

Thomas Tarnovius (edited 1908 and 1950, see the bibliography) and Lucas Jacobsen Debes (see especially Jørgen Rischel's edition from 1963 — see also Dahl 1980:32ff.).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the ballads frequently preserve various older word forms, older types of case marking etc., but it is usually impossible to tell how old these forms may be.

7.3 Faroese orthography and Faroese as an official language

7.3.1 Examples of phonetically based orthography

The first person to do any extensive writing in post-reformation Faroese was Jens Christian Svabo (1746–1824). In the 1770s he began to write down Faroese ballads and also compiled the first Faroese dictionary (Faroese-Danish-Latin).

Svabo was forced to try to develop a systematic way of writing Faroese when recording the ballads and working on the manuscript of the dictionary. He based his orthography on his own dialect of Faroese, that of Vágur (his father was a Danish minister in Jansagerði in Miðvágur). As a result, his manuscripts give a quite clear indication of the pronunciation of (the Vágur dialect of) Faroese in the late 18th century. An example of Svabo's orthography is given in (6), both from his collection of ballads and from his dictionary (see also Hansen 1991, 2003a, Barnes and Weyhe 1994:197, Jóansson 1997:81ff., Poulsen 1997a, etc.):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| (6) Svabo's orthography: | Modern Faroese orthography: |
| a. Aarla vear um Morgunin | Árla var um morgunin |
| Seulin roär uj Fjædl | sólin roðar í fjøll |
| Tajr seuü ajn so miklan Mann | teir sóu ein so miklan mann |
| rujä eäv Garsia Hødl. | riða av Garsia høll. |
| (Roughly: 'It was early in the morning, (when) the sun was coloring the mountains, (that) they saw a great man ride from Garsia's palace'.) | |
| b. Fjadlsteavur s.m. en lang Stav, beslagen nedenom med Jern, baculus longior, annulo ferreo et cuspidē infra munitus ... | |
| ('long stave, iron-bound at the bottom with fitted spike') | |

As the reader can verify, Svabo's orthography shows evidence for various phonological developments in Faroese. Thus it indicates the development (diphthongization) of the old long vowels, e.g. when Old Norse /ó, í/ are spelled "ēu" and "uj", respectively (cf. *uj, rujä* for *í, riða*; *Seulin, seuü* for *sólin, sóu*). Observe that the spelling "ēu" rather than, say, "ou" for old /ó/ presumably indicates a dialectal feature of Vágur (cf. the discussion in 6.2.3.3). Svabo's orthography also shows the diphthongization of long /a/ (spelled "ēa") whereas the modern orthography does not. Similarly the spelling "aj" for the diphthong /ei/ is phonetically based. Note further that Svabo does not use "ð" in his phonetically based orthography, and he uses "dl" for old /ll/ where the phonological development calls for it (cf. *Fjædl, Hødl*) whereas the modern orthography does not. Finally, observe that unstressed /a/ is sometimes represented as "ä" (*roär, Garsia* — unstressed /i/ is also occasionally written "i", e.g. *baajir* for *báðir* 'both').

Other aspects of Svabo's orthography worth mentioning here include the (fairly consistent) use of double vowel symbols (*ee, ii* ...) to represent long vowels (*eer* for *er* 'is', *tiil* for *til* 'to' ...), although this is not without exceptions (e.g. *betur* 'better'). Note, however, that "aa" is used to represent old /á/ regardless of quantity (thus *aarla* for *árla* 'early' (short vowel) and *Baatin* for *bátin* 'boat(Asg.)' (long vowel)). Consonant length between vowels is also indicated by doubly written consonants (*læddu* 'loaded', *Monnun* for *monnum* 'men(Dpl.)'), and this also includes the (presumably preaspirated) "hard" stops /pp, tt, kk/ (e.g. *ettir* for *eftir* 'after', *ikkji* for *ikki* 'not'). Word-finally, on the other hand, consonant length is not always indicated (thus *Mann* 'man(Asg.)' but *han* for *hann* 'he' (but note that here (lack of) sentence stress may play a role). Svabo represents the "hard" stops /p,t,k/ as "p,t,k" between vowels (*Lejpi* for *leypi* 'wooden creel(Dsg.)', *Baatin* for *bátin* 'the boat(Asg.)', *tekur* 'takes'), suggesting that these stops had (some sort of) aspiration in his dialect in this position (see the discussion in 6.2.1.3 above). The palatalized /k,g/ are generally represented as "kj", "gj", also before front vowels (*gjevi* for *gevi* '(I) give', *Bainkjir* for *beinkir* 'banks'). The Verschärfung combinations now represented as -ógv- and -úgv- are typically represented as -øgv- and -ygv-, respectively (thus *Sjøgvrur* for *sjógvur* 'sea' and *Brygv* for *brúgv* 'bridge'), which is somewhat surprising as this does not correspond to any known dialect variant today (cf. 6.2.3.3). Otherwise the letter "y" is generally not used by Svabo (nor is "ý"). The dative ending is always written "-un" and not "-um" as in the modern orthography (e.g. *sjaalvun* for *sjálvum* 'self(D)'). Finally, the glides inserted by the glide insertion rule (see section 2.3.5) are sometimes but not always represented (thus both *naavun* and *naaun* for *náðum* 'peace(Dpl.)', *bognai* and *bognaj* for *bognaði* 'bent').

All in all, however, Svabo's orthography is remarkably consistent and hence he managed to establish a kind of orthographic tradition, although there is some variation in the orthography used by those who followed in his footsteps. We will now look at some examples below for comparative purposes.

In 1817 the Danish minister and natural scientist Hans Christian Lyngbye visited the Faroes and learned about the Faroese ballads. Lyngbye himself recorded fragments of the so-called *Sjúrðarkvæði* ('Ballads about Sjúrður') and later contacted the minister in Suðuroy, Johan Hendrik Schrøter (1771–1851), and asked him to provide more complete transcriptions. Schrøter wrote down a number of ballads for Lyngbye and these formed the basis for the first book published in Faroese, *Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fofnersbane og hans Æt* 1822 ('Faroese Ballads about Sigurðr Fáfnisbani [i.e. Sigfried] and his kin', cf. Lyngbye 1822). An illustrative sample is given in (7) below:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| (7) Schrøter's orthography (in Lyngbye): | Modern orthography: |
| Brinild situr uj gjiltan Stouli, | Brynhild situr í gyltum stóli, |
| Teâ hit veâna Vujv, | tað hitt væna vív, |
| Drevur hoon Sjúra eäv Nordlondun | dregur hon Sjúrða av Norðlondum |
| Uj Hildarhaj tiil sujn. | í Hildarheið til sín. |
| (Roughly: 'Brynhild sits on a golden chair, the beautiful lady, she attracts ('draws, pulls') Sjúrður from the North to herself on Hildarheiði'.) | |

The spelling obviously very similar to Svabo’s, including the use of circumflex in the representation of diphthongized long /a/.² Thus Svabo normally uses “gj” for the palatalized unaspirated affricate (as is used here in *gjiltan* for *gyltum*) and he also frequently uses two vowel symbols to represent long vowels (as is done here in *tiil*, *hoon* — but not in *situr*). Note that the dative ending is written “-un” and not “-um” as in the modern spelling (*Nordlondun*), and the ending “-an” in *gjiltan*, where “-un” (or “-um”) might be expected, possibly reflects an unclear quality of the unstressed vowel (see e.g. the discussion in section 6.2.5 and references cited there). Finally, it is worth noting here that although Schrøter lived in Suðuroy, where the stops /p,t,k/ are not aspirated between vowels, he writes *situr* ‘sits’ with an intervocalic “t” (possibly because he grew up in Tórshavn, which is north of Skopunarfjørður, the relevant dialect boundary, cf. 6.2.1.3 above).

