

manuscripts. Some of them have received new dates since the publication of Seip (1954), e. g. GKS 1347 4to, which was dated ca. 1200 by Seip (1954), but now ca. 1175.

Finally, Holm-Olsen (1990) should be mentioned. This is a general introduction to the field of Norwegian literary culture in medieval times, popular in approach, but well documented and richly illustrated.

8. Literature (a selection)

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Odd Einar Haugen, Bergen (Norway)

96. The development of Latin script II: in Iceland

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6. Literature (a selection)

1. The introduction of Latin script

According to the Icelandic *Book of Settlements* (*Landnámabók*), a considerable part of the Norse population which settled in Iceland in the decades around the year 900 came from the British Isles; some of these settlers, at least, were Christians and may have brought with them books in Latin. Christian missionaries travelling to Iceland during the last decades of the 10th century must have relied on Latin texts, and such books no doubt existed in Iceland after Christianity was adopted in the year 1000 and in the 11th century with the organization of the Icelandic church.

The General Assembly (*Alþingi*) resolved in the summer of 1117 to put Icelandic civil laws into writing; this work was begun in the following winter, but the resolution would

hardly have been passed unless Icelanders already at that time had some experience in writing the vernacular in the Latin script.

2. The corpus

Remains of Latin medieval manuscripts in Iceland are for the most part confined to single leaves used in the binding of younger books, and it cannot be determined conclusively whether the oldest ones were written in Iceland or abroad. On such fragments, see especially Eggen 1968 and Gjerløw 1980. Only in very few cases has the same scribe been shown to have written in both Latin and Icelandic; see e. g. Louis-Jensen 1977, 19–20, and Stefán Karlsson 1982, 1986.

Relatively few Icelandic manuscripts from the Middle Ages have been preserved intact; in many cases we are left with only a few leaves, sometimes no more than a single leaf or a part of a single leaf. The earliest preserved manuscripts (and fragments of manuscripts) containing vernacular texts have been dated to the middle of or second half of the 12th century, and manuscripts from before 1300

number less than one hundred, but on the whole somewhere between 700 and 800 manuscripts, written in the period up to the middle of the 16th century, have survived to present times. Many of the manuscripts written after 1300 contain texts which are thought to have been copied from 13th century exemplars. With the exception of charters, only very few originals of Icelandic texts have survived. No charters from the period before 1300 have survived, and only 20 have been preserved from the first half of the 14th century, but after that they become more numerous, especially charters from the 15th century. Almost all charters include a date, but most manuscripts have been dated by scholars based on paleography and orthography, which only allows them to be dated within a period of half a century.

Specimens, in most cases a single page, from a vast majority of surviving manuscripts from the period before 1300 are produced in facsimile by Hreinn Benediktsson (1965), and his introduction provides a very thorough survey of the development of the Icelandic script and orthography at its earliest stages; the present article draws substantially on this account. The most detailed descriptions of the paleography of individual manuscripts are the ones by Buerger (1904), Lindblad (1954) and de Leeuw van Weenen (1993 and 2000). Facsimiles of select pages from manuscripts of this period and subsequent centuries have been reproduced by Kålund (1905, 1907) and Árni Böðvarsson (1974), and specimens of the script are found in Björn K. Þórólfsson (1950), Seip (1954), and Svensson (1974). A little over fifty manuscripts are available in their entirety in facsimile editions in the series CCI, MI, ÍH, EIM, and ÍM. Facsimiles of original charters down to 1450 are in IO. The latest datings of medieval Icelandic manuscripts are found in ONP Indices.

3. The earliest Icelandic script

3.1. The so-called *First Grammatical Treatise*, composed about or shortly after the middle of the 12th century, is a unique source of information about language and writing in Iceland at the time. It is only preserved in a single manuscript, AM 242 fol. (facsimile edition in CCI II), from the 14th century, and is available in several editions, the most recent one by Hreinn Benediktsson (1972), accompanied by an English translation and a very thorough

commentary and introduction, as well as facsimiles of the manuscript pages containing the treatise. The aim of the author of the treatise was to compose “an alphabet for us Icelanders”, i. e. adapt the Latin alphabet to meet the needs of the Icelandic language by, on the one hand, disposing of Latin letters deemed unnecessary by the author, and, on the other hand, adding letters that were essential for unambiguous interpretation of the written language.

