

Palaeography

DIGITAL HUMANITIES FOR MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES

3. Abbreviation system

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1 Abbreviation types

- Conventional signs
- Shortening of words

2 Instruments for deciphering

Homework7

- Because of the limits of writing space, the copyists invented techniques of word abbreviation.
- The abbreviations differ from a historical period to another, from a territory to another, from an intellectual context to another, both for abbreviation signs and for words which are abbreviated.










☞ **mr̃** = mater (jur., comm.), magister (univ. XIII), martyr (theol.), multipliciter (comm. XIII)

- To decipher the abbreviations, we must take into account the abbreviation procedure:
 - very frequent words are the most abbreviated, often with letter-like conventional signs
 - the other words are often abbreviated to shorten them, using conventional signs and shortening procedures

The conventional signs replace a succession of sounds

- sometimes the same abbreviation can stand for several homophone successions of sounds
- some signs correspond to whole words, but they can be used also inside another word

The most common abbreviation signs:  (tilde) nasalization m/n

	que/quae		per/par-	 / 	et	 / 	est
	que/quae		pre/prae-		in/im-		non
	quod		pro		sed/secundum		esse
	qui		pri		de		vel
	quo		ergo		igitur		modo
	-que/quem		-bus		-rum		-ir/-er
	cum/con-	 	-et/-m	 	-us	 	-ur
	hic		haec		hoc		

Longer or more frequent words are abbreviated by suppression of letters, which can be one of two types:

- suspension (only the first letters are written, the last are replaced by a mark)
- contraction (only the beginning and the end are written, letters from the middle are omitted)

The suppression can be marked by:

- tilde (warning! the tilde may also mean nasalization)

āīa (anima) **rō** (ratio) **cā** (causa) **hñt** (habent)

- superscript at end


po^a (potentia) **a^a** (alia) **ph^{ci}** (physici) **cor^{is}** (corporis)

- above the word

n̄ (natura) **p̄r⁹** (posterius) **ex^ema** (extrema)

- omission (some letters may be omitted when the word is easy to guess)


lba (substantia) **qo** (quaestio) **Jo.** (Iohannes)

To restore the word, one must find an existing word in latin which corresponds to the written or abbreviated sounds and which is obtainer by minimum expansions from a known form. ( **rōle** (~~r~~ationabile) (rationale))

! not all the possible words are contained in dictionaries

the dictionaries cover several domains and languages, attention to the specific usage in the transcribed

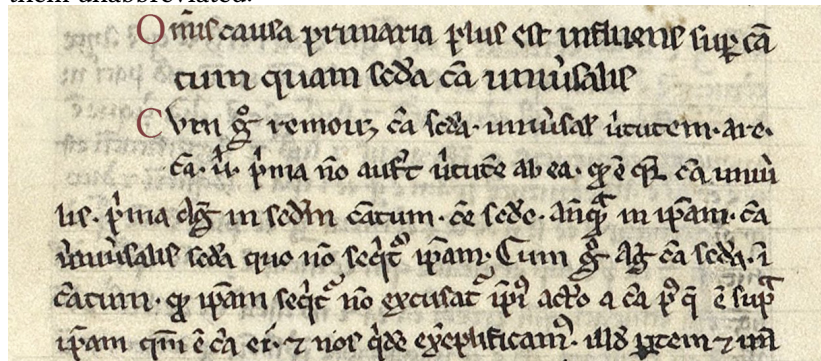
NCC ^m — NCCITA	233	NCCITI — NE ^{ar}
ncc̄ ^m , ncc̄ (nce, ncc ^m) neces- sarium XIV f.		ncc̄it̄ (ncciti) necessi- tati XIV m.
ncc̄ ^a (ncc ^{aa}) necessaria XIV		ncc̄ ^τ m (ncc ^{am}) necessa- rium xv f.
ncc̄ [~] (ncc ^{aa}) necessaria		ncc̄ [~] s (ncc ^{as}) necessitas XIII

 **Breviter** Interactive Dataset of Medieval Abbreviations

<https://dhcluj.ro/breviter/>

💡 students are encouraged to form their own dictionaries of abbreviations

Identify 10 abbreviations in the following manuscript and transcribe them unabbreviated:



Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 3237, f. 53r (first quart of 13th c.)

PSEUDO-ARISTOTELES, *Liber de causis*

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |