

characteristics of Icelandic writing; the few occurrences of it in Norwegian manuscripts probably indicate Icelandic influence.<sup>1</sup>

ABBREVIATIONS. Abbreviations were a prominent feature of medieval Latin writing at certain periods. In the earliest Caroline minuscule, however, in the eighth century, relatively few abbreviations were in use. The same is true of the ninth and tenth centuries. But in the eleventh, and especially in the course of the twelfth century, their number and variety increased considerably, so that from then they may be said to exist in an elaborate, but fairly coherent system. This system was used most regularly in the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.

It is customary to divide abbreviations into four categories, viz. abbreviations

- (a) by suspension,
- (b) by contraction,
- (c) by superscript letters, and
- (d) by special signs.

This classification may be taken as a synchronic analysis of the abbreviations according to their external form. But at the same time it reflects, to a certain extent, their very varied origins and development.

It is generally agreed that in its fundamental features the medieval system of abbreviation goes back to antiquity.

In Roman times the principal method of abbreviation, known from inscriptions and coins and also found in classical manuscripts, was by suspension, i.e. by writing only one or more letters at the beginning of the word and leaving out the remainder, e.g. C. for *Gaius*, cons. for *consul*, A.U.C. for *ab urbe condita*. Sometimes the plural was indicated by doubling of the final letter, e.g. conss. for *consules*. The abbreviation was often shown by a following point; often, however, the point is missing. Later, from the second and third centuries onward, the abbreviation was shown by a superscript horizontal stroke. In particular, at the end of a line, 'm' or 'n' was left out and indicated by the superscript stroke either over the preceding letter or following it.

In Christian manuscripts we find abbreviations by contraction, i.e. by writing at least the first and the last letter of a word, but leaving out some or all of its middle part. This method of abbreviation may, in part at least, derive from Greek Biblical manuscripts, where we find such abbreviations as, for example,  $\overline{\Theta C}$  for  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ,  $\overline{IC}$  for  $\text{'I}\eta\sigma\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma$ ,  $\overline{XC}$  for  $X\rho\iota\sigma\acute{\tau}\acute{o}\varsigma$ ,  $\overline{PNA}$  for  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ . In Latin manuscripts we find in the same way, for instance,  $\overline{DS}$  for *deus*,  $\overline{SPS}$  for *spiritus*, and later, for example,  $\overline{DMS}$  or  $\overline{DNS}$  for *dominus* and  $\overline{SCS}$  for *sanctus*. This method of abbreviation was gradually extended to a number of other words. The Greek origin appears clearly in the abbreviations for *Iesus* and *Xristus*. A variant of the Greek contractions mentioned above was  $\overline{IHC}$  for  $\text{'I}\eta\sigma\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma$  and  $\overline{XPC}$  for  $X\rho\iota\sigma\acute{\tau}\acute{o}\varsigma$ , each consisting of the first two letters and the last letter. These were taken over into Latin capital writing as  $\overline{IHS}$  (or  $\overline{IHC}$ ) and  $\overline{XPS}$  (or  $\overline{XPC}$ ), and later, in the minuscule script, they were represented by  $ihs$  and  $xpm$  (acc.  $i\grave{h}m$  and  $x\grave{p}m$ ) by a misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the Greek letters.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Spehr 1929 p. 154; Seip 1954a p. 82; Holm-Olsen 1940 pp. 21-22.

In legal manuscripts from the Roman period there is in use a much more elaborate system of abbreviations than in any other writings from this period. It contains abbreviations by suspension, especially by syllabic suspension, in which the abbreviation consists of the initial letter of each syllable (e.g. *at* for *autem*,  $\overline{SN}$  for *sine*,  $\overline{tM}$  for *tamen*); other abbreviations are by contraction (e.g.  $\overline{BFIO}$  for *beneficio*), by a superscript letter (e.g.  $M^i$  for *mihi*,  $q^a$  for *qua*), and by various other means (e.g.  $c'$  for *cum*,  $\overline{N}$  for *nec*,  $\overline{q}$  for *quae*,  $p$  for *per*).

Finally, there was also in use in Rome a system of shorthand which has come to be known as the Tironian signs, so called after Cicero's freedman, Marcus Tullius Tiro. This was not a series of arbitrary signs, but a system with an alphabetical basis. From its frequent mention in ancient authors we learn that this system was used in the Senate, for instance, but no manuscript written in Tironian signs is preserved from the Roman period. Documents written in this shorthand are preserved from the seventh to the ninth centuries, after which it fell into disuse. It was from this source that medieval writing derived, for example, the sign '7' for *et*.

It is clear that even if the medieval system of abbreviation goes back to Roman antiquity, it cannot do so through a continuous, unbroken tradition. For, in the so-called national hands, which gradually developed after the fall of the Roman Empire, abbreviations were little used; the only exception is the insular script. It is therefore generally agreed that the adoption of the ancient systems of abbreviation, their development and their transfer to medieval writing, is due to the Irish.

The use of the elaborate system of abbreviation which arose in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was, to a large extent, restricted to the writing of Latin. In writing the vernaculars, only relatively sparing use was as a rule made of abbreviations. Norse writing, however, was an important exception in this matter. In Norwegian and Icelandic writing we find an extensive use of abbreviations, which is unparalleled in any other vernacular script. These abbreviations were based on the current medieval system, which was taken over from Latin writing, but it was adapted to the vernacular script, of which it became an integral part; it then followed largely its own course of development. Norwegian writing makes considerable use of abbreviations, but the Icelandic script goes still further; the abundant use of abbreviations is one of the distinctive characteristics of early Icelandic writing.

In Iceland, the Latin system of abbreviation as found in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was probably taken over together with the Latin script itself. The Latin abbreviations are sometimes used unchanged in Icelandic texts, but this is relatively rare. Usually, the adaptation of the Latin system resulted in the formation of vernacular abbreviations based on the principles inherent in this system. As in other cases of orthography, it is possible that traces of English vernacular influence may be found here. The earliest extant manuscripts still make a comparatively sparing use of abbreviations. But in the course of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries their number increases and their use is greatly extended.