The author argued that in addition to the Latin vowel symbols ⟨a⟩, ⟨e⟩, ⟨i⟩, ⟨o⟩, and ⟨u⟩, the Icelandic alphabet needed the symbols ⟨q⟩, ⟨ę⟩, ⟨ø⟩, and ⟨y⟩, i. e. symbols denoting the phonemes which arose as the result of the umlauts. For each one he provided a description of the pronunciation and explained the shape of every one of the new letters, for instance, ⟨ø⟩, he said, was composed of “the crossbar of *e* and the circle of *o*”. In his view, long vowels should be distinguished from their short counterparts by the writing of a superscript accent mark over the letter when it represented the long vowel; furthermore, nasal vowels should be indicated by a superscript dot over the vowel symbol.

The author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* found a few of the Latin consonant symbols to be unnecessary for writing the Icelandic language; for the short /k/ he proposed to use ⟨c⟩ exclusively, rather than ⟨k⟩ or ⟨q⟩ (in the combination /qv/), and instead of the letters ⟨x⟩ and ⟨z⟩ he preferred to write ⟨cs⟩ and ⟨ds⟩ (or possibly ⟨ts⟩), respectively. On the other hand, he favored the addition of ⟨þ⟩ to the Icelandic alphabet, and he also designed a new symbol intended to denote /ng/. Instead of doubling the minuscule letters to denote geminate consonants, the author proposed to use single majuscule letters, or small capitals, but since the small capital ⟨C⟩ looks almost identical to the minuscule ⟨c⟩, he thought it convenient to adopt the Greek *kappa* for the geminate /k/; the shape of this letter in the extant copy of the treatise and in manuscripts where it occurs is ⟨k⟩, i. e. like the type of ⟨k⟩ employed at least in the early stage of Caroline minuscule script (see, for instance, the alphabet in Bischoff 1986, 175).

For the influence of the *First Grammatical Treatise* on the development of the Icelandic script, see 4.1.

3.2. The script in the earliest extant Icelandic manuscripts is almost fully consistent with Caroline minuscule. In this respect there is a

clear difference between the Icelandic and Norwegian script in the earliest period, for at that time the Norwegian script already shows considerable Anglo-Saxon insular influence in vernacular writings. The letter ⟨þ⟩ was, however, used already in the earliest Icelandic manuscripts, and even if the letter was already familiar to Icelanders from the runic alphabet, where it was named *þurs*, its adoption in the Latin script in Iceland, as well as in Norway, is without much doubt due to either direct or indirect Anglo-Saxon influence, for in this function it had at least from the 12th century been known in Iceland under the Anglo-Saxon name *þorn*. The insular letters ⟨þ⟩, ⟨ð⟩, and ⟨f⟩, were adopted later than ⟨þ⟩ and used to varying degrees, as described in 4.1. (⟨ð⟩) and 5. (⟨þ⟩ and ⟨f⟩); their adoption is without doubt to be attributed to Norwegian, rather than Anglo-Saxon, influence.

4. The development of the script

4.1. The guidelines set forth in the *First Grammatical Treatise* were not followed in detail in any of the preserved Icelandic manuscripts. Its influence can, however, be detected in a great many manuscripts well into the 14th century, but the observance of its rules varies greatly, and consistency in orthography is extremely rare. An overview of the employment of various graphemes in almost 50 Icelandic manuscripts from the earliest period into the 14th century is provided by Lindblad (1954, 308–16). Considerable variation in script and orthography is to be expected in a sparsely populated country like Iceland, where there were many cultural centers but with few people; these were primarily the episcopal seats, the monasteries and the farmsteads of the most affluent families. Under these circumstances the homogeneity in language – and script – is more remarkable than the variation.

The umlaut phonemes /e/, /ø/, and /ø/ were not only denoted with the symbols proposed by the author of the *First Grammatical Treatise*, but also in a variety of other ways, as described in section 5.; this variation was compounded by the fact that in Icelandic the short vowels /ø/ and /ø/ began to merge around 1200 and long /e/ and long /ø/ around 1250. Nasal vowels appear to have merged with their non-nasal counterparts in the 12th century; there is, at any rate, no indication that the scribes of the earliest extant manuscripts distinguished them in their own language.