The collecting of ballads became very popular in the decades that followed and one of the best known collectors of ballads was Johannes Clemensen (or Klemensen, known as Jóannes í Króki, 1794–1869). In 1821–1831 wrote down ballads and collected them in his well known *Sandoyarbók*. Some examples are provided in (8):

(8)	Jóannes í Króki’s orthography:	Modern Faroese orthography:
	Gjevi liou u lujie aa	Gevið ljóð og lýðið á
	meni e man kvøa	meðni eg man kvøða:
	Bondin fist uj hajmi bigdi	Bóndin fyrst í heimi bygdi
	har um viil e røa.	har um vil eg røða.
	...	
	Bondans kona ettir fjadli gongur	Bóndans kona eftir fjalli gongur
	langa laj u drigva	langa leið og drúgva.
	Eld sar hoon uj høvum fjadli	Eld sær hon í høgum fjalli,
	stourar najstar fligva.	stórar neistar flúgva.
	...	
	Hoon sar frammi uj hædli hanga	Hon sær frammi í helli hanga
	spioudi og so svøri	spjótið og so svørðið.
	Bødnini tvej aa golvi gjingu	Børnini tvey á gólvi gingu,
	lajgtu vi silvur kjeri.	leiktu við silvurkeri.
	(Roughly: ‘Give silence and listen as I recite the ballad: The farmer initially lived at home and that is what I want to talk about ... The farmer’s wife walks along the mountain a long way. She sees a fire in a high mountain and large sparks fly ... She saw hanging in (the) cave the spear and the sword. The two children were on the floor playing with a silver cup.’)	

As the reader can see, the orthography here is rather similar to that of Svabo, although there are some differences which presumably reflect dialectal features to some extent. Thus Jóannes í Króki uses “ou” (as did Schrøter) and not “eu” to represent long old /ó/, which suggests a round-

² Except that Svabo used a (large) circumflex in his manuscript to connect the two vowel symbols representing a diphthong, and we have tried to imitate this here, whereas the circumflex is over one of the vowel symbols (the second) in Lyngbye’s edition, presumably for technical (i.e. typographical) reasons.

ed pronunciation of (the first part of) this vowel in his Sandoy dialect (possibly [œu:] and not [eu:] — cf. section 6.2.3.3 above). Observe also that Jóannes normally writes “b,d,g” for /p,t,k/ after long vowels (e.g. intervocalically in *spioudi* for *spjótið* ‘the spear’ — elsewhere also *tegur* for *tekur* ‘takes’, etc.) and this is not surprising since he is from Sandoy (which is south of the relevant dialect boundary). — Note that although vowel length is indicated here by double vowels in examples like *viil* and *hoon*, Jóannes is not entirely consistent in this, cf. e.g. *kjeri* for *-keri* ‘cup, vessel’ (elsewhere also e.g. *ori* for *orðið* ‘the word’, *havinum* ‘the sea(Dsg.)’). Jóannes does not use the letter “y” for old /y/ in forms like *bigdi*, for instance, and it is in fact not used by any of the early writers (only “i”, as /i/ and /y/ had merged long ago, cf. section 7.4.1 below). Observe also the phonetic rendering by Jóannes of Verschärfung examples like “drigva” for *drúgva* and “fligva” for *flúgva* (cf. section 2.3.6 above). The spelling *langa*, *hanga* with “a” (and not “e”) before /ng/ may reflect the pronunciation [a] (and not [ɛ]) of the vowel in this context, a typical “Southern” trait (cf. section 6.2.1.1). Finally, it is interesting to see the dative ending *-um* represented as “-um” in *Sandoyarbók*, whereas Svabo consistently used “-un” and so did most of the other early writers.

Other orthographic characteristics of *Sandoyarbók* worth mentioning here include the following: The inserted glides are frequently represented (e.g. in forms like *nijur* for *niður* ‘down’, *mavur* for *maður*, *rajist* for *ræðist* ‘fears’ and even *brouvir* for *bróðir* ‘brother’). Between mid-vowels and /a/, where the hiatus is not broken up by a glide, he often puts a hyphen (e.g. *fra-ar* for *frægar* ‘famous(pl.)’, *blaa-ar* for *bláar* ‘blue(pl.)’, *hø-ar* for *høgar* ‘high(pl.)’, etc.). Consonant quantity is not consistently noted word finally (cf. forms like *væg* for *vegg* ‘wall(Asg.)’, *ran* for *rann* ‘ran’ — also examples where preaspiration would presumably be involved, such as *bek* for *bekk* ‘bench(Asg.)’) but it is in intervocalic position (cf. *frammi* above — elsewhere also *náddi* ‘got’). Finally, numerous examples suggest the change *ø > e* in word forms like *querki* for *hvørki* ‘neither’ and *qverjar* for *hvørjar* ‘which(f.pl.)’ (cf. Sørlie 1968).

Sandoyarbók was not published until 1968–1982, but it became quite well known early on and served as a model for many “local” collections of ballads (Dahl 1980:61ff.).

In 1823 the Danish Bible Society published *Evangelium Sankta Matthæussa aa Førisk o Dansk* (‘The Gospel according to St. Matthew in Faroese and Danish’), which contained Schrøter’s translation (from Danish) of the gospel. The translation was sent to every home in the Faroes (which were around 1200 at the time) and it must have been of considerable importance, although it was not enthusiastically received in the church, where people were used to Danish and found Faroese somewhat out of place. In 1823 Schrøter was still basically using the same kind of orthography as he had used in the ballads he wrote down for Lyngbye (cf. Hansen 1991), largely based on Svabo’s example. A sample is given in (9) with the modern spelling underneath:

(9)	<i>Men so gjæk teâ til vi Fødsuli Jesu Christussa. Taa=ui Maria,</i>	
	men so gekk tað til við føðing Jesu Krists tá ið Maria	
	but thus happened it at birth Jesu Christ’s when Mary	
	<i>Mouur hansara, veâr fæst Jósephi, fandst hón, aarin tei</i>	
	móðir hansara var fest Jósefi fanst hon áðrenn tey	
	mother his was engaged to Joseph was-found she before they	

kómu seâman, á væra blivin við Badn eâv Halgan Anda.
komu saman at vera blivin við barn av halgum anda
came together to be become with child by Holy Ghost

(Matth. 1:18)

We see that Schrøter uses the circumflex for the diphthongized long /a/ (*teâ, veâr, seâman, eâv* for *tað, var, saman, av*), but he continues to use “ou” (and not “eu” as Svabo had done) to represent long old /ó/, which is not surprising since he grew up in Tórshavn and lived most of his life on Suðuroy.³

An interesting difference between the orthography of St. Matthew and that of the ballads published a year before regards the representation of /p,t,k/ after long vowels. In the Bible translation we find forms like *leiba* for *leypa* ‘run’, *foudur* for *fótur* ‘foot’, *ruigje* for *riki* ‘kingdom’ as opposed to forms like *situr* ‘sits’ etc. in the ballads. Another difference, less important from a linguistic point of view, involves the representation of diphthongs ending in the front unrounded glide, i.e. those represented by the letters *ei, ey, oy* and *i* in the modern orthography. These are usually represented as *ai, ei, oi* and *ui*, respectively, in the Bible translation (cf. *ain* for *ein* ‘one’, *leiba* for *leypa* ‘run’, *loisa* for *loysa* ‘untie’, and *ui* for *i* ‘in’ — but also e.g. *ajnkja* for *einkja* ‘widow’) but more frequently as *aj, ej, oj* and *uj* in the ballads (cf. *-haj* for *heið* ‘heath’, *uj* for *i*), as they are in Svabo’s writings.

As already mentioned, Schrøter’s translation of St. Matthew was not well received in the Faroes. According to a minister on the Northern Islands, Søren Sørensen, in a letter to the Danish Bible Society 1824, his parishioners did not find it entirely appropriate to use Faroese in a religious context where they were used to hearing Danish (Matras (ed.) 1973, vol. II, p. 13). In addition, they complained about some of the word forms, apparently because they were dialectal, and later Sørensen even sent a short passage translated into ‘the Northern dialect’ (cf. Møller 1827).

While Schrøter’s Bible translation was not a breakthrough, his next translation was. In 1832 Carl Christian Rafn published *Færeyínga saga eller Færøboernes Historie* (‘The Faroe Islanders’ Saga or the history of the inhabitants of the Farroes’) which contained Schrøter’s translation from Old Norse of what has since been known as *Færeyinga saga* (or *Føroyingasøga*). Jákup Nolsøe (1779–1869) and Jens Davidson (1803–1978), who had had Svabo as their mentor when he was living in Tórshavn (1800–1824), assisted Schrøter in the translation.⁴ They sent a draft of the translation to the famous Danish linguist Rasmus Rask and he proposed some changes in the orthography. Rafn may have suggested Rask as a consultant, as he was probably looking for ways to avoid the criticism that the orthography of St. Matthew had received, i.e. with some sort of standardization in mind.

³ In the 1961 edition of the Faroese Bible the passage just cited (Matth. 1:18) reads as follows: *Men við føðing Jesu Krists gekk tað soleiðis til: Tá ið Maria, móðir hansara, var trúlovað Jósefi, so kendist tað á henni, áðrenn tey komu saman, at hon var við barn av hinum heilaga anda.*

⁴ It is of some interest to note here that Jákup Nolsøe was apparently the only one among the early writers of Faroese who was in favor of an etymologically based orthography, as opposed to the phonetically based one used by Svabo and others. He drafted a Faroese grammar in the 1820’s but it was never published (see e.g. Weyhe 1996b:76–78).

As we shall see, the orthography of *Færeyinga saga* is somewhat different from that of the gospel and other early Faroese writings. An illustrative sample is given in (10), with the modern spelling for comparison as before:

- (10) *Og um Morgunin tái tajr häva lagt Skip sujni*
og um morgunin tá ið teir hava lagt skip síni
and in the morning when they have placed ships their
utanverdt uj Våjina, tái regva fim Vujkjingaskjip mowti tajmun,
uttanvert í vågina tái rógva fimm víkingaskip móti teimum
out in the bay then row five viking ships towards them
og ajn Mävur stendur uj Stavninun á Drekanun
og ein maður stendur í stavninum á Drekanum
and one man stands in the bow of the Dragon
båji stowrur og sterkur, og spír tajr strags
bæði stórur og sterkur og spyr teir straks
both big and strong and asks them immediately
kvøri ráddi firi Skjipunun.
hvør ið ráddi fyri skipunum
who commanded the ships

The reader will notice that here no circumflex is used in the representation of long /a/ but instead the letter “ä” is used (cf. *häva, Mävur*), apparently at Rask’s suggestion. The use of “ä” for the descendant of old /á/ is presumably also from him, as is the use of “ow” to denote long old /ó/ by “ow”. But Schrøter and his assistants did not follow all of Rask’s suggestions as can be seen from the overview in (11):

(11) The original proposal by Schrøter et al.:	Rask’s suggestion:	The symbols used in the 1832 edition:	The symbols used today:
ov	ow	ow (<i>fowru, towku</i>)	ó
ú	uw	ú (<i>fúsur</i>)	ú
eâ	ä	ä (<i>Mävur</i>)	a, æ
gv	gw	gv (<i>regva</i>)	gv
x	ks/gs	ks/gs (<i>strags</i>)	ks

Other interesting aspects of the orthography of *Færeyinga saga* include the following: Intervocalic /p,t,k/ are now (again) represented as “p,t,k” by Schrøter (cf. *Skjipunun* for *skipunum* ‘the ships(Dpl.)’, *mowti* for *móti* ‘towards’, *lujka* for *lika* ‘as’). Note also that the diphthongs ending in the front unrounded glide are now (again) represented as *aj, ej, oj, uj* (cf. *ajn* for *ein* ‘one’, *lejpur* for *leypur* ‘runs, jumps’, *Suroj* for *Suðuroy*, *uj* for *i* ‘in’). The Verschärfung sequences -ógv- and -úgv- are typically represented as -egv- and -ygv-, respectively (e.g. *negv* for *nógv* ‘much’, *mygvandi* for *múgvandi* ‘rich’ (the latter as in Svabo’s writings).

The importance for *Færeyinga saga* for Faroese nationalism (in a positive sense) can hardly be overestimated and the saga has been published many times and several translations into Faroese exist. But it did not solve the standardization problem in the orthography in a convinc-

ing fashion. Before we look at the development of the modern orthography, consider the variation in the representation of long vowels in some of the early Faroese writings (the overview is slightly simplified since not all minor inconsistencies are included — and we only include illustrative examples from Svabo, plus modern ones):

(12) Modern orthogr.:	Svabo's orthography:	Schrøter's ballads:	Sandoyar-bók:	Schrøter's Fær. saga:
a, æ (var, sæti)	ēā (vear, Seati)	eā, ea	ea, aa, a	ä
á (á)	aa (aa)	aa, aaa	aa, a	å
e (er, tekur)	ee, e (eer, tekur)	ee, e	e	e, è
i, y (til, fyri)	ii, i (tiil, firi)	ii	ii, iij	i, ì
í, ý (í, brýtur)	uj (uj, brujtur)	uj	uj	uj
o (orð, sova)	oo, o (oor, sova)	oo, o	oo	o, ò
ó (góður)	ēū (geuur)	ou	ou	ow
u (guð)	u (Gud)	u	u	u
ú (tú)	û (tû)	û, u	uu, u	ú
ø (gjør, Gøtu)	øø, ø (gjøør, Gøtu)	ö	ø ⁵	ø ⁶
ei (eitur)	aj (ajtur)	aj, ai	aj, ai	aj
ey (leypa)	ej (lejpa)	ej, ei	ej, ei	ej
oy (goyma)	oj (gojma)	oj, oi, öj	oj, oi	oj

As should be clear from the discussion above, the overview in (12) only reflects the dialect problem to a limited extent, partially because that also involved the representation of consonants. Because of these dialectal differences, it was not practical to use a phonetically based spelling, unless one dialect was to be elevated above the others. So it seems safe to conclude that standardized orthography was sorely needed.

7.3.2 Development of the modern orthography

7.3.2.1 The first steps towards standardization

As already mentioned, Carl Christian Rafn had already made an attempt at standardization in his publication of *Færeyinga saga*, but the fact that the middle of the 19th century was the National Romantic era in Scandinavia undoubtedly influenced the further development of the Faroese orthography (see e.g. Matras 1929, 1941, 1951). We will trace this development in some detail here and try to explain the reasons for it, since we believe such understanding is important for students of modern Faroese.

The currently used orthography is usually attributed to Vencelaus Ulricus (or V. U.) Hammershaimb (1819–1909). He grew up in Tórshavn for the most part, although he was sent to school in Copenhagen when he was quite young. He was minister in the Faroes 1855–1878, but other than that he lived and worked in Denmark.

⁵ Assuming that the “e” in word forms like *querki* ‘neither’ etc. stands for the sound /e/ and not /ø/ (cf. the comments above).

⁶ Interestingly, short /ø/ is represented as “ö” but long as “ø” (cf. the names (e.g. *Torbjødñ* and (*i*) *Gøtu*).

Hammershaimb’s first attempt to standardize the orthography is generally considered to be his publication of a few folk tales in *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed* in 1846, together with a few comments on the pronunciation of Faroese. There is some evidence, however, that the spelling Hammershaimb uses there is much more “etymological”, i.e. closer to Old Norse, than what he had originally had in mind. This can be seen by comparing it to a manuscript of his from 1845, containing folk tales and the like. A sample from this manuscript is given in (13), together with the same text written in the standardized (or normalized) orthography he later suggested (cf. Matras 1951:9 — note, however, that the variant given below the italicized version uses Hammershaimb’s orthography from 1891 rather than the 1846 variant, cf. (16) below):

- (13) *Sjóðregil* *hèvur* *fólkaskäpilsí*, *stendur* *å* *skjèrun* *ettir sólaseting*
Sjóðregil hevur fólkaskapilsí, stendur á skerum eftir sólarseting
og biður útírórabátanar *lòva* *sär* *vi;* *fiskar väl,* *men vegrast*
og biður útíróðrabátarnar lova sær við; fiskar væl, men veðrast
burtur tái sól rúvar *y hävi,* *tekur til at minka jú meiri*
burtur tá ið sól roðar í havi, tekur til at minka jú meiri
lyjur ymoti *dèji;* *ty slist:* “*minkar sum sjóðrègil*”.
líður ímóti degi; tí sigist: “minkar sum sjóðregil”.