This development goes hand in hand with that of the non-phonemic ligatures (pp. 51-54 above) and was no doubt dictated by the same considerations of graphic expediency and economy. The parallelism between these two, the abbreviations and the ligatures, appears clearly in the First Grammatical Treatise. Although the author is concerned only with the alphabet

and therefore does not deal with abbreviations, he nevertheless discusses the use of the 'tittle' (*titulus*), which clearly comprises two different abbreviation marks, one for 'm' or 'n', the other for the syllable 'er'; he says:<sup>1</sup>

'The tittle does not either have the nature of a letter [i.e. no more than '&' does], but it is used for various other letters, sometimes one and sometimes more, for the hastening and shortening of the writing. I generally use it for *m*, or sometimes for *n*, or for the syllable *er*, when it has [this] shape: [the usual abbreviation mark for 'er' is reproduced here]. On this I can only give a small piece of advice: let each one abbreviate by means of the tittle as he finds advisable and understandable'.

About the only ligature that he mentions, viz. that of 'n' and 'g' (pp. 53-54 above), the author says:<sup>2</sup>

'The *n* which comes immediately before a *g* in the same syllable . . . receives some slight taint from the *g*. For this reason I shall make their intercourse friendly, and fashion one letter from the two . . . This letter alone I give the same value as the other two, so that it makes no difference whether you write *hringr* or *hringr*, except that the fewer the letters, the less the writing'.

Cf. also the passage quoted p. 81 n. 2 above on the writing of capitals instead of two minuscules to denote geminate consonants.

The abbreviations found in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Icelandic manuscripts are, in brief outline, as follows:

Suspensions are not infrequent. Many words are traditionally abbreviated in this way; others are so when the context is clear. The abbreviation is, as a rule, either followed or preceded as well as followed by a point. Cf., e.g., *b.* (or *.b.*) for *borg* (26:29), *búar* (3:13), or *bróður* (12:1); *d.* for *dróttinn* (20:16), *dróttins* (20:19), *dómandi* (19:7), *dag* (26:3), *dag* (19:39), or *dóttir* (40:a:9); *e.* (or *.æ.*) for *eða* (48:a:5 34:19); *.g.* (*G.*, *g.*, or *g*) for *guð* (6:10), *guði* (6:2), *guðs* (19:17 51); *h.* for *hét* (19:15 40:a:24); *.i.x.* for *iesu xristi* (20:43), *x.* for *xristr* (20:33); *.j.* for *jarl* (40:a:2), *jarls* (40:a:6); *.k.* for *keisari* (20:2), *konungi* (27:7), *konungs* (27:30), *k.* for *Knútr* (40:a:10), *Knúts* (40:b:40); *m.* for *maðr* (26:3), *mann* (26:18), *manns* (26:5), *m.* for *mann* (19:1), *.M.* for *mörkum* (3:18), *m.* for *mælti* (26:19 40:a:14); *O.* for *Óláfr* (40:a:37); *p.* for *postuli* (27:3), *.P.* for *postula* (27:8), *.p.* for *pávi* (69:14), *páva* (69:12); *s.* for *sonr* (19:26), *svarði* (19:19), *f.* for *(-)son* (1:26 20:30 40:a:7), *-sonar* (34:1), *sagði* (40:a:12), *segir* (or *sagði*) (40:a:21), *sagt* (40:a:31), *segja* (or *sögðo*) (40:b:7), *f.v.* for *svarði* (26:9); *.t.* for *til* (33:14 39:2); *.v.* for *várs* (20:43), *var* (31:a:4).

Suspensions of this kind are particularly frequent in legal manuscripts, where entire phrases representing fixed formulas may be abbreviated in this way, e.g. *.f.b.g.* for *fjörbaugsgarð* (3:7), *.q.h.b.* for *kveðja heimilisbúa* (3:17), *.t.f.b.f.* for *til fjörbaugssaka* (3:17), *.f.g.v.* for *fjörbaugsgarð varðar* (3:27); see also pls. 47-49.

Doubling of the initial letter to indicate the plural occurs not infrequently; cf., e.g., *MM.* (*MM* or *mm*) for *menn* (20:12 22 27 41), *manna* (20:37 39), or *mönnum* (20:10 26 34);<sup>3</sup> *ff.* for *synir*

<sup>1</sup> FGT 1950 p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *MM.* (or *mm.*) for the dat. plur. may, however, be a case of contraction rather than of suspension,

i.e. it should possibly be expanded *monnom* (or *monnom*) rather than *monnom* (or *monnom*). If so, it is parallel to *ma* for *manna* (20:30 40). On contractions of this kind, see below.

(40:a:7 51:25), or *sona* (51:19); *k̄k* for *konungar* (57:9), *konungum* (57:16), or *konunga* (57:35 58:41). See also below the double 'm'-rune for the plural of *maðr*.

Suspensions also occur with the superscript abbreviation stroke (or a cross-bar, if the letter is tall) instead of, or in addition to, the point(s). The most frequent are no doubt *þ̄* for *þat* (e.g. 3:3)—which may have been formed under the influence of Old English *þ̄* for *þæt*, which was frequent from the tenth century onwards<sup>1</sup>—and *h̄* for *hann* (e.g. 2:a:2). Cf. further, e.g., *ḅ* for *borg* (15:24), *byskup* (70:17), *byskupi* (70:21), *byskups* (70:9); *k̄* for *konungr* (40:a:9), *keisari* (70:32), *keisara* (70:30), *kirkna* (69:32); *m̄* for *maðr* (3:4), *m̄* or *m̄* for *menn* (4:14 25:9 26:18); *p̄* for *prestr* (8:12). Abbreviations of this kind become more and more frequent, but very often two or more letters are written, and the stroke is placed above (or across) the last of these. Cf., e.g., *v̄tl* for *útleğða* (3:17), *utl* for *útlagr* (3:18); *alm̄* for *almáttig* (20:3); *andl* for *andlátí* (26:36); *engl* for *England* (29:b:4); *gȳþ* for *gyðinga* (36:14); *fagri* (36:9), *nał* (36:11), *lcýndil* (36:27), *optl* (40:b:9) for *-lega*; *þ̄st* for *þorstein* (39:11); *luā* for *svarar* (or *svaraði*) (39:38); *Ol* for *Óláfr* (40:b:13); *hofþ* for *hofðingja* (43:21); *kirk* for *kirkjunni* (51:16). For double letters with a superscript stroke (or cross-bar) to indicate the plural, see above.