The distinction between long vowels and their short counterparts is entirely absent or only sporadic in some manuscripts, but when this distinction is made it is, until around 1300, done exclusively by means of a superscript acute accent mark; this same acute accent mark does, however, sometimes also appear over short-vowel symbols, especially over ⟨i⟩ in order to separate it from the minims of ⟨u⟩, ⟨n⟩, and ⟨m⟩. During the 14th century the employment of the acute accent mark to denote vowel length gradually decreased, and after 1400 it is rarely seen in this function until its revival in the second half of the 18th century (Lindblad 1952). Due to Norwegian influence during the 14th century this usage of the acute accent mark was gradually replaced by the doubling of vowel symbols, if the distinction of vowel length is observed at all; in those cases long /i/ is denoted ⟨ij⟩, and in the course of the 14th century ⟨a⟩ replaced ⟨aa⟩, and long /u/ was represented by ⟨w⟩. In addition, doubled vowel symbols (or ligatures) sometimes were written with double accent marks.

The author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* did not succeed in expelling those Latin consonant symbols which in his view were unnecessary. During the 13th century most scribes used the letter ⟨q⟩ in the sequence /kv/, but occasionally the velar was spelled ⟨c⟩ or ⟨k⟩ in this position. The predominant practice in the 14th century was to write ⟨ku⟩ (or ⟨kv⟩), except perhaps in the sequence /kve/, which was usually abbreviated ⟨q⟩ with a superscript horizontal stroke, consistent with the Latin custom. Almost every scribe used both ⟨k⟩ and ⟨c⟩ alternately to denote /k/; in some early manuscripts the so-called palatal rule was observed to a certain extent, i.e. the practice of writing ⟨k⟩ mostly before front vowels, but in the course of the 13th century ⟨k⟩ gradually took precedence over ⟨c⟩, which in the 14th century became rare, except in foreign words, loanwords, and in the digraph ⟨ck⟩ for long /k/. On the other hand there are examples of ⟨c⟩ for *ts* in a few manuscripts from around 1200. Generally, however, a sequence of a dental stop followed by a sibilant was, into the 16th century, denoted with the letter ⟨z⟩, but before the genitive ending *-s* the letter representing the dental was sometimes inserted before the ⟨z⟩, usually in analogy with other forms in the paradigm. The letter ⟨x⟩ is commonly found in word stems, but less frequently in genitive forms where *-s* directly follows stem-final *g* or *k*. A fair num-

ber of scribes in the first half of the 13th century employed a special symbol ⟨ŋ⟩, a kind of ligature of ⟨n⟩ and ⟨g⟩, but it was much less frequent in the second half of this century and appeared very rarely after 1300. In the earliest manuscripts the letter ⟨þ⟩ was the universal symbol for denoting the dental fricative, but before the middle of the 13th century the Anglo-Saxon insular ⟨ð⟩ appeared in this role in medial and final position. From around 1300 onwards, ⟨þ⟩ was somewhat rare in non-initial position and appeared in these positions only sporadically in abbreviations in some hands up to 1400. In initial position, ⟨þ⟩ has maintained its standing up to modern times, but ⟨ð⟩ was replaced by ⟨ð̇⟩; this process had already begun in the 13th century, around the mid-14th century ⟨ð̇⟩ took precedence over ⟨ð⟩ in these positions, and after 1400 ⟨ð̇⟩ does barely appear. Both the adoption of the letter ⟨ð̇⟩ and ultimately its abolition were due to Norwegian influence. (Around 1700 ⟨ð̇⟩ was retained in accurate copies of old manuscripts; it was used in a few printed books in the late 18th century, a practice which became more common in the first half of the 19th century, but ⟨ð̇⟩ did not become a standard feature of Icelandic writing and printing until the second half of the 19th century.)

The distinction between single and geminate consonants, if observed at all, could be accomplished in three ways: (1) Doubling the consonant symbol was practised from the very beginning but was not used exclusively, save for a very few of the earliest manuscripts. Long /k/ was frequently written ⟨cc⟩ in the earliest period (and sometimes ⟨cq⟩ before *v*), but later also ⟨kk⟩ or ⟨ck⟩, and after 1300 ⟨ck⟩ was the most common notation by a wide margin. (2) The practice proposed in the *First Grammatical Treatise* can be witnessed to varying degrees in a great many hands; it also varies considerably from one letter to another, since some of the capital letter forms differ only minimally from their minuscule counterparts. For this reason the letter ⟨k̇⟩ was adopted for long /k/ (see 3.1.) and used in a few manuscripts until around 1300; in this period, too, long /l/ could be denoted as ⟨l̇⟩, which is more likely a kind of a small capital rather than a ligature of ⟨ll⟩. The 13th century saw the sporadic use of uncial ⟨ṁ⟩ as a capital for long /m/, and the capital ⟨Ṫ⟩ never became widely used for long /t/, due to its resemblance to the minuscule ⟨ṫ⟩. The most frequent and longest lasting in their function denoting geminate consonants were ⟨Ṅ⟩, ⟨Ṙ⟩, ⟨Ġ⟩, and ⟨Ṡ⟩,

which were employed by some scribes well into the 14th century. The last of these four had, however, a weaker position than the others, since the “round *s*”, which is, in fact, the same letter, was used more and more frequently to denote short /s/ (see 5.); the predominant symbol for short /s/ was, however, the “tall *s*”, ⟨ſ⟩. (3) The third method of denoting geminate consonants was by means of a superscript dot; it is, like the use of capital letters in this function, characteristic of Icelandic writing. Even in the first half of the 13th century instances can be found of a superscript dot over ⟨ṫ⟩, ⟨ṙ⟩, ⟨ġ⟩, and ⟨ṗ⟩, and in the second half of this century also over ⟨ċ⟩, ⟨ṅ⟩, and the bowl of ⟨ḋ⟩ (⟨ð̇⟩) and ⟨k̇⟩. The first set of these dotted letters remained in use at least into the 16th century; the same applies to ⟨ṅ⟩, although here it was more common to express length by way of a superscript horizontal stroke over the vowel symbol preceding the ⟨ṅ⟩ or over the ⟨ṅ⟩ itself; this is also true of long /m/. The use of ⟨ċ⟩ with a superscript dot was abandoned in the 14th century, consistent with the decreasing use, in general, of the letter ⟨ċ⟩ at the time. ⟨ð̇⟩ with a superscript dot is very rare, but dotted ⟨k̇⟩ is somewhat more common and appears as late as around the middle of the 14th century. The two latter methods of denoting consonant gemination were sometimes united, i.e. by writing a capital letter with a superscript dot. This practice can be observed before the middle of the 13th century and lasted as long as capitals were employed for geminates.

Icelandic medieval script is characterized by extensive use of abbreviations. Common words or words that appeared frequently in the same text often were abbreviated by writing only the first one or few letters, but sometimes the ending was indicated by writing the last letter on or above the line. Individual superscript letters could also denote a sequence of letters, and various abbreviation symbols derived from Latin script were employed, cf. the thorough overview in Hreinn Benediktsson (1965), pp. 85–95, and the specimens accompanying the present article. The shape of some of the abbreviation symbols and their use evolved somewhat over time, for instance the way common words were abbreviated.

4.2. As noted above, the earliest Icelandic script is Carolingian in character. The individual letters are written separately and not

joined, and in addition to the straight vertical strokes, they are characterized by their curved shape. This was the prevalent script throughout the 13th century and remained in use to some extent into the first half of the 14th century. During the 13th century, Gothic traits became discernible, initially in that the bow of ⟨h⟩, ⟨m⟩, and ⟨n⟩ became angular; these characteristics became more pronounced at the beginning of the 14th century and culminated in book writing around the middle of this century.

There is usually a considerable difference between the script used in the 14th century for charters and the one used for books; in the charters (none of which are earlier than the 14th century) a cursive type of script predominates (see e. g. fig. 7), which in many cases was heavily influenced by Norwegian charter script; by contrast, the script used for books is as a rule much less cursive in character. The angular character of the Gothic script, replacing the curved (or even the straight) strokes of the Caroline script, is much more pronounced in books than in charters, while in the charter script letters more frequently were joined and also – more often than in book script, at least in the first half of the 14th century – a small loop was written on the right side of the topmost part of the ascenders.

The difference between book script and charter script is in most cases barely discernible after 1400, except that in service books containing Latin texts the script is more formal. Changes in script were quite insignificant up until the Reformation, which brought with it foreign influence, i. e. German influence by way of Denmark.

5. The shape and use of individual letters

⟨a⟩ of the Caroline type, with a bowl and a bow above it, was predominant in the 13th century. In the second half of the century a younger type of ⟨a⟩ appeared sporadically, with a bow bending down to the bowl, i. e. the so-called “two-storey *a*”; this type gradually prevailed in the course of the 14th century, but in addition a “single-storey *a*” started appearing, initially in charters, before the middle of the 14th century.

⟨d⟩ with an upright shaft was universal or predominant in a few of the very earliest manuscripts, but around 1200 a different type

of ⟨d⟩ made its appearance; in this type the shaft bends to the left and it is usually curved (⟨ð⟩, uncial ⟨d⟩). ⟨ð⟩ was predominant or universal in most manuscripts during the 13th century and probably became universal around 1300. The upper tip of the ascender of ⟨ð⟩ frequently was turned upward, but sometimes, especially around the middle of, and during the second half of, the 13th century, it was turned downward. During the 14th century – in the first half thereof mostly in charter script – it became common to draw a thin line from the upper tip of the ascender down to the right side of the bowl.

⟨ð̄⟩ was distinguished from ⟨ð⟩ in several ways, usually with a loop, much less frequently with a straight stroke, on the right side of the ascender. The end of the loop or the straight stroke sometimes extended through the ascender, but a straight cross-bar without a loop was used by a few scribes. For the use of ⟨ð̄⟩, see 4.1.

⟨f⟩ of the Carolingian type was universal in the earliest Icelandic manuscripts (3.2.), but the insular ⟨f⟩, ⟨ƒ⟩, started to appear in the first half of the 13th century, became predominant around the middle of the century and was practically universal towards the end of it, with the exception that many scribes used Caroline script ⟨f⟩ in words of Latin origin. The vertical stroke of ⟨ƒ⟩ always descended below the line, but the right-hand strokes varied in shape. Throughout the 13th century the upper shaft typically consisted of a short angular stroke, a dot or a short curved stroke and the lower one of a nearly horizontal stroke or a dot. In some hands in the first half of the 14th century the upper shaft developed into a larger curved stroke which bends down to touch the vertical shaft, and in charter script the lower shaft, too, forms a bowl which extends down below the line. This type, with two bowls, became predominant in Icelandic script, both in books and charters, in the second half of the 14th century and was used to a great extent up to the 17th century.

The upper half of ⟨g⟩ most often resembled the letter ⟨o⟩, but the shape of the lower half varied. The lower half frequently consisted of a second bowl which was joined with the upper bowl; this shape became predominant during the 14th century. Alternatively, the lower half was formed by a stroke from the upper half, extending below the line, either curving to the left or almost entirely vertically. Sometimes this leftward stroke was joined to the upper half by a fine hair-line, or, alternatively, it

could curve again to the right to form an oval-shaped bowl below the line. In some hands, especially in the second half of the 13th century, this stroke extended leftward below the letters preceding the ⟨g⟩.

In some of the earliest manuscripts, the right stroke of ⟨h⟩ barely extends below the line, and usually its lower tip bends leftward. However, even in the early 13th century it usually descended below the line. When the right stroke of ⟨h⟩ has a sharp angular turn, it most often extends straight down below the line where it frequently bends to the left; this type of ⟨h⟩ was predominant in the 14th century.

⟨j⟩ (always without a dot, but occasionally with acute accent mark) was rarely used in the 13th century, except sentence-initially for short and long /i/ and for /j/. In a few hands, however, the use of ⟨j⟩ is more extensive (for /i/ or /j/), but it was almost entirely limited to word-initial or final position, especially in final position in Roman numerals. The use of ⟨j⟩ in word-initial position increased after 1300, to begin with especially in charters; frequently, however, the capital letter ⟨J⟩ was used in this position. In addition, ⟨ij⟩ was used for long /i/ as a doubled vowel symbol.

The right half of ⟨k⟩ was formed by two strokes; the upper one formed a bowl, and the lower one extended rightward down towards the line. During the 14th century the lower stroke was almost vertical in some hands, but in a more common type of ⟨k⟩ this stroke and a serif on the right side of the lower tip of the main vertical stem nearly join to form a ⟨k⟩ which almost has two bowls.

In a few hands in the 13th century, the right minim of ⟨n⟩ sometimes extends below the line, especially in those cases where ⟨n⟩ (usually with a horizontal superscript stroke) denotes long /n/. This type of ⟨n⟩ and ⟨m⟩ was most common in word-final position. Its use culminated around or shortly after 1300, when it often was used irrespective of position within the word, but around the middle of the 14th century it had again become somewhat rare.