(Roughly: ‘*Sjóðregil* [a kind of a sea monster] has a human shape; stands on skerries after sunset and asks the fishing boats to let him come with them; fishes well, but withers away when the sun rises from the sea, begins to get smaller the closer it gets to dawn; hence the saying: “shrinks like a *sjóðregil*”’.)

Here the spelling is obviously quite similar to the phonetically based variants discussed in the preceding section, e.g. the variant found in *Færeyinga saga* (1832 — see e.g. the overview in (12)). Note the following, for instance:

- (14) a. long /e/ is represented by “è” (*hèvur*, *skjèrun*, *-sètting* ...)
b. long /o/ is represented by “ò” (*lòva*)
c. long /a/ is represented by “ä” (*-skäpilsí*, *sär*, *väl*, *hävi*)
d. the descendant of old /á/ is represented by “å” (*å*, *-bátanar*)
e. the dative ending is written “-un” (*skjèrun*)

The main innovations seen in this example are the following:

- (15) a. the descendant of old /ó/ is represented by “ó” (*Sjó-*, *sól* ...) and not e.g. “ou”
b. the descendant of old /i/ is represented by “y” (*y*, *ty*, *ymoti*)

The former is arguably an instance of “etymological” spelling, the latter phonetic since the sound represented by “y” here is rather similar to the one represented by “y” in Danish orthography (which is in turn similar in quality to Old Norse /y/), although it is for the most part derived from a different sound historically (except in cases where the modern spelling has “ý” which is derived from Old Norse long /ý/, cf. section 7.4.1.1).

7.3.2.2 The principles behind Hammershaimb's orthography and its development

As already mentioned, the further development of the Faroese orthography must be considered in the light of the current cultural debate in Scandinavia at the time. In 1844 Hammershaimb had published an article in the Danish paper *Københavnsposten* criticizing a proposal by the Danish government about Faroese schools that was being discussed at the time. In this discussion Faroese had been referred to as 'a dialect' and it was not to be recognized at all as a national or official language. In his article, Hammershaimb referred among other things to the ballads and Schrøter's translation of *Færeyinga saga* as evidence showing that Faroese was an independent language that had 'preserved its Old Norse characteristics' (cf. Matras 1941:211, 1951:10). The following year Svend Grundtvig published the booklet *Dansken paa Færøerne, et Sidedestykke til Tysken i Slesvig* (Grundtvig 1845) where he argued that the relationship between Faroese and Danish in the Faroes was similar to that between Danish and German in Schleswig, where the Danish were fighting for the rights of their language at the time. Because of this, the government proposal under discussion should state that Faroese was the national language of the Faroe Islands and thus it should be used in the church, in the schools etc. (cf. Matras 1941:211–213, 1951:11–12).

It was with this political and cultural aim in mind that Grundtvig, Hammershaimb and the Icelandic Jón Sigurðsson, among others, sent out an invitation proposing the founding of a Faroese Society in Copenhagen, which should among other things collect and publish material in Faroese and thus form a body of national literature (cf. Matras 1941:213, 1951:13). But the society was never founded and the main reason may have been a reaction to this invitation by the Danish professor N.M. Petersen. He published an article in the Danish paper *Fædrelandet* 1845 entitled *Det færøske Sprog* ('The Faroese language' — the article is reprinted as a whole in Matras 1951:15–18) and argued that Faroese did not exist yet as a written language since all Faroese material published so far was based on some particular dialect and 'no dialectal pronunciation can ever be the basis for a written language' as the written language must be 'the dialectal harmony, based on the language's simple, noble and original form' ("det harmoniske i Dialekterne, henført til Sprogets simple, ædle, oprindelige Form", cf. Matras 1941:214, 1951:15). He argued further that in the material published thus far in Faroese one had in fact used the worst orthography one could think of, because it did not make any sense to have the orthography represent the ugly and inconsistent dialectal pronunciation of the vowels ("den stygge og fra sig selv bestandig afvigende Udtale av Selvlydene") nor did it make sense to leave out or distort the supporting pillars of the language formed by the consonant system ("enten aldeles borttage eller forskyde og svække de faste Støtter for Sproget som dannes av Medlydssystemet" — cf. Matras 1951:17). As an example he takes a phrase from *Færeyinga saga* which is spelled *E haldi tã råvuliast* in the 1832 edition and he claims it makes no sense in that form (to those familiar with Old Norse and other Nordic languages, that is) but it would if it were spelled *eg haldi tãd råduligast* ('I think it most advisable'), for instance (ibid.). Here we see a clear example of what Petersen means by the "supporting pillars" formed by the consonants: If (the etymologically recoverable) consonants are not represented in the written form of the words they will not be recognizable by Scandinavians or others who know Scandinavian languages (or language history). What needs to be done, Petersen argues, is to save what is left

and still can be salvaged of Old Faroese and give it to the world in an acceptable and understandable form ("frelse fra Undergang, hvad der af Gammelfærøsk endnu kan frelses, og at give Verden det i en saadan Skikkelse, at det er modtageligt og forstaaeligt", cf. Matras 1951:18). His aim is thus similar to Svabo's more than half a century earlier but their methods are different since Petersen is not interested in the spoken form of the language (it would only be of interest for the linguist, he says (ibid.)).

Although Petersen's remarks about Faroese and the early attempts to write in Faroese were quite critical, his conclusion proved to be crucial for its development: "Med andre Ord: der maa skabes et færøsk Skriftsprog" ('In other words: A Faroese written language must be created' — cf. Matras 1951:16). In his discussion he refers to the Icelandic written standard, which he considers to be based on the Old Norse tradition and abstracted from dialectal differences. He further maintains that Faroese should be written in such a fashion that anybody who knows Icelandic and Old Norse can read it. And although this means, he says, that the Faroese will have to **learn** to read their language, that is no different from the situation in Denmark, where anybody who speaks a particular dialect will have to learn to read the written language. He cannot just read it without special instruction, as it were, relying on his own dialectal pronunciation (cf. Matras 1951:18).

There is some evidence that Hammershaimb and Grundtvig originally intended to reply to Petersen's article and Schrøter made an attempt to do so in an article in the Danish paper *Berlingske Tidende* (cf. Matras 1951:19). But as the Norwegian P.A. Munch by and large accepted Petersen's arguments in an article about the possibility of 'national written Norwegian', Hammershaimb and Grundtvig decided against publishing any reply to Petersen.

Around this time, i.e. in 1845, Christian Pløyen, *amtmaður* ('county prefect') in the Faroes, sent some 'magic formulas' to the society that published *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed* ('Annals for Nordic antiquity') and wanted to have them printed. They had been written down in Svabo's orthography. It so happened that the secretary of this society was Carl Christian Rafn, the editor of *Færeyinga saga*, and since he was thoroughly familiar with the orthography problem and the ongoing discussion about the status of the Faroese language, he sent the manuscript to the Icelandic historian and philologist Jón Sigurðsson and asked for some sort of an "islandification" ('Icelandification') of the text. Jón Sigurðsson then prepared a version with the original text (in Pløyen's Svaboian orthography) on one page and his "Icelandicized" variant on the other. This was then sent to professor Petersen for comments. When Rafn had received Petersen's comments, the whole thing was sent to Hammershaimb and he asked to make the final decision (Petersen had pointed out that a native speaker of Faroese should make that decision). It is of some interest to note here that Petersen suggested that the consonants that are left out 'in the sloppy pronunciation' ("i den skødesløse udtale") should definitely be put back in so the words could be recognized in their written form. But all 'real changes in the form of the language' ("enhver virkelig forandring i sprogets former") should be recognized, such as the change of the dative ending from the form *-um* to *-un* (cf. Matras 1951:22).

This, then, was the background to Hammershaimb's orthography, which was thus first introduced in the journal *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed* 1846. It seems that in his final decision he by and large followed Jón Sigurðsson's suggestions (Matras 1951:23; see also Hansen 1991,

2003a, Djupedal 1964). But this volume of *Annaler* did not only contain the magic formulas sent by Pløyen but also a few Faroese folktales collected by Hammershaimb (“Færøiske Sagn, meddelte af V.U. Hammershaimb”) and a few comments by him on the pronunciation of Faroese (“Bemærkninger med Hensyn til den færøiske Udtale ved V.U. Hammershaimb”, cf. Matras 1951:23).