Later, from towards the middle of the thirteenth century, 'þ' with a bar across the descender is used for *þeir* (e.g. 34:11 40:a:1) and less frequently for *þess* (47:a:15 etc.).

Sporadically, the tittle for 'er' (see below) is used instead of the stroke to indicate the suspension, e.g. *geirfteinn* (31:b:14), *noreg* (40:b:42).

The suspension may end in a superscript letter or a special sign (on which, see below). See, e.g., *c<sup>i</sup>*. (20:30) to be expanded as *crist*, *s<sup>a</sup>*. (17:6 19:16) to be expanded as *svaraþe* (or *svarar*), *ver.* for *veralda* (20:19), *fvar.* for *svaraði* (or *svarar*) (27:11 40:a:22), *bvf* for *byskup* (47:a:33).

A not infrequent kind of abbreviation, which may be described as a suspension, is to write only the two initial letters of the word, the second of them superscript. The abbreviation may be preceded and/or followed by a point. This kind of abbreviation is practically restricted to some frequent monosyllables, e.g. *h<sup>o</sup>* for *hon* (16:2 etc.), *t<sup>i</sup>* for *tíl* (21:4 25:3 26:12), *v<sup>a</sup>* for *var* (22:1 28:24 32:23), *f<sup>i</sup>* for *fir* (27:1), *v<sup>i</sup>* for *við* (40:a:15), *f<sup>v</sup>* for *fyr* (47:a:5 66:21 68:14), *s<sup>i</sup>* for *sinn* (40:a:20), *m<sup>v</sup>* for *mun* (40:b:2), *m<sup>a</sup>* for *man* (28:10).<sup>2</sup> In longer words this kind of abbreviation occurs only sporadically, e.g. *s<sup>v</sup>* for *systir* (31:a:3), *s<sup>i</sup>* for *sinna* (40:a:36), *m<sup>o</sup>* for *móðir* (62:27 76:12).

Contractions are very frequent. They may consist of two letters only, viz. the first and last letter of the form in question. But the initial letter may also be followed by two or more of the final letters of the word. Or, thirdly, the first and the last letter of the word may be separated by one or more letters from its middle. The contraction is as a rule indicated by an abbreviation stroke, written superscript or across the ascender of tall letters. Examples are *Jhc* (16:25), *ihc* (20:6) for *iesus*, *iħm xp̄m* (14:7–8) for *iesum xristum*, *iħu* (36:15) for *iesu*; *gþ* (16:24), *gð* (69:1) for *guð*, *gþe* (7:20), *gði* (15:27) for *guði*, *gł* (25:2), *gþł* (7:5), *gðł* (69:20) for *guðs*; *ple* (27:8), *plañ* (36:39), *plom* (27:22) or *plañō* (27:6), *plañł* (36:17), *plar* (19:26), *plarner* (36:10), *plm*

<sup>1</sup> Keller 1906 p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Sporadically the prep. *tíl* and *við* are abbreviated by 't' and 'v' with a superscript point; for

*tíl*, see 56:1 8 9 etc.; for *við*, 69:4 13 etc. Probably the point is nothing but a reduction of the superscript 'i'.

(16:26-27), *plā* (22:15) for *postuli*, *-ulann*, *-ulanum*, *-ulans*, *-ular*, *-ularnir*, *-ulum*, *-ula*; *bp* (46:18), *bṑ* (67:32), *bp* (42:7), *bcop* (15:4), *bcup* (43:12) for *byskup*, *bpi* (46:18), *bcupe* (8:19) for *byskupi*, *bpf* (42:17) for *byskups*, *bpa* (67:35) for *byskupa*; *p̄tr* (17:25), *p̄lti* (43:5), *p̄ltinō* (17:4), *p̄ltar* (19:13) for *prestr*, etc.; *kkia* (1:32) for *kirkja*, *kkio* (40:a:23) for *kirkju*; *f̄lti* (66:27) for *freistni*; *kr* (30:a:4), *kḡr* (19:1), *kṅgr* (7:24) for *konungr*, *kN* (32:4) for *konungrinn*, *kin* (40:a:6) for *konunginn*, *ki* (40:a:31), *kngi* (69:11) for *konungi*, *kl* (40:a:25, with 'k' and 'l' joined into a ligature; see p. 54 above), *kl* (32:12), *kḡf* (19:3) for *konungs*, *kar* (40:a:39) for *konungar*; *m̄n* (3:12) for *maðrinn*, *m̄e* (25:14) for *manni*, *m̄n* (3:20), *m̄N* (9:13) for *menn*, *m̄m* (19:34), *MM* (26:25), *m̄M* (37:18) for *mōnnum*, *m̄a* (19:14), *M̄a* (25:11) for *manna*, *fiolm̄e* (40:b:1) for *-menni*; *bg* (44:18) for *borg*.

Other examples are *fl* (3:7), *fel* (33:7), *flot* (27:29), *flo* (31:b:16) for *skal*, *skuluð*, *skulu*; *hle* (17:18), *hli* (17:7) for *hluti*; *hhr* (6:11) for *heldr*; *ld* (36:12), *lde* (3:20), *ldz* (36:13) for *land*, *landi*, *lands*; *p̄gi* (3:29) for *þingi*; *tḡl* (4:16) for *tungl*; *m̄ca* (26:40) for *munka*; *f̄hia* (27:31) for *skilja*; *v̄pr* (3:7) for *varðar*. In the verb *mæla* contraction is particularly frequent, *m̄la* (19:23) for *mæla*, *m̄r* (19:10) for *mælir*, *m̄e* (6:15), *m̄li* (19:7), *m̄lti* (44:10) for *mælti*, *m̄lo* (19:30), *m̄lto* (19:10) for *mæltu*, *m̄lt* (8:12) for *mælt*.