During the 13th century a few scribes wrote ⟨r⟩ with a vertical stroke that extended below the line; this mostly occurred in word-final position, and in some hands this was even a standard practice. This type of ⟨r⟩ became more common around 1300, but after the middle of the 14th century it was again rare. During the 14th century, starting in charter script, a line was sometimes drawn from the

lower tip of the stem upward to the shaft so that the ⟨r⟩ resembles the letter ⟨v⟩. The “round *r*”, also known as “*r rotunda*”, ⟨ṛ⟩, which developed out of the right half of the ligature of ⟨o⟩ and ⟨R⟩, appeared sporadically following ⟨o⟩ (as well as ⟨ø⟩, ⟨q⟩, ⟨ð⟩, and ⟨æ⟩) in almost all the earliest Icelandic manuscripts, and over the course of the 13th century it became almost the standard choice for *r* following these letters. Around the middle of the 13th century ⟨ṛ⟩ also started appearing after ⟨ð⟩ (and ⟨ð⟩), and soon thereafter its use, too, became standard practice; at the same time ⟨ṛ⟩ also appeared following ⟨b⟩, ⟨g⟩, ⟨p⟩, and ⟨b⟩, albeit with less regularity. The use of ⟨ṛ⟩ following these letters was further established during the 14th century, and around the middle of this century and shortly thereafter the use of ⟨ṛ⟩ sometimes was extended to follow other letters, at least ⟨a⟩, ⟨y⟩, ⟨v⟩, and ⟨h⟩. During the 15th century, especially in the second half, ⟨ṛ⟩ was frequently used without any regard to the preceding letter, but it was rarely seen in word-initial position before 1500.

Two types of ⟨s⟩ were in use, the so-called “tall *s*”, or ⟨ſ⟩, and the “round *s*” ⟨s⟩. The first one was nearly universal up to 1300 as a symbol for short /s/. From around the middle of the 13th century and onwards, the ⟨ſ⟩ extended below the line in some hands, and in the 14th century this variant of ⟨ſ⟩ became predominant, except in very formal script. The use of “round *s*” (to denote short /s/) was in the beginning to a great extent confined to abbreviations where the abbreviation symbol was written above the ⟨s⟩; its use increased during the 14th century, especially in word-final and initial position, but ⟨ſ⟩ still remained the much more widely used type. The “round *s*” appeared in a number of variant shapes, especially in charter script: frequently the bows were closed so that the letter resembles the numerals ⟨8⟩ or ⟨6⟩ or a mirror image of the latter.

The stem of ⟨t⟩ usually extended only very slightly above the crossbar and sometimes not at all.

Short and long /u/, and /v/ were denoted by ⟨u⟩ and ⟨v⟩; the insular ⟨p⟩ appeared around 1200 and it was employed by many scribes, especially or even exclusively in word-initial position, until around 1300, but it was only sporadically seen in the 14th century. ⟨w⟩ was infrequently used until the second half of the 14th century, but it appeared in a few hands much earlier, around 1200. It was

most often used word-initially for /v/, and, in the 14th century and later, in all positions for long /u/, cf. 4.1. The use of <u> and <v> varied from one period to another and also from one scribe to another. In many of the earliest manuscripts, they are used for /u/ and /v/, respectively, fairly regularly in word-initial position but at the same time inconsistently in medial position. Many scribes used one of the two letters mainly or exclusively without regard to the distinction between the vowel and the semi-vowel, and in the 14th century it had become standard practice in many hands to use <v> word-initially and <u> elsewhere.

In some of the earliest manuscripts, the left stroke of <y> was drawn down below the line with a slight leftward turn, while the right part, which did not extend below the line, consisted of a dot with a thin connecting line curving down to the left stroke. Other types of <y> in the 13th century and into the 14th century all had a <v>-shaped upper half with a curving right stroke. However, which of the two strokes extended down below the line varied; the descender bent leftward to varying degrees. Around the middle of the 14th century there sometimes was a crossbar through the descender right below the line. All the <y>-types usually were written with a superscript dot. In those cases where it was the left stroke that extended below the line, the letter resembles <p>, but the superscript dot serves to distinguish it from the symbol for /v/. From a little before the middle of the 14th century, the two strokes sometimes were nearly vertical above the line and the right one extended below the line, frequently bending to the left; in such cases the <y> was often distinguished from <ij> (with or without the accent marks) by means of the superscript dot.