Hammershaimb later made some changes to his orthography, as can be seen if one compares the folk tale *Risi og Kelling* (‘Giant and Giantess’) in the version from 1846 and the one published in Hammershaimb’s anthology 1891:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(16) 1846</p> <p>Norðan firi bigdina Eiði í Esturoi standa framman firi landi tveir stórir drengar sum líkjast manni og konu. Um hesar drengarnar gengur sögnin í Førvun: at einusinni atlaði Ísland at flíta Føroiar norður til sín, og sendi tí ein stóran risa við konu síni eftir teimun. Tey bæði komu at tí itsta berginun af Esturoi, sum er nevnt Eiðis kolli, og liggur longest ímóti útnorðingi.</p> | <p>1891</p> <p>Norðan fyrri bygðina á Eiði ytst í flógvanum, sum er millum Eysturoyar og Streymoyar, standa framman fyrri landi tveir stórir drangar, sum kallast Risi og Kelling, hin ytri og hon innari landinum, og har er røtt sund ímillum teirra, tá ið kyrt er. Um hesar drangarnar er sögnin, at einusinni ætlaði Ísland at flytja Føroyar norður til sín og sendi tí ein stóran risa og konu hansara at fáa tær fluttar har norður. Tey komu bæði at tí ytsta berginum, sum kallast Eiðskollur og longest ímóti útnyrðingi.</p> |
|--|---|

(A rough translation of the 1846 version: North of the village Eiði in Eysturoy two big cliffs stand off the shore and they look like a man and a woman. About these cliffs there is a story in the Faroes: Once Iceland wanted to move the Faroes north to itself and sent a big giant and his wife to get them. They came to the outermost cliffs of Eysturoy, which are called Eiðskollur and is furthest to the northwest.)

Before we discuss the general characteristics of Hammershaimb’s orthography, it is useful to first consider some of the changes that he made between 1846 and 1891. Comparing the two variants above we can note the following, for instance:

- (17)a. the letter “y” is introduced to denote the descendants of old /y/, e.g. *fyrri* vs. *firi* (he also used “ý” for old /ý/)
- b. the dative ending is written “-um” and not “-un” as before, e.g. *berginum* vs. *berginun*
- c. the descendant of old /ang/ is spelled *ang* and not *eng*, e.g. *drangar* vs. *drengar*
- d. long and short variants of vowels are generally represented in the same way, thus e.g. *at*, *manni* vs. *át*, *manni*; *bæði*, *ætlaði* vs. *bæði*, *atlaði*; *tey*, *Eysturoy* vs. *tey*, *Esturoi*
- e. the descendant of the old diphthong old /ey/ is written “oy” and not “oi”, thus *Eysturoy* vs. *Esturoi*

The first two differences can be said to be entirely etymologically or historically based and thus they go in fact against the principle mentioned in Petersen’s comments that all ‘real linguistic changes’ should be respected in the orthography (although they are consistent with his desire to have Faroese written in such a way that the word forms would be recognizable by those famil-

iar with Old Norse, for instance). The third difference arguably has etymological roots but it should be kept in mind that the spelling *drangar* is also consistent with a dialectal variant, namely the [aŋg̊]-pronunciation south of Skopunarfjørður (see e.g. the discussion in sections 1.2 and 6.2.1.1). In the 1846 version Hammershaimb has thus opted for a spelling that corresponds to the majority dialect but in 1891 he has chosen to follow the minority dialect because it represents an older stage. This is a common decision when orthography is standardized and made dialect-independent — and one that has parallels in standard Icelandic orthography.⁷ The fourth difference, on the other hand, has more principled phonological (or morphophonemic) roots, since here we arguably have a case of a predictable difference between the long and short variants of the same phoneme, i.e. a clear synchronic alternation between [ea:] and [a], [ei:] and [e], etc., in many instances (e.g. in *lakur* (m.) vs. *lakt* (n.) ‘bad’, *fær* (3sg.) vs. *fært* (2sg.) ‘get’, *deyður* (m.) vs. *deytt* (n.) ‘dead’, cf. the discussion in chapter 2, e.g. section 2.3.4). It is a basic characteristic of Hammershaimb’s orthography, and others that build on similar principles (e.g. the modern Icelandic one that served as its model), that such automatic and predictable alternations are typically not represented in the spelling. Finally, using “oy” instead of “oi” to represent the diphthong discussed in (17e) is a minor difference and consistent with the use of “ey” (for old /au/) in the 1846 version.

It is thus not entirely accurate when it is said that the difference between Hammershaimb’s orthography and its predecessors is basically one between an “etymologically” based and phonetically based orthography. While it is true that Svabo’s orthography was largely based on phonetic principles, Hammershaimb’s is both etymological (or historically based) and phonological (or morphophonemic). Interestingly, it has been argued that many of the most “successful” orthographies known today seem to be those that are built on morphophonemic rather than phonetic principles (for some discussion see O’Neil 1972). The morphophonemic characteristics of the modern Faroese spelling were discussed to some extent in chapter 1 and they will become clearer when we compare Hammershaimb’s orthography to Svabo’s and to the proposal launched by the Faroese linguist Jakob Jakobsen (1864–1918), to be described presently.

7.3.2.3 Hammershaimb’s orthography vs. Jakobsen’s alternative and Svabo’s

It seems that Hammershaimb’s standardized orthography from 1846 was not criticized much during the following decades. But in 1889 Jakobsen published an article in the Faroese paper *Dimmalætting* arguing that Hammershaimb’s orthography was too etymological and too difficult to master. Instead he suggested a return of sorts to the phonetic principles adhered to by Svabo and his followers. It appears that Jakobsen was influenced by the well known British phonetician Henry Sweet (1845–1912) and his emphasis on the importance of phonetics as a field of inquiry. Thus Jakobsen wanted to aim at a one-to-one correspondance between speech sounds and letters. In (18) we see a short passage written in Hammershaimb’s orthography and Jakobsen’s:

⁷ In Icelandic the old /ang/-words are now pronounced with a diphthong, [aun̥g̊], except in a restricted minority dialect where they still have the monophthongal [aŋg̊]-pronunciation. The spelling corresponds to the (older) minority dialect stage, e.g. *drangar* ‘cliffs’, as in Faroese.

(18) **Hammershaimb 1891**
Mikines hevur eftir manna søgn verið flotoyggi. Ein maður í Sörvági, sum javnlíga róði út, ræddist illa stórhvalirnar úti á havi, og av tí at han ikki átti bævur at styggja teir við, hevði hann til tess tarvsmýkju, sum hann kastaði í sjógvin, tá ið hvalir vóru nær staddir bátinum.

(Roughly: According to the legend, Mikines used to be a floating island. A man in Sörvágur, who used to go fishing, was very much afraid of the big whales out in the ocean, and because he did not have the appropriate stinking material [as from a skunk or a related animal] to scare them away, he used bull’s dung instead and threw it into the ocean when the whales were close to the boat.)

As the reader can see, Jakobsen’s orthography is in many ways similar to that of Svabo and his followers: “y” is not used to represent the descendant of old /y/ (cf. *stiggja* vs. *styggja* ‘scare’ — but note that Jakobsen uses “y” for the descendant of old long /i/ as Hammershaimb had done 1845, cf. *y* for *í* ‘in’); “ð” is not used (cf. *róe* vs. *róði*); initial “hv-” is not used (cf. *kvälir* vs. *hvalir*); the dative ending is represented as “-un” and not “-um” (cf. *bátenun* vs. *bátinum* ‘the boat(D)’), etc. More importantly, perhaps, Jakobsen attempts to use different letters for long and short variants of the “same” phoneme, as can be seen from examples like *mävur* ‘man(Nsg.)’ vs. *manna* ‘man(Gpl.)’ (for *maður*, *manna*), *á* ‘on; owns’ vs. *átte* ‘owned’ (for *á*, *átti* — also *blávur* (m.) vs. *blátt* (n.) ‘blue’), etc. But as anybody who is familiar with phonetic transcription will appreciate, it is not entirely simple to be consistent in “phonetic spelling”. Thus Jakobsen sometimes uses “e,o” for the unstressed vowels /i,u/ and sometimes “i,u”, and being a linguist he could device a rule for this and follow it himself. Thus he typically writes “i,u” in closed syllables, including endings like “-ir”, “-ur” (e.g. *ættir* ‘after’, *hevur* ‘has’ for *eftir*, *hevur*), and “e,o” in open syllables, including absolute final position (e.g. *hæie* ‘had’, *-mikjo* ‘dung’ for *hevði*, *-mykju*) and when a CV-sequence followed inside a word (as in examples like *bátenun* ‘the boat(D)’ for *bátinum*). It is not obvious that this would have been easy to learn. But it is perhaps instructive to try to compare Hammershaimb’s orthography to that of Svabo on the one hand and Jakobsen on the other. A simplified comparison is given in (19)–(21). Note that we are here referring to Hammershaimb’s version from 1891 since that is basically the orthography still used, as can be seen from the examples given in the modern orthography in parentheses:

(19) Etymologically (historically) based characteristics:

	Svabo:	Hammershaimb:	Jakobsen:
a. use of “y, ý” for old /y, ý/ (<i>fyri</i> ‘for’, <i>lýsa</i> ‘shine’)	no	yes	no
b. use of “hv-” (<i>hvalur</i> ‘whale’)	no	yes	no

Jakobsen
Mikjenes hevur ættir manna søgn vere flotáiggj. Ain mävur y Sörvåje, sum javnlia róe út, rad-dist idla stórkvælenar úte á hæve, og æv ty hann ikkje átte bævur á stiggja tair vi, hæie hann til tæss tarvsmikjo, sum hann kastaje y sjægvin, tá y kvälir vóro nær staddir bátenun.

	Svabo:	Hammershaimb:	Jakobsen:
c. use of “hj-” for old /hj-/ that has turned into a palatal affricate (<i>hjá</i> ‘at, with’)	no	yes	no
d. use of “-um” in the dative (<i>bátum</i> ‘boats(Dpl.)’)	no	yes	no
e. use of “ll” for [ɖl] and “nn” for [ɖn] (<i>illa</i> ‘badly’, <i>oynni</i> ‘the island(D)’)	no	yes	no
f. use of “ð” (<i>maður</i> ‘man’)	no	yes	no
g. use of “g” after long vowels (<i>draga</i> ‘draw’, <i>og</i> ‘and’)	no	yes	no

As already discussed above, Hammershaimb’s choices in (19a–c) are clearly etymologically based. The linguistic changes involved happened a long time ago and no productive synchronic alternations nor dialectal differences are involved. There are thus no words that show an alternation between phonetically different /i/ and /y/, for instance, nor are there dialects that distinguish such phonemes. Hence word forms like *il* ‘sole of foot’ and *yl* ‘warmth(Asg.)’ sound the same in all dialects and consequently Svabo and Jakobsen use “i, í” to represent old /i,y/ and /i,ý/ respectively. Similarly, old initial /hv-/ sequences have merged with old /kv-/ sequences such that no dialect distinguishes between *hvalir* ‘whales’ and *kvalir* ‘pains’.⁸ Thus Svabo and Jakobsen use “kv-” for both. The change of /hj-/ to the palatal(ized) affricate [tʃ^h] in words like *hjá* ‘at, with’, *hjallur* ‘store house’, for instance, has also occurred in all dialects in Faroese (see section 2.4.5) and here no paradigmatic or morphophonemic alternation can be found. Hence Hammershaimb’s reasons for writing “hj-” must be purely etymological (here Jakobsen uses “kj-”). Finally, the dative ending is now nowhere distinguished from a final /-un/ — there are thus no dialects where word forms like *diskum* ‘plates(Dpl.)’ and *miskunn* ‘mercy’ do not rhyme. Still Hammershaimb uses “-um” for the dative ending but Svabo and Jakobsen use “-un”.⁹

One can also say that Hammershaimb’s use of “ll” and “nn” in examples of the type given in (19e) is mainly motivated on etymological (or historical) grounds. As discussed in sections 1.3, 2.4.6 and 2.4.7 a [ɖ] has been inserted where one might expect a long [l:] or a long [n:] between vowels, from a historical point of view. This change occurred generally in the case of /l/ and after the diphthongs /oi, ai/ (now spelled “oy”, “ei”) in the case of /n/.¹⁰ As shown by the pronuncia-

⁸ Compare this to the situation in Modern Icelandic: Here old /i, í/ have merged everywhere with old /y, ý/, respectively, but this merger is not recognized in the modern spelling. A minority dialect still distinguishes between initial /hv-/ and /kv-/, on the other hand, so there is some synchronic reason to use “hv-” in Icelandic orthography, as is in fact done.

⁹ But recall that Jóannes í Króki consistently represented the dative ending with “-um”, as mentioned in 7.3.1, suggesting that he may have had an [-m] there.

¹⁰ A related change occurred in (some) instances of /rn/ that turned into [ɖn] (cf. 2.4.7). This is recognized by phonetic spellings like *badni* for *barnið* ‘the child’.

tion of loanwords like *ball* [bʰal:] ‘dance, party’ and others, this is not a productive or automatic rule in the language anymore. Still the change is not recognized in Hammershaimb’s orthography but Svabo and Jakobsen do represent it in spellings like *Hødl* for *høll* ‘palace’, *idla* for *illa* ‘badly’ and *åidne* for *oynni* ‘the island(D)’.

As pointed out above (e.g. in sections 1.3, 2.3.5 and 2.4.5), Faroese has no voiced dental fricative [ð] and thus the sound that the letter “ð” is typically used for in (standardized) Old Norse and Modern Icelandic orthography is completely missing in Faroese. Thus it would seem that Hammershaimb’s use of “ð” (cf. (19f)) is based solely on etymological considerations — and the desire to make Faroese words more “recognizable” to those familiar with Old Norse and Icelandic, which was a major concern of Petersen, as the reader will recall.¹¹ Although there are a few cases where a “silent” “ð” in the spelling alternates with the dental (or alveolar) stop [d̥] in other inflectional forms, (weakly) suggesting an underlying /ð/ (cf. adjectives like *moðin* [moːjɪn] ‘mouldy’, Asg.m *modnan* [mɔðnan] and weak verbs like *oyða* [ɔiːja] ‘spend’, past tense *oyddi* [ɔiðːi], discussed in sections 3.5.2 and 3.8.2.1, respectively), most instances of “ð” in modern Faroese orthography do not have any support of that kind. Hence it is quite difficult to learn when to write an “ð” and when not in Faroese — unless one knows Old Norse or Modern Icelandic!

The case of “g” after a long vowel exemplified in (19g) is somewhat similar although the situation is slightly more complex. Intervocally the letter “g” frequently represents the voiced velar fricative [ɣ] in Old Norse and Modern Icelandic and this sound does not exist in Modern Faroese (cf. 2.4.5). But before the front vowel /i/, for instance, “g” typically appears to represent a palatal (or palatalized) fricative (or glide) [j], e.g. in word forms like *bogin* [bɔːjɪn] ‘bent’. In such instances there is frequently regular paradigmatic alternation with the velar stop [g̊], cf. the Asg.m. form *bognan* [bɔg̊nan] ‘bent’, which would seem to lend some synchronic morphophonemic support to the spelling with “g”. There are several cases of this sort (for some discussion see section 3.5.2), although the arguments for using “g” after a long vowel are etymological (historical) in most instances. But an interesting situation arises because of the general and regular glide insertion (see the discussion in 2.3.5). The glide insertion has the effect that words spelled with “ð” before /i/ will have a [j] just like words spelled with a “g” in that position. Thus *boðin* ‘invited’ and *bogin* ‘bent’ sound the same, for instance, although in the former case we have a paradigmatic alternation between [j] and [d̥] (*boðin* [bɔːjɪn] ‘invited’, Asg.m. *bodnan* [bɔd̥nan]) and in the latter between [j] and [g̊], as described above.

Based on the arguments given here, we can conclude that the aspects of Hammershaimb’s orthography exemplified in (19a–e) are purely etymological and the ones in (19f–g) at least partly so, although synchronic morphophonemic alternations play some role too. We now turn to instances where the morphophonemic characteristics of Hammershaimb’s orthography are more clearly evident.