In certain pronominal forms contraction is very frequent, *hō* (3:7), *hom* (36:29), or, after the middle of the thirteenth century, *hm* (e.g. 44:26 67:1 68:23) for *honum*,<sup>1</sup> *hf* (2:a:13 36:9) for *hans*, *ha* (15:28) for *hana*, *he* (25:18), *hi* (45:16) for *henni*, *har* (15:27) for *hennar*; *p̄r* (3:20), *p̄r* (27:1), or *p̄r* (40:a:32) for *þeir*, *p̄m* (62:2) for *þeim*, *p̄ra* (15:2), *p̄ra* (39:1), *p̄a* (58:27), or *p̄ra* (34:13) for *þeira*, *p̄re* (43:2) for *þeiri*, *p̄rar* (12:2) for *þeirar*; *p̄a* (27:23), *p̄a* (28:3 12), *p̄ta* (29:b:4), *p̄tta* (32:22) for *þetta*, *p̄fi* (66:10) for *þessi*, *p̄fa* (62:5) for *þessa*, *p̄so* (58:34) for *þessu*; *p̄n* (44:12) for *þann*; *p̄t* (8:11), *p̄t* (15:29) for *því at*, *p̄gat* (27:25) for *þangat*, *p̄aN* (44:16), *p̄an* (47:b:24) for *þaðan*.

Contraction is frequent in foreign words and names, e.g. *d̄nl* (15:29), *d̄uf* (16:3, with the superscript sign for 'ul') for *dominus*, *dm* (11:12) for *dominum*, *d̄ni* (15:24) for *domini*; nom. *Iōhs* (26:37), acc. *iohm* (36:5), dat. *iohe* (8:4), gen. *iohil* (7:16) from *Johannes*; *dd* (38:6), *dds* (15:15) for *David*, *Dauids*; *Silūr* (19:16), *filuō* (19:48) for *Silvester*, *-tro*; cf. further *angeluf* (15:26), *-angelo* (7:17), *ecclesie* (36:12), *prophete* (19:18), *discipulus* (27:9), *ierusalem* (38:1). The same may be found in Norse names, e.g. *Ohr* (74:4) for *Óláfr*, *Oif* (74:25) for *Óláfs*.

Sporadically the first letter of the contraction is doubled to indicate the plural (see above), e.g. *kkga* (74:5) for *konunga*.

Contraction is often indicated by writing the last letter of the word superscript instead of writing a superscript stroke. These contractions as a rule consist only of two letters (with or without points, as in the corresponding suspensions; see above). Cf., e.g., *ic* (19:38) for *iesus*, *iv cr* (8:15) for *iesu kristr*, *xz* (38:13) for *kristis*, *d<sup>i</sup> mei iv x<sup>i</sup>* (27:12) and *cs d<sup>i</sup> n<sup>i</sup> iv x<sup>i</sup>* (27:16) to be expanded, respectively, as *domini mei iefv xristi* and *Guðs domini noftri iefv xristi*; *ce* (12:10) for *guði*, *gs* (19:32), *cs* (6:4) for *guðs*; *ks* (27:6) for *konungs*; *mr* (8:21), *M<sup>r</sup>* (20:5) for *maðr*, *Me* (31:b:3), *M<sup>i</sup>* (46:23) for *manni*, *Mz* (27:24) for *manns*, *M<sup>N</sup>* (26:30) for *menn*, *M<sup>o</sup>* (15:29) for *mōnnum*, *M<sup>a</sup>* (7:32), *M<sup>a</sup>* (26:33) for *manna*; *h<sup>o</sup>* (27:22) for *honum*, *h<sup>e</sup>* (27:11) for *henni*, *p<sup>s</sup>* (40:b:8 48:b:7) for *þess*; *ar* (75:23) for *Alexander*, *a<sup>i</sup>* (75:17) for *Alexandri*. Several words or

<sup>1</sup> Sporadically, *h̄v* occurs also; see H. Benediktsson 1963a p. 21.

word-types which are otherwise not abbreviated by contraction are often abbreviated in this way, e.g.  $n^t$  (4:7) for *nótt*,  $n^r$  (4:6) for *nætr*,  $v^r$  (4:13) for *vetr*,  $s^r$  (8:8) for *sonr*;  $m^{\text{c}\bar{o}}$  (3:21) for *morkum*;  $s^r$  (40:b:28) for *sínar*,  $s^m$  (40:b:32) for *sínum*;  $r^i$  (40:a:4) for *ríki*,  $m^i$  (40:a:42) for *minni*;  $v^a$  (28:29),  $f^a$  (40:a:42),  $t^a$  (40:b:36),  $h^a$  (47:a:18) for *vera*, *fara*, *taka*, *hafa*,  $f^o$  (36:10),  $t^o$  (40:b:6) for *fóru*, *tóku*,  $v^o$  (26:17) for *vóru*;<sup>1</sup>  $k^a$  (58:50),  $k^o$  (58:6) for *kona*, *konu*;  $e^i$  (22:7) for *eigi*;  $om^a$  (48:a:9) for *ómaga*. Instead of the superscript letter(s) the contraction may end in a superscript abbreviation sign (on which, see below), e.g. *vra* (48:b:7 9) for *vetra*.

Instead of the stroke the contraction is sometimes indicated by writing one of the omitted letters above the line, e.g.  $m^o\text{þr}$  (4:9) for *mónuðr*,  $m^a\text{þa}$  (4:12) for *mánada*,  $m^o\text{þ}\bar{o}$  (4:5) for *mónuðum*,  $m^a\text{a}$  (12:2 38:13) or  $m^na$  (62:7) for *manna*. Probably, cases like  $\text{-þ}^i\text{g}$  (49:a:12),  $\text{-þ}^i\text{gi}$  (49:a:13),  $\text{-þ}^i\text{ga}$  (49:a:12) for *-þing*, *-þingi*, *-þinga*, and  $m^i\text{ill}$  (59:29),  $m^i\text{in}$  (59:23) for *mikill*, *mikinn* belong here.