<z> usually appeared without a crossbar in the earliest manuscripts, but the variant with the crossbar became more common during the 13th century and more so in the 14th century.

Long /ɛ/, when not written <e>, was usually denoted with <ę> or <æ>, sometimes with a superscript accent mark. <ę> was the more common symbol during most of the 13th century, but <æ> appeared in some of the earliest manuscripts, gaining considerable ground in the second half of the century and becoming predominant in the 14th century. The first member of the ligature <æ> frequently came close to being a “one-storey *a*”, even if as an independent symbol the <a> was written with a bow or as a “two-storey *a*”. A few scribes

in the 14th century employed <è>. When long /ɛ/ and long /ø/ began to merge into a single phoneme in Icelandic (through the derounding of long /ø/), around the middle of the 13th century, the long /ɛ/ sometimes was denoted with the symbol for long /ø/, even as late as after the middle of the 14th century, by scribes unsuccessfully attempting to archaize their orthography or imitate Norwegian spelling conventions.

A few of the very earliest manuscripts have a special notation for short and long /ø/, namely the digraph <eo> and the letter <ø> (beside <o>), but since the merger of short /ø/ and short /ɔ/ began around 1200 the resulting phoneme (/ö/) was symbolized in the same way, regardless of origin. To be sure, the digraphs <ev> and <ey> (which otherwise were used to denote the diphthong /ey/) appeared in a few manuscripts from the 13th and 14th centuries and even still younger copies of texts from the second half of the 13th century as symbols for original short /ø/, without original short /ɔ/ (or long /ø/) ever being denoted in the same fashion. During the 13th century and as long as scribes maintained, or tried to maintain, the distinction between the long vowels /ø/ and /ɛ/, the former was denoted with a number of graphemes or allographs. Most common among these were <ø> and <ɔ> which were also used for the short /ö/ resulting from the merger of short /ø/ and /ɔ/. These letters sometimes were written with a superscript accent mark; this is also true for the hybrid <ɔ̇>. Around the middle of the 13th century <ð> (along with the hybrid <ð̇>) also appeared and <ð> remained longest in this function, beyond the middle of the 14th century.

Long /ɔ/ had already around 1200 begun to merge with long /a/ (or, when nasalized, long /o/) and was, accordingly, subject to the same kind of notation as long /a/ (or long /o/), whereas in the earliest manuscripts a symbol for /ɔ/ was employed. In the earliest manuscripts, short /ɔ/ was denoted with <æ>, <ɔ>, or <o>. The first of these is, however, found in few manuscripts in the 13th century, but during that century new types of notation came into use for /ö/ (or, very rarely, for /ɔ/ only), the most common of which were <au>, <aʷ>, and <ø>. During the second half of the 13th century, the symbol <ð>, first mostly used for long /ø/, entered the ranks of the symbols for /ö/; it gained ground during the 14th century and gradually became the predominant symbol for /ö/ along with /o/ and <au>.

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Reduced facsimiles from manuscripts in The Arnamagnæan Institute in Iceland (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi) and a charter in The Icelandic National Archives (Þjóðskjalasafn Íslands). Photos by Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir.

Examples (reduced except 96.5)

ícolom v. oc feóþa ánd óra hátíþlegre
feózlo. þat eru orþ goþf. þviat ó feómt
ef at lícamr feóþefc. oc clæþefc. itarlega
en enn íþre maþr fe oprúþr. oc miffc

ícolom ver oc feóþa ánd óra hátíþlegre
feózlo. þat ero orþ goþf. þviat ó feómt
ef at lícamr feóþefc. oc clæþefc. itarlega.
en enn íþre maþr fe oprúþr. oc miffc

Fig. 96.1: AM 237a Fol., 1 vb, ca. 1150–1200; fragments of homilies.

Honocentavf heýter dýr þat ef ver kollom fin galkan.
þat ef maþr fram en dýr aftir oc markar þat o ein
arþar men i vexti finom þat kallafc at bok male

Honocentavf heýter dýr þat ef ver kollom fin galkan.
þat ef maþr fram en dýr aftir oc markar þat o ein
arþar men i vexti finom þat kallafc at bok male

Fig. 96.2: AM 673a I 4to, 1v, ca. 1200; Physiologus.

langaþu til ðngra ððgra. h qðdi oc engv pilgi mioc
 nema imboðogv oc alþingi. aþ þvi alþingi at hano
 þotti þar margr maðr þerþa pillr vega vm þin mala
 ferli þa ær mikilf var perðr. oc hano mikit pið liggia.

langaþi til ðngra ððgra. hann qvðði oc engv pilgi mioc
 nema imboðogvm oc alþingi. aþ þvi alþingi at hanom
 þotti þar margr maðr þerþa pillr vega vm þin mala
 ferli þa ær mikilf var perðr. oc hanom mikit pið liggia.

