pertain to the same complex of manuscripts.

(25) AM 561 4^o (Reykðæla saga, Ljósvetninga saga, and Gull-Þóris saga). Written about 1400 (Kålund). Contains biær 38v14 = 269.10 (the reference is to manuscript and to ed. Guðmundur Þorláksson 1880) and biæði 25v12 = 28.13 (bi not clear; the reference is to the manuscript and to ed. Kålund 1898). Nothing is known about the provenance of 561, except that its contents point to the northern region, and that it was once in the possession of the Hólar bishop Þorlákur Skúlason (seventeenth century), see ed. Guðmundur Þorláksson 1880: XXIV and ed. Kålund 1898:II.

(26) AM 732 b 4^o (miscellaneous contents). Written at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Kålund). Contains viætti 'píslarvætti' 7r2 = CVI, 61, and biæði 4v16 = 60 (the references are to the manuscript and to Konráð Gíslason 1846). 732 b has probably been written with the same hand as AM 415 4^o (Munch 1873:319 f.).

(27) Perg. fol. nr. 12, fragment VI (one folio of Barlaams saga and Josaphats). Written in the former half of the fourteenth century (ed. Rindal 1981:*32 with references). Contains vienaztu (not clear) rb21, vienn va7, vięna va25, nier gongul vb29.

(28) Perg. 4:o nr. 18 (Heiðarvíga saga, Gunnlaugs saga, and other material). Written in the middle of the fourteenth century (ed. Finnur Jónsson 1916). Contains uiænleik 14r23 = 8.2, 20r15 = 38.1, viæna 13r22-23 = 4.7, viænu 20r27 = 39.8, uiænleiks 20v31 = 42.8, Uiæn 21r6 = 43.1 (the references are to the manuscript and to ed. Finnur Jónsson 1916, cf. also *ibidem* p. VII), kaupbiænum 11v3 = 105.15, biæði 12r12.13 = 107.13.15 (the references of the last three examples are to the manuscript and to ed. Kålund 1904, cf. also *ibidem* p. XXIV).

Conclusions concerning the manuscripts that have so far not been located. Six manuscripts containing iæ-spellings have so far not been located, nor will any attempt be made here to determine the place of their origin (except that I venture to suggest that the existence of iæ-spellings in (23)–(28) above indicates weakly the possibility that they are of northern origin, or less likely, stem from the Breiðafjörður region). The six manuscripts are mostly sagas in contents. All but one, AM 180 b fol., were written in the fourteenth century: AM 732 b 4^o, from the beginning of the century, is the oldest one, whereas AM 396 4^o and AM 561 4^o, from about 1400, are the youngest ones. AM 180 b fol. has been dated to about 1500; as indicated sub (23) above, the

occurrence of its seven *iæ*-spellings can stem from the exemplar of that part of the manuscript, so that *iæ*-spellings were probably a mere orthographic archaism in AM 180 b fol.

Most instances of *iæ*-spellings in the six manuscripts occur where stem-initial 'bæ' and 'væ' would be expected. In fact, three of the six manuscripts contain such examples only. AM 396 4^o and Perg. fol. nr. 12 VI stand apart each with a single instance of *iæ* in 'nær', and AM 180 b fol. with a single instance of *iæ* in 'þær'. Thus there are two *iæ*-spellings in 'nær' and one in 'þær', as against over twenty in 'bæ' and 'væ'.

1.4. General conclusions about the philological sections.

(I) The *iæ*-spellings occur in northern documents and manuscripts, and to lesser extent, in documents and manuscripts connected with the Breiðafjörður region. In addition, *iæ*-spellings occur in six manuscripts that have so far not been located.³

(II) The *iæ*-spellings are a fourteenth century phenomenon. Later occurrences — with the exception of instances in AM 180 b fol. the later occurrences are to be found in the (place) names of the documents only (see section 1.1 ad finem) — can be explained away as archaisms.

(III) The *iæ*-spellings are by far the most common in the combinations 'væ, bæ'; they occur also in 'næ, sæ, læ, þæ, klæ, snæ, tvæ, bræ'.

(IV) In none of the documents and manuscripts — except in the document sub (1) — are the *iæ*-spellings the predominant or only spelling of 'æ'. This vowel is usually represented by æ or e.

(V) The *iæ*-spellings do not occur in Old Norwegian documents and manuscripts, and are thus typically Icelandic. In fact, at least one philologist, Rindal (1981:*32–*33), has already made use of *iæ*-spellings when arguing for the Icelandic character of the manuscript Perg. fol. nr. 12 VI.

Much of the above had been observed by Stefán Karlsson long before me: 'The use of *iæ* for æ — especially after the labials v and b — is found in a few scribes of northern documents from the 14th century and later, and in a few manuscripts which, in so far as they can be located at all, also come from the north' (ed. 1967:24).

³ The manuscript AM 126 4^o (legal material, including *Jónsbók*), which contains at least one *iæ*-spelling, in *biæia* 34v9, came to my attention too late to be considered in the present paper.

2. *Considerations from the standpoint of historical phonology.*

I take *iæ*-spellings to reflect a feature of the fourteenth century spoken dialect, viz. the geographically limited pronunciation of [æ:] *æ* as [iæ:]. As assumed by Stefán Karlsson 1960 §19.61 and by Hreinn Benediktsson 1977:42 fn. 1, the diphthongal pronunciation must have arisen through the diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ*.

The diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ* scored relatively much success in *bæ*, *væ*, and some success in *næ*, *læ*, *þæ*, *sæ*, *snæ*, *klæ*, *tvæ*, *bræ*, but apparently none in *pæ*, *fæ*, *mæ*, *tæ*, *dæ*, etc. (The groups *kæ*, *gæ*, often spelled as *kiæ*, *giæ* in the fourteenth century, are of course ambiguous in that here the *i* can mark the palatal pronunciation of *k* and *g*.) The diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ* never made it past its INCIPIENT stage: it was ABORTIVE.

The fact that *iæ* was preserved for the longest time in the place-name elements *bær* and *lækr* may be due to the palatal character of the segments that follow *iæ* in some case forms of *bær* and *lækr*, notably in their genitive singular (*bæjar*, *lækjar*), a case form frequently used with compound place names. Notice that the *iæ*-spellings of Perg. 4:0 nr. 16, on which see (21) above, are also of this kind. (I owe the observations of this paragraph to a personal communication from Stefán Karlsson, 1982.)

Beside the rising diphthong *iæ* there is a competing and eventually victorious pan-Icelandic reflex of *æ*, namely the falling diphthong *æi* (later [ai]). The relationship between *iæ* and *æi* (i.e. whether they are parallel reflexes of *æ*, or one has arisen from the other) is not clear, largely because the absolute chronology of the first appearance of *æi* has not yet been determined:

(1) Scholars have traditionally taken the inverse spellings such as *dæginn* for *daginn* as proof that *æ* had become a falling diphthong. The oldest spellings of this type date from the middle of the fifteenth century (Hreinn Benediktsson 1977:42 fn. 1). These inverse spellings prove that the falling diphthong that arose from *æ* had reached its modern value, [ai], by the time that the spellings appear. The diphthongisation process may have started much earlier, see next paragraph.

(2) Another possible terminus post quem for the existence of the falling diphthong that had arisen from *æ* are spellings such as *æi*, *ei* for 'æ'. The spelling *æi* occurs frequently in hand 1 of *Króksfjarðarbók* (AM 122 a fol., *Sturlunga saga*, written about the middle of the four-

teenth century), see Hreinn Benediktsson 1977:42 fn. 1. The spelling *ei* occurs in AM 764 4^o (miscellaneous material, written in the 1370's): its page 15r contains *beidi* 'bæði'.⁴ It is interesting to note that both these manuscripts contain *iæ*-spellings as well, see (13) and (19) above, so that *iæ*- and *æi*-spellings seem to be related: both directions of the diphthongisation of *æ* were possible in the same dialect. A thorough philological investigation of this situation, which would doubtless bring additional *æi* and *ei* for 'æ' to light, remains a desideratum. In my opinion the *æi*- and *ei*-spellings for 'æ' show that the diphthongisation of *æ* had begun by the middle of the fourteenth century. (This squares nicely with the assumption mentioned in the preceding paragraph that *æi* had passed to [ai] by the middle of the fifteenth century, at least in some parts of Iceland.)

Stefán Karlsson 1960 §19.61 pointed out the parallelism between the diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ* and the diphthongisation of *é* to *ie*. Hreinn Benediktsson 1977:29, 42 fn. 1 saw in the diphthongisation of *æ* to *iæ* and *æi* a part of the more general diphthongisation of old non-high long vowels *é*, *æ*, *á*, *ó* (although he also stated, p. 42 fn. 1, that he had included *á* and *ó* in the list for pattern congruity only). As is well known, the diphthongisation of *é* took two opposite directions, to *ei* and to *ie* (of which *ie* prevailed); similarly the diphthongisation of *æ* resulted in *iæ* and *æi* (of which *æi* > [ai] prevailed). I fully agree that there must be some connection between *é* > *ei/ie* and *æ* > *æi/iæ*. In particular, I submit that *æ* > *æi/iæ* is an extension of the diphthongisation process from *é* to a sound of the same natural class, namely *æ*. Witness that according to the accepted view the diphthongisation of *é* began earlier than the diphthongisation of *æ*. It is often the case that a sound change first takes place in one or more sounds, and then, after some time has elapsed, spreads to one or more related sounds. (For an Icelandic example of this type see Höskuldur Þráinsson 1980.) The extension of the diphthongisation process from *é* to *æ* gave the richest results in the north and maybe in the Breiðafjörður region, that is, where the reflex *iæ* beside *æi* also arose. This suggests that the diph-

⁴ Another *ei* for 'æ' occurs in line 10 of document no. 14 (Skagafjarðarsýsla, 1340) in ed. Stefán Karlsson 1963: *eifinlinga* [sic] 'æfinliga'. This instance of *ei* for 'æ', although it fits into the picture chronologically, can be dismissed as a mere slip of the pen for *efin-* 'æfin-' (thus Stefán Karlsson 1960 §19.41) or as a folk-etymological reshaping in accord with the adverb *ei*, *ey* 'ever'.

thongisation of *é* was most potent in that area. This systemic consideration fits in with a seventeenth century observation, whose trustworthiness has however been questioned, that *é* > *ie* had begun in the north (Björn Karel Þórólfsson 1925:XIV fn., Hreinn Benediktsson 1961–62: 96–97, 1977:42 fn. 1).

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