Similarly, the contraction may, when appropriate, be shown by a superscript sign (see below), e.g. *fvaraþe* (8:14), *bvscup* (68:21).

Sporadically there occurs a different type of contraction, which consists of the initial letter of the word and one or more of its middle letters, while the final letter is omitted. Directly from Latin comes *pp* for *papa* (19:14). Cf. further, e.g.,  $e\bar{g}$  for *eigi* (3:1),  $k\bar{k}$  for *kirkju* (51:22) (cf. also  $k\bar{k}vr$  61:20, to be expanded as *kirkivr*),  $m\bar{l}$  for *mællir* (31:a:17),  $m\bar{æ}l\bar{t}i$  (20:19 43:11),  $m\bar{æ}l\bar{t}u$  (36:34), or  $m\bar{æ}l\bar{t}$  (19:6),  $m\bar{l}t$  for *mælti* (15:28).

Superscript letters are not infrequent. A superscript vowel symbol regularly stands for 'r' or 'v' (cons. *u*) followed by the vowel in question. Cf., e.g., *dagren* 4:22, *necqverre* 2:b:10, *þripia* 4:13, *þvi* 15:16, *drotten* 7:24, *qvolom* 26:16, *brv* 3:3. Superscript 'a' usually stands for 'va', however, cf., e.g., *qvad* 2:a:21, *necqvad* 2:b:20, since there was a special sign for 'ra' (see below).<sup>2</sup>

Superscript 'i' sometimes also stands for 'ir', e.g. *virþa* 3:13, *uirgo* 15:24, *virþing* 49:a:2. In the same way, superscript 'v' occasionally represents 'vr', e.g. *fvrifr* 47:b:23, *bvriapi* 59:12, *bvr* 59:23, *þvrfti* 66:19, *þvrpti* 68:27. Sporadically, superscript 'o' also seems to be used for 'or', e.g. *borg* 27:5 28:17, *borgina* 27:23, *vorþr* 28:7, *morgom* 28:20, *voro* 64:9, although these might be cases of contraction comparable to  $m^a\text{a}$ ,  $\text{-þ}^i\text{g}$ , etc. (see above).

From about, or shortly before, the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, superscript 'r' is used for 'ar', e.g. *lagnar* 33:1, *fvmar* 33:6, *var* 39:6 40:a:2, *þegar* 40:a:6, *farit* 40:a:40, *anar* 40:b:36, *varð þar* 48:a:4. This 'r' may form a ligature with a preceding tall letter by being joined to its ascender (see p. 54 above), e.g. *þar* 33:21 22 24 60:4 23 62:5, *iapar* 52:1,

<sup>1</sup> There can be little doubt that these abbreviations are to be expanded as *fara*, *foro*, *voro*, etc. (and not as *fara*, *foro*, *voro*, etc.). This appears from such contractions in Sthm Perg. fol. No. 9 I (no. 40) as  $r^a$  (Ira13) for *rikja*,  $s^o$  (Irb25) for *sinu*; cf. also  $k^a$  for *kona*. Therefore, in the same way,  $v^o$  (8:25) and  $v^æ$  (27:1) are to be expanded as *voro*, *være*. The superscript 'ó' and 'æ' represent the 'o' and 'e' of the second syllable, to which are added certain features of the vowel symbol of the first syllable, viz. the accent and the first member

of the ligature, respectively; cf., below, such forms as *være*, with the abbreviation sign for 'er' ( $v^æ$ ). Similarly,  $v^w$  (51:24) is, to judge from instances of this form spelled out in full, to be expanded as *varv*; i.e. the superscript 'a' represents the 'v' of the second syllable and the entire vowel symbol of the first syllable.

<sup>2</sup> Sporadically, 'or' (with round 'r' and therefore treated as a unit) is written superscript for 'vor'; see *nocqvorum* 45:3 (with *-orum* superscript), *nocqvors* 45:6, *nocqvoru* 45:10.

rikari 62:21. In one manuscript at least, superscript 't' seems to stand for word-final 't' and a preceding vowel, *hvat* 44:22, *þingit* 44:27.

The sporadic writing of the two last letters of a word, joined into a ligature, above the line, may also be called an abbreviation, even though no letter is omitted; the purpose is obviously the same as in abbreviating; cf., e.g., *m<sup>an</sup>* 40:a:31 48:a:8, *hallarin<sup>ar</sup>* 68:2, *v<sup>ar</sup>* 68:14. Cf. also, in the middle of a word, but at the end of a line, *m<sup>or</sup>-gon* 71:6-7.

Finally, one may also mention here the superscript letters added as 'phonemic complements' to symbols with morphemic reference, in particular the numerals; cf., e.g., *.v<sup>ta</sup>*, *.vi<sup>ta</sup>*. (1:31) for *fimta*, *sétta*, *.iii<sup>si</sup>a*. (3:23) for *þriggja*, *.ii<sup>ar</sup>*. (3:32) for *tysvar*, *.xx<sup>da</sup>*. (38:3) for *tottogunda*. Cf. also, below, the phonemic complements accompanying the 'm'-rune for *maðr*.

A number of special signs are used in abbreviations:

The sign † is used for *kross*, e.g. 11:1 and †*fefta* 27:20, †*marc* 28:5.

The 'm'-rune is sometimes used for *maðr* and its inflectional forms, e.g. 9:12 14 25:5 48:b:10. In inflectional forms other than the indefinite nominative the rune is often followed by the last letter(s) of the form in question, either on the line or above it, in accordance with the principle of contraction; see, e.g., *miN* (25:25) for *maðrinn*, *.m<sup>ne</sup>*. (3:15) for *manni*, *.m<sup>s</sup>*. (3:18 23) for *manns*, and, with the 'm'-rune written twice to indicate the plural (see above), *.m.m<sup>na</sup>*. (3:28) for *manna*.