Fig. 96.3: AM 383 I 4to, 2r, ca. 1250; Þorláks saga helga (the Life of Þorlákr the Saint).

h raða f þe þra oc kapo. Eg e kono
 feyllt at eiga ibue nea ho pile. En ef ho a i
 bue m; ho. þa a ho at raða bu rapo. f man
 ftock ef ho pill oc smala npt. Kona a at

hann raða þf þe þerra oc kapom. Eige er kono
 feyllt at eiga ibue nema hon pile. EN ef hon á i
 bue með honom. þa á hon at raða bú ráþom. þf inan
 ftock ef hon pill oc smala npt. Kona a at

Fig. 96.4: AM 334 Fol., 30vb, ca. 1270; Grágás.

en an þowñ þar v uari konvr. En atv þav fön er egull het. 7 er h ox vpp. þa matti brat
 fia a honm at h v liotr m; 7 liker feðr finv. Oc er h v m. vetr þa var hann mikill oc fterkr. h v brat
 ma logr oc oðvif oc illr v ungm þott h vi at leikom m; þ. þ v þæ lngvtr til boðg h bað grmi

en anvr þozunn þær voro vænar konvr. En attv þav fön er egull het. ok er hann ox vpp. þa matti brat
 fia a honvm at hann var liotr maðr ok líkr feðr finvm. Oc er hann var m. vetr þa var hann mikill oc fterkr. hann var brat
 malógr oc oðvif oc illr við vngmeme þott hann væri at leikom með þvi. þat var þo: Jngvarr til boðgar hann bað grmi

Fig. 96.5: AM 162 A 8 Fol., 5r, ca. 1300; Egils saga Skallagrímssonar.

^{englat}
 c. i þall Ríkhardar. Jón bróðr h tók ríki
 í englandi. Lögtekim Tholác msa.
 Þ Sophia danadótning. Petr prestur.
 Barðagi á ftrindfé með Sperru konvngi ok boglm.

c. i Þall Ríkhardar engla konvngf. Jón bróðir hann tók ríki
 í englandi. Lögtekim Tholác msa.
 Obut Sophia danadótning. Petr þbj/kvp prestur.
 Barðagi á ftrindfé með Sperru konvngi ok boglm.

Fig. 96.6: GKS 2087 4to, 28va, ca. 1307; Annales Regii.

^{L. 1.}
 Allum monnum þeim sem þetta brep seá eða heýra/ sendir stephán prestur Gunnlaugs son Queðiu Guðs
 ok þina/ Ýð: se kunni[k]t at þa er lidit var þra hingat burð vars herra þushundað þíu hundað
 ok þúrtigur áára/ tok ek J vmbode míns virðuligs herra laurencif hola þjfkups land á guðmun

Allum monnum þeim sem þetta brep seá eða heýra/ sendir stephán prestur Gunnlaugs son Queðiu Guðs
 ok þina/ Ýð: se kunni[k]t at þa er lidit var þra hingat burð vars herra þushundað þíu hundað
 ok þúrtigur áára/ tok ek J vmbode míns virðuligs herra laurencif hola þjfkups land á guðmun

Fig. 96.7: AM Dipl. Isl. Fasc. I 4; charter written 1330.

aonem. Tok aaron þa vöndinn. ok þegar leid sem h
 kaftade hnu þramm þyr kungu ok hús þionofstu me
 u. þa varð hann at eitr o:me. Enn sem pharao sa vn
 ð þetta. þa léet hann kalla féer fpekninga sina 7 gallð

aonem. Tok aaron þa vöndinn. ok þegar leid sem hann
 kaftade honum þramm þyrir konunginn ok hans þionofstu me
 nn. þa varð hann at eitr o:me. Enn sem pharao sa vn
 ð þetta. þa léet hann kalla féer fpekninga sina ok gallð

Fig. 96.8: AM 227 Fol., 64va, ca. 1350; Stjórn.

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