¹¹ As Matras points out (1951:22n.), it is possible that Petersen may have thought that [ð] still existed in some variants of Faroese although it was left out in others, since his native Danish dialect did not have [ð] although other Danish dialects did. If some Faroese dialects still had [ð], the use of “ð” in the spelling would have been supported by synchronic dialectal variations and not only by historical evidence, just as the use of “hv-” in modern Icelandic orthography is still dialectally supported although it is not in Faroese (cf. footnote 8).

(20) Morphophonemic characteristics:	Svabo:	Hammershaimb:	Jakobsen:
a. long and short variants of vowels represented the same way (<i>hava</i> ‘have’, past part. <i>havt</i> ; <i>ræða</i> ‘frighten’, past <i>ræddi</i>)	no	yes	no
b. glide insertion disregarded (<i>maður</i> ‘man’)	no	yes	no
c. palatalization disregarded (<i>ekki</i> ‘worry’, <i>skjóta</i> ‘shoot’)	no	yes	no

First, it must be admitted that the wording of (20a) is not entirely accurate. Although there is (and presumably already was in the 19th century) a rather clear difference in vowel quality between long and short variants of virtually all Faroese vowels (cf. the overview in 2.3.4), Jakobsen and Svabo (and his followers) represented this most consistently in the spelling when it manifests itself as diphthongization (of the long variant) or monophthongization (of the short variant).¹² Jakobsen would thus for instance represent the descendant of old /á/ as “á” when it was long but “â” when it was short (cf. examples like *blávur* (m.) vs. *blátt* (n.) ‘blue’ already discussed). Similarly, he would represent the descendant of old /a/ as “ä” when long and as “a” when short (e.g. *mävvur* ‘man’ vs. *hann* ‘he’). Svabo, on the other hand, used “ēa” for the long descendant of /a/, indicating the diphthongization, and “a” for the short one. As the reader will recall, we have also seen examples where the monophthongization of short diphthongs was shown in the spelling (including *Esturoi* for *Eysturoy* in Hammershaimb’s 1846 orthography, cf. (16) and the following discussion). All these variations are automatic and predictable and hence it is not “necessary” to represent them in the spelling. As already mentioned, it is one of the main characteristics of morphophonemically (or phonologically) based orthographies not to show variations of that kind.

The glide insertion mentioned in (20b) is also regular and predictable, as discussed in 2.3.5. Hence it is only natural that it is disregarded in Hammershaimb’s morphophonemic orthography whereas it is typically indicated in Svabo’s and Jakobsen’s phonetically based orthographies, cf. examples like Jakobsen’s *mävvur* for *maður* ‘man’, *kastaje* for *kastaði* ‘threw’, for instance.

Finally, the extensive palatalization discussed in chapter 2 (e.g. in 2.4.2) is generally not represented in Hammershaimb’s orthography whereas Svabo and Jakobsen do represent it. As discussed in chapter 2, this palatalization frequently shows up in morphophonemic alternations, e.g. in examples like *veggur* ‘wall(sg.)’ with a (long) velar stop [g̊ː] vs. the pl. *veggir* with the long palatal affricate [d̥ʒː], *rikur* ‘rich(sg.)’ with the velar stop [g̊] vs. the pl. *rikir* with the palatal affricate [d̥ʒ], *vaka* ‘wake(Inf.)’ with the velar stop [b̥k] vs. 1sg.pres. *vaki* with the palatal

¹² As the reader will recall, however, Svabo and others would sometimes use double letters (i.e. “ii”, “ee”, “oo”) or a grave accent to differentiate long /i, e, o/ from their short counterparts, but they were not entirely consistent in this (see e.g. the overview in (12) above).

affricate [ʰtʃ], etc. All these alternations are automatic and predictable and hence not represented in Hammershaimb’s morphophonemic orthography — and the palatal(ized) consonants are not represented any differently when they do not enter into alternations of this kind, cf. the adverb *ikki* ‘not’. But in phonetically based orthographies like Svabo’s and Jakobsen’s the (auto-matic) palatalization is represented, cf. examples like Jakobsen’s *ikkje* for *ikki* above and also examples like *gjeva* for *geva* ‘give’, *kjista* for *kista* ‘chest, coffin’, *kjæipa* for *keypa* ‘buy’ that can be found elsewhere.

The palatalization of initial /sk-/ sequences is not indicated in Hammershaimb’s orthography either whereas it is in Svabo’s and Jakobsen’s. Thus Hammershaimb writes *skjótast* ‘most quickly’ and Jakobsen *sjótast*, where the initial consonant is the palatal(ized) [ʃ]. In cases of this sort we also sometimes have paradigmatic alternation, e.g. in examples like *skjóta* ‘shoot’ and past sg. *skeyt* with [ʃ] vs. past pl. *skutu* and past part. *skotin* with [sk], but by no means always. Hence historical knowledge may be needed to determine the spelling in some instances.

Although Svabo and Jakobsen followed similar principles in their orthographies, there are some non-trivial differences between them. One of the most obvious ones lies in the representation of the diphthongs. As we have seen, Svabo (and his followers) can be said to have attempted to give a phonetic transcription of the diphthongs. Thus Svabo used symbols like “*ea*”, “*eu*”, “*aj*”, “*ej*”, “*oj*” and “*uj*” and similar symbols were used by his followers (see e.g. the overview in (12) above). Jakobsen uses a slightly different method, as does Hammershaimb (1891). This is illustrated in (21):

(21) Representation of some (long) diphthongs (and diphthongized vowels):

Svabo	Hammershaimb	Jakobsen
aa (<i>aa</i>)	á (<i>á</i> ‘on’)	á (<i>á</i>)
ea (<i>meavur</i>)	a (<i>maður</i> ‘man’)	ä (<i>mävur</i>)
eu (<i>seul</i>)	ó (<i>sól</i> ‘sun’)	ó (<i>sól</i>)
uj (<i>uj</i>)	í (<i>í</i> ‘in’)	y (<i>y</i>)
aj (<i>ajn</i>)	ei (<i>ein</i> ‘a, one’)	ai (<i>ain</i>)
ej (<i>eja</i>)	ey (<i>eyga</i> ‘eye’)	æi (<i>æia</i>)
oj (<i>hojra</i>)	oy (<i>hoyra</i> ‘hear’)	âi (<i>hâira</i>)

As can be seen here, Jakobsen uses single letters to represent some of the long diphthongs (or diphthongized vowels), just as Hammershaimb does, where Svabo uses doubly written vowel symbols or digraphs. A part of the reason may be that the diphthongal quality of the vowels in questions (those represented by “*á*”, “*ö*”, “*í*” by Hammershaimb) may not be as obvious as that of the others. The first two (those represented by “*á*”, “*ö*” in Jakobsen’s orthography, phonetically [ɔa:] and [ɛa:] in Modern Faroese) do not end in a glide and could thus be analyzed as “diphthongal variants” as opposed to “true diphthongs” (cf. the discussion in sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 above). Jakobsen’s choice of symbols for the third and fourth vowel, namely “*ó*” and “*y*”, may have been influenced by the fact that their quality was perhaps not too different from that of, say, Danish /o/ and /y/ in his dialect (and in the modern majority dialect — recall the comment made above on the quality of long /o/ in the Vágar dialect of Svabo). With respect to the final three

diphthongs, those represented by “*ei*”, “*ey*” and “*oy*” in Hammershaimb’s orthography, it should be kept in mind that although Svabo’s representation is arguably closer to an acceptable IPA-transcription of their phonetic quality than Hammershaimb’s is, it is in principle not hard to learn to represent, say, the diphthong [ai(:)] with the letter combination “*ei*” as Hammershaimb does (which is incidentally the way this diphthong is standardly represented in German orthography!). The correspondence between sounds and letters tends to vary somewhat from language to language (which is why we need phonetic transcription to represent pronunciation) and consistency in this relationship is probably more important than the particular relationship between the letters and the sounds. But here Hammershaimb’s choice was undoubtedly influenced by the etymology.