For *ok* the Tironian nota '7' is very frequent. From some manuscripts, however, it is entirely absent, especially the earliest ones, such as RM I-II, AM 237 a fol., and AM 315 d fol.<sup>1</sup> The sign has slightly varying forms; see, e.g., 16:15 22:6 7 26:7 and 31:b:15. From about the middle of the thirteenth century the crossed form replaces the earlier form; see, e.g., 36:24 51:1 52:1 etc. Like '&' (see p. 52) this sign is used sporadically for 'ep'.<sup>2</sup>

The superscript ω-like sign is used for combinations of 'a' and 'r' or 'v'. In the earliest manuscripts it seems always to stand for 'ra', e.g. *vitrac<sup>s</sup>k* 2:a:1, *bra<sup>v</sup>t* 8:6. Later it is also used for 'ar' and 'va', e.g. *marca* 26:32, *þegar* 27:21, *sva* 38:4. In the late thirteenth century this sign has sporadically a different form; a horizontal stroke at the top produces a closed variant which somewhat resembles a π, e.g. *v<sup>tra</sup>* 1:32 34, *sva* 50:a:36, *hvat* 62:19, *foruitnar* 76:11.<sup>3</sup>

The superscript '9'-like sign is used for 'uf' (or 'vf', which may then denote *ys* also; see p. 27 above). It is used both in Latin, especially at the end of words, e.g. *marciuf* 4:6 9, *Maiuf* 4:7, and in Icelandic, e.g. *huf* 3:27 6:7, *hauftet* 4:24, *Gu<sup>f</sup>* (for *guðs*) 6:13, *aúftr* 8:28, *hufi* 15:6, *gøf<sup>u</sup>fto* 27:6, *laclaufa* 38:18, *bv<sup>f</sup>cup* 68:21 (see above).

The superscript '2'-like sign is used for 'ur' (or 'vr', which may then denote *yr* also; see p. 27 above), e.g. *concurr<sup>en</sup>f* 4:7. It has more frequently the form '∞'; sometimes it is even almost closed, so that it looks like an '∞'-sign; see, e.g., *[pur]pe* 8:26, *turtu[re]* 10:1, *gv<sup>r</sup>þr* 31:b:10, *fvr* 40:b:6.

The sign 'o' for 'con' occurs sporadically, both in Latin words, e.g. *concurr<sup>en</sup>s* 4:5, *constan-  
cianaf* 68:6, and in Icelandic, e.g. *conurnar* 59:9, *cona* 68:24.

<sup>1</sup> See Holtsmark 1936 p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Seip 1954a pp. 59-60.

<sup>3</sup> For an additional example, see H. Benedikts-  
son 1963a pp. 21 and 34. —It should be noted

that in *manna* 62:31 this sign is, in accordance with its origin, used as an 'a'; therefore, in 62:19, one would be justified in expanding *hvat* instead of *hv<sup>a</sup>t*.

The slanting stroke attached to round 'r' to represent word-final 'rum' occurs sporadically; see, e.g., *orum* 19:19 20, *nanqrum* 46:15, *auðrum* 76:14. The stroke is sometimes added to capital 'R' also, e.g. *milfarum* 53:19, *fýrrum* 53:34, *ridderum* 67:9.

The semi-colon is used for 'ep' (or later 'eð'), e.g. *meþ* 27:6 43:7, *bipeþ* 27:3; cf. also *meðan* 58:37. It is used also, for example, in Lat. *sed* for *heldr* (7:8). It occurs sporadically for 'ul', too.<sup>1</sup>

The superscript tittle for 'er' is very frequent from the earliest times onward. It occurs in every manuscript except RM I and II.<sup>2</sup> It has slightly different forms. In the earliest manuscripts it stands as a rule for 'er', i.e. represents *er*, *ér*, or *ér* in stressed syllables as well as unstressed [ɪr]; cf., e.g., *ver* 2:b:17 18, *gerer* 3:2, *verþr* 3:18, *aprer* 3:20, *vere* 6:13. This agrees with the statement of the First Grammarian about the function of this sign (see above). There are, however, sporadic instances of this sign standing for an 'r' preceded by a vowel other than 'e', e.g. *aldernar* 4:29, *voro* 6:16, *dómar* 8:23. Quite frequently it is also used, apparently, for 'ei' or 'eir' especially in *þeir*, etc. (but sometimes also in *meiri*); cf., e.g., *þeir* 4:2 7:3, *þeira* 7:1 19:3, *þeire* 4:13, *þeirar* 19:2; *þeir* 19:11 29:a:14, *þeira* 29:a:15; *meira* 52:4 9. Thus, the same form *þer* may represent, in one and the same manuscript, *þeir* (38:1), *þær* (38:8), or *þér* (38:9).

It is generally believed that this sign may stand for 're' or 'ri', i.e. 'r' followed by the unstressed front vowel. This is based on examples like *være* 8:3, *lære-* 8:4, *være* 15:11, *þere* 16:2. These forms, however, are rather to be expanded as *være*, *þere*, etc. It is especially noteworthy that the abbreviation sign always clearly precedes the final 'æ' or 'e', never follows it. In other words, the 'æ' or 'e' represents not the entire vowel symbol of the stressed syllable; instead, it stands for the 'e' of the unstressed syllable to which is attached the diacritic mark of the stressed vowel symbol. This is parallel to such spellings as *-qvemðar* 40:a:4, *qvemer* 40:a:16, where 've' is represented by the superscript stroke (see below), while the subscript loop is attached to the preceding 'q'.

Very early this sign is used for 'r' alone, e.g. *er* 12:1, *mark* 12:4, *criftr* 12:4, *merk(r)þr* 12:5, *gýþingrin* 18:1, *uinr* 18:5.