7.3.2.4 The attempted compromise and its fate

Although Jakobsen’s orthography was remarkably consistent, it was not universally acclaimed. People soon discovered that one very important aspect of orthography is that it should make it easy to relate and identify different inflectional forms of the same word, and even derivationally related words, and a morphophonemic orthography (like Hammershaimb’s) makes this easier in many instances than a phonetically based orthography (like Jakobsen’s) does. The relative merits of Hammershaimb’s and Jakobsen’s orthographies were lively discussed in the *Føringafelag* (‘Society of the Faroese’) which published the paper *Føringatiðindi*. In the end a compromise was proposed, the so-called *Broyting* (‘change’). The main characteristics of this compromise can be seen by comparing (22) to (18) above:

(22) **Broyting**

Mikines hevur ettir manna søgn verið flotoyggj. Ein maður í Sørvági, sum javnliga róði út, ræddist idla stórkvalirnar úti á havi, og af tí at hann ikki átti bævur at stiggja teir við, hevði hann til tess tarvsmikju, sum hann kastaði í sjógvin, tá ið kvalir vóru nær staddir bátinun.

At first sight *Broyting* may seem more similar to Hammershaimb’s orthography than Jakobsen’s. But there are several important differences between the two and the most important ones are listed in (23) (they are not all exemplified in (22)):

- (23)a. *Broyting* uses “*i*” and “*í*” for the descendants of /i, y/ and /í, ý/, respectively
- b. *Broyting* uses “*kv-*” and not “*hv-*” for old /hv-/.
- c. *Broyting* uses “*kj-*” and not “*hj-*” for palatalized old /hj-/
- d. *Broyting* uses “*dl*” and “*dn*” where old /ll/ and /nn/ (and /rn/) have developed into [ɖl] and [ɖn]
- e. *Broyting* uses “*-un*” and not “*-um*” to represent the dative ending
- f. *Broyting* uses the spelling *ettir*, *attur* and *attan* where Hammershaimb has *eftir*, *aftur* and *aftan*

If we compare (23) to (19) above, we see that *Broyting* has eliminated most of the purely etymological characteristics of Hammershaimb’s orthography listed in (19) and in addition it recognizes the lexically restricted change *ft* > *tt* in the spelling of the words given in (23f). The only items that are left from the list in (19) have to do with the use of “*ð*” and of “*g*” after long vowels, but as the

reader will recall, this use has arguably some morphophonemic support in Modern Faroese. In addition, *Broyting* preserved all the purely morphophonemic characteristics of Hammershaimb’s orthography listed in (20), namely those that have to do with identical representation of long and short variants of vowels and disregarding the automatic alternations caused by glide insertion and palatalization. Because of this, one could argue that *Broyting* was a more genuinely morphophonemic orthography than Hammershaimb’s. Jakobsen accepted it and used it in his later writings (e.g. in his edition of *Diplomatarium Færoense* 1907), but it was not generally well received and the compromise was not accepted by all members of the *Føringafelag* and the paper *Føringatíðindi* died. The Icelandic linguist Valtýr Guðmundsson at Copenhagen University was eventually consulted and he recommended Hammershaimb’s orthography over *Broyting*, using the by now familiar argument that it would be preferable to have a Faroese orthography that made Faroese words easily recognizable to Icelanders and other Scandinavians. The etymological aspects of Hammershaimb’s orthography certainly had that effect, and still do (cf. Djupedal 1964, Hagström 1986, Larsen 1991, Nauerby 1996a — see also the conference report in *Málting* 17:2–13 and Lenvig 1997).

7.3.3 Faroese as an official language

The first newspaper written in Faroese, *Føringatíðindi*, was of crucial importance for the development of written Faroese and Faroese orthography. It was first published in 1890 as a result of the so-called *Jólafundur* ‘Christmas Meeting’ in 1888, where a program for Faroese language policy and cultural policy was established.

Another result of the Christmas Meeting in 1888 was the founding of *Føroya Folkaháskúli* (‘The Faroese Folk High School’) in 1889, which was not run by the Danish government and where Faroese thus could be used as the language of instruction and as a topic of study. Faroese became a general language of instruction in Faroese schools in 1938 and in the *Heimastýrislóg* (‘Home Rule Act’) from 1948 it is specified that Faroese is the principal language in the Faroes but Danish is to be ‘learned well and carefully’ (“skal læres godt og omhyggeligt”). But the road to this recognition was long and at times hard (see e.g. the extensive overview in Thomassen 1988 and the discussions in Hagström 1986 and Lenvig 1996b, 1998, 1999).

As mentioned above, Danish was the language of the church in the Faroes from the Reformation (in the 16th century) on. It continued to be virtually the only language in the church until the 20th century (cf. Rasmussen 1987, 1997), despite the attempts of Schrøter mentioned above. Jákup Dahl (1878–44) translated the whole New Testament into Faroese between 1923 and 1936 and it was published as a whole in 1937, more than 100 years after the appearance of the Gospel according to St. Matthew in Schrøter’s translation. Schrøter had in fact originally offered to translate the whole New Testament into Faroese for the Danish Bible Society, but he may have lost interest, or the Society did, when it became clear how Matthew’s Gospel in Schrøter’s translation was received. The whole Bible was published in a Faroese translation in 1961 (a translation by Victor Danielsen (1894–1961) had been issued by the religious group *Brøðrasamkoman* in 1949) and in the same year the first book of Faroese psalms was published by the church (here, too, *Brøðrasamkoman* had been a pioneer with a collection of psalms in 1952, cf. Dahl 1981:100 — see also Funding 1998).

7.4 Historical phonology

In this section we will give an overview of the most important phonological changes that have occurred in Faroese since Old Norse times. We will first deal with changes involving the vowel system, then the consonant system, and end with a description of a few less systematic changes. Since written records of Faroese are very scarce, as already noted (virtually nonexistent between 1400 and 1600 and very incomplete between 1600 and 1800, cf. sections 7.1 and 7.2), we will only rarely have anything to say about the age of the sound changes involved but we will frequently refer to the history of Icelandic and sometimes other (West) Nordic languages and dialects for comparison. For a short overview of phonological changes in Faroese the reader can be referred to Jóansson (1997:44–53 — see also Sandøy 2002).

7.4.1 The vowels

7.4.1.1 Development of Old Norse long vowel system

As described in section 2.3.1 above, vowel quantity in Faroese is positionally determined, the basic rule being that stressed vowels are long if no more than one consonant follows. In Old Norse, on the other hand, vowel length was distinctive. In standardized Old Norse orthography (as well as in many Old Norse manuscripts), an accent over a vowel symbol indicates length. Thus the vowel in the Old Norse infinitive *ljýsa* ‘light’ was long and so was the vowel in the past tense *ljýsti*, whereas Modern Faroese has a long vowel (diphthong) in *ljýsa* but a short one in *ljýsti*, as described in section 2.3.1.

The long monophthongs in Old Norse have typically developed into diphthongs in Modern Faroese, as shown in (24), where the Old Norse vowels are organized according to their phonetic quality and ON stands for Old Norse and MF for Modern Faroese. For ease of reference we first give the most common orthographic symbols (letters) and then the phonetic transcription symbol in brackets. Note that for Modern Faroese we give two variants of each vowel, a long and a short one, since, as noted above, the phonetic quantity of Faroese vowels varies positionally, and the difference in quantity is sometimes accompanied by a qualitative difference, as we have seen (cf. sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 — see also the detailed discussion of Faroese diphthongization in Rischel 1967–1968):

(24)	front				back			
	unround		round		unround		round	
	ON	MF	ON	MF	ON	MF	ON	MF
high	í [i:]	í [ui:/ui]	ý [y:]	ý [ui:/ui]			ú [u:]	ú [ʊu:/ʏ]
mid	é [e:]	æ [ea:/a]	ø [ø:]	ø [ø:/œ]			ó [o:]	ó [ou:/œ]
			(œ)					
low	ǣ [ɛ:]	æ [ea:/a]			á [a:]	á [ɔa:/ɔ]	ǫ [ɔ:]	á [ɔa:/ɔ] ¹³
	(æ)							

¹³ In most cases Old Norse /ǫ/ and /á/ merged. This led in some instances to the merger of word forms that used to be distinct, such as the sg. and pl. forms of *sár* ‘wound’ (the sg. had /á/ and the pl. /ǫ/).