Later this sign is also used to represent 'ir' in stressed syllables, e.g. *-firðe* 34:10, *fir* 36:11 43:13 69:20. This is probably, to some extent at least, connected with the change in the notation of the unstressed front vowel from 'e' to 'i' (p. 72 above), through which the abbreviation sign, when denoting unstressed [ɪr], acquired the value of 'ir' beside 'er'.

As mentioned above (p. 54), 'r' could form a ligature with a preceding letter, especially a tall one; the tongue of the 'r' was then attached to the ascender of this letter. On the analogy of the sign for 'er', this 'r', obviously misinterpreted as an abbreviation sign, was then used sporadically for 'er', e.g. *þer* 33:2 (representing *þær*), and for 'ei' or 'eir' in *þeir*, e.g. *þeir* 51:37.<sup>3</sup>

The most frequent abbreviation sign is no doubt the superscript stroke. Its principal function is to represent a nasal consonant, the so-called 'nasal stroke'. In some of the earliest manuscripts it is used only to indicate an omitted 'm' after a vowel, e.g. *ollom* 1:1, *com* 2:a:1. Very

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Its absence from the short RM III and VI, on the other hand, is probably accidental.

<sup>3</sup> For examples of *þeir*, see H. Benediktsson 1963a p. 25. Spehr 1929 p. 145 mentions the occurrence of this abbreviation in Norwegian.



early, however, it also stands for 'n', though at first less frequently; e.g. *farningar* 3:10–11, *faman* 4:6. It is noteworthy that the First Grammarian suggests that it should be used for 'n' as well as for 'm'. Very early, too, the stroke represents 'n' and a preceding vowel, e.g. *himenlf* 7:18, *himen-* 8:3, *drotennlf* 15:13, *drotennlf* 16:18, *drottenlf* 17:20, *domendr* 19:10, *comen* 15:22, *himen* 20:6; *hæfþingia* 8:5, *læcning* 7:13 28, *kenning* 8:2, *buninge* 8:18 (with the ligature 'ŋ'; see pp. 53–54); *mifcunn* 15:30, *mifcunnar* 15:28, *mifcun* 20:40, *mifcunnaþu* 26:21; *fiþan* 8:7 17:16, *darþan* 27:10, *faman* 33:11. These abbreviations are difficult to distinguish from such contractions, mentioned above, as *tǫl* for *tungr*, *þǫi* for *þingi*, *ld* for *land*, etc. The stroke may also stand for 'nn' or for 'nn' preceded by a vowel, e.g. *inn* 18:2, *borinn* 26:6; *drottenn* 19:18 20:6, *numenn* 27:1. Later the stroke is often placed over a consonant letter, especially an 'n', e.g. *minning* 36:2, *hænnar* 36:4, *fiannða* 37:15, *criftnne* 38:6. The examples show that the stroke has mainly two slightly different forms, a curved hook and a straight horizontal stroke; cf., for instance, the two examples of *fiþan* in 43:2.<sup>1</sup>

Like the stroke for suspension and contraction the nasal stroke is sometimes not placed directly above one letter, but extends along two. It may then be difficult to decide whether a form like, for example, *ein* is to be expanded as *einn* or as *einn*. The not very frequent instances of *hō* (e.g. 52:10 55:6) for *hon* (beside the much more frequent *hō*) may be of this kind (cf. also, e.g., *h̄rfo* and *h̄rfo* for *hversu*, or *þ̄r* and *þ̄r* for *þeir*). But *hō* may also conceivably represent a further development of *h°* (see above) under the influence of *h̄* for *hann*.

The stroke sometimes stands for 've', especially when it is placed over 'q', e.g. *neqv̄et* 18:22 (cf. *neqv̄et* 18:23), *necqv̄er* 26:3 29, *qv̄eliafc* 26:24, *qv̄elio[m]c* 36:37, *qv̄emi* 40:b:42, *-qv̄em-ðar* 40:a:4, *qv̄emer* 40:a:16 (see above). Over other letters it occurs only sporadically, e.g. *h̄rfo* 6:7 or *h̄rfo* 6:15 for *hversu*.

A superscript stroke (or cross-bar) is used in some manuscripts to indicate word-final 'e' or 'r', e.g. *markaþe* 12:3, *lagþe* 12:12, *dege* 12:5, *eiġe* 12:11; *tirop̄r* 12:7, *l̄ypr* 12:21. It is worth observing that these abbreviations are kept clearly apart from the ligatures of 'de' and 'þr' respectively (see pp. 52 and 54 above); cf., e.g., *-ld* for *-lande* 16:16 22 and *hallde* 16:3, or *ḡyrþ̄* for *ḡyrþr* 31:a:20 and *gvrþr* 31:b:10. The same abbreviation sign is used for word-final 'r' and a preceding vowel, e.g. *merker* 14:22, *móþor* 22:5, *goþer* 26:1, *faþer* 26:21, *iarþar* 27:15, *fóþor* 27:17, *heNar* 31:a:10,<sup>2</sup> *reiþar* 31:b:22,<sup>2</sup> *epter* 40:a:19. Later it is also used for word-final 'et', e.g. *þeget* 36:10, *micet* 40:a:34, *leget* 40:a:35, *litet* 40:b:1, or 'at', e.g. *aNat* 40:a:12. Cf. further, e.g., *atte* 31:a:3 40:a:6, *callaðe* 36:5, *kallaðe* 40:b:36, *aNat* 48:b:19, *gengo* 51:22.

Probably related to this are the abbreviations *eþ̄* (3:3 17:5 19:7 20:29 21:12 25:25 etc.) or *eđ̄* (25:25 etc.) for *eða*, *mþ̄* (17:13 19:46 20:15 29:a:5 etc.) or *mđ̄* (25:1 etc.) for *með*, and *vþ̄* (17:17 etc.) or *vđ̄* (25:29 etc.) for *við*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained that in some manuscripts, especially AM 677 4° B, the strokes for 'm' and 'n' are differentiated in form; see Spehr 1929 p. 138 n. 3, Seip 1954a p. 61. This may, indeed, be true. In many cases the strokes seem clearly different, cf., e.g., *orpom* 26:2 and *tungo* 26:9. But in some cases there appears to be confusion. For example, in *abrahamlf* 26:6, *abraham* 26:7, *dòmom* 26:13, the stroke is more similar to that in *tungo*;

cf. also *non* 26:14 and (cf) *non* 26:17, where the two forms of the stroke seem to be used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> This example is at the end of a line.

<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that the origin of these abbreviations is to be sought in the instances with 'đ'; see Seip 1954a pp. 25 and 60. The earliest examples, however, do not seem to favour this: most of them are cases of 'þ' for *-þe* or *-þr*.

Latin words, abbreviated, are not infrequent in Icelandic texts. Of at any rate the most frequent ones it may be said with certainty that they were not intended to be read in Latin, but were used only as abbreviations for Icelandic words. The most frequent are  $\bar{n}$  (= *non*) for *eigi* (15:5 26:14 etc.),  $\bar{l}$  (= *vel*) for *eða* (26:13), *lic* (= *licut*) for *svá sem* (22:14), *s*; or *l*; (= *fed*) for *heldr* (7:8 27:26). Others, less frequent, are *p'* (= *poft*) for *eftir* (27:6), *n<sup>i</sup>* (= *nifi*) for *nema* (27:18), *s<sup>c</sup>s* (= *sanctus*) for *heilagr* (70:14).

As pointed out above (p. 85), the traditional and current classification of abbreviations into suspensions, contractions, etc. may be said to be based on the formal means used to indicate the abbreviation; the classification, in other words, is an analysis of the 'expression plane' of the system of abbreviation signs, not of its 'content plane'. From the point of view of the latter, on the other hand, i.e. from the point of view of their function, the abbreviations fall into two categories, depending on the level of the linguistic hierarchy to which they have reference. Some of the abbreviations refer directly to the morphemic level; they represent lexical or grammatical forms, or both. Thus, for example,  $\bar{p}$  for *þat* refers directly to this grammatical form, and the abbreviation mark (the cross-bar) does not stand for the phonemes, or graphemes, other than 'p', of which the word-form is composed; for in other occurrences of 'at', in words like *gata*, *þangat*, this combination is as a rule not abbreviated in this way. Whether or not a word is abbreviated in this way depends very much either on its general frequency of occurrence (as in the case of  $\bar{p}$ ,  $\bar{h}$ ,  $\bar{7}$  for *þat*, *hann*, *ok* respectively) or on its frequency in the text in question (as in the case, for instance, of *.m.* for *morkum* in the laws, or of *O.* or *O<sup>l</sup>* for *Óláfr* in the Sagas of the Kings of Norway). In other words, the potentiality of abbreviation of a lexical or a grammatical form may, to a considerable extent, be said to be proportional to the redundancy, as conditioned by the linguistic or extra-linguistic context, of its phonemic shape. Other abbreviations refer to the graphemic-phonemic level; they represent graphemic-phonemic combinations without regard to the lexical or grammatical form in which they occur. Thus, for instance, superscript 'e' represents the combinations 're' or 've', and the superscript  $\omega$ -like sign stands for 'ra' or 'va', and these abbreviations may be used, with one exception (the word-initial position), wherever these combinations occur, without regard to the identity of the grammatical form. It is especially noteworthy that the only condition for their use, which excludes them from the initial position—viz. that they be preceded by at least one letter—belongs to the graphemic-phonemic level. About these abbreviations it may be argued, however, that they refer directly to the graphemic level only, and only indirectly, at the second remove as it were, to the phonemic level. This is indicated by such abbreviations as *bravt* 8:33, or *aú/tr* 8:28, where the abbreviation signs stand for letter combinations which represent phonemes that are not coordinate in the hierarchy of the phonemic word structure, while others which are more closely related to each other (viz. those forming the diphthong *au*) are separated in the graphic representation. What, among other things, makes the twelfth- and especially the thirteenth-century abbreviation system so complex is that the same material mark may function as an abbreviation of either category, or conversely, that abbreviations belonging to the two functional categories may be manifested by the same graphic means. The most extreme example of this is the multiple function of the superscript horizontal stroke.

WORD DIVISION AND PUNCTUATION. Word division is on the whole very regular. The two main irregularities are that proclitics, especially the prepositions *á, í, af*, etc., are often written together with the following word (e.g. *afþui* 7:9, *inaofnom* 7:10), and that the two members of a compound word are sometimes written apart (e.g. *hofop ærer* 7:6).

Word division between lines is very irregular; a single final letter may even be carried over to the next line (e.g. *Ren-n* 2:a:2-3). The hyphen is sometimes used.

By far the most common punctuation mark is the period. It represents pauses which mark the division of the text into sentences, clauses, or even phrases; it may thus be said to correspond, roughly, to the period and the comma in modern punctuation. To indicate a higher degree of separation the period is followed by a majuscule; sometimes the period is then omitted, and the majuscule alone indicates the separation. Letters representing numerals are as a rule preceded and followed by the period (e.g. 4:2-3). For the period as an abbreviation mark, see pp. 87-89 above.

Other punctuation marks are less frequent, such as the colon, the semi-colon (e.g. 23:2), the inverted semi-colon (e.g. 34:7 21), and the 'diaeresis-comma' (,) (e.g. 8:14). An interrogation mark (∞) may be seen in 8:13 19.

To indicate transposition of words or longer passages two dots or the letters 'a', 'b', etc. are used (see, e.g., 8:8 and 13-14).

A subscript dot indicates deletion (e.g. *ḣ* 3:8).

When an omitted letter or one or more words are added above the line or in the margin, an insertion mark is often written in the appropriate place. The caret mark is most frequent (see, e.g., 1:4 3:8 14:28 26:24 25 27:13 36:13 48:a:33), but other marks also occur, for example a cross (34:13 70:22).

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<sup>1</sup> This short bibliography covers only general works dealing with Icelandic paleography as well as the principal series of reproductions of manu-

scripts. For a bibliography of medieval paleography in general, see, for instance, Denholm-Young 1954 pp. 86-93 with further references.