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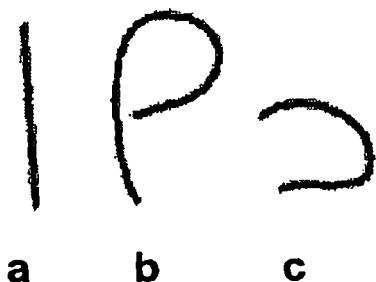
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(54) Title: **A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DECODING HANDWRITTEN CHARACTERS**(57) **Abstract:** Disclosed is a method of performing written character recognition, including sequentially comparing a given input character with one of a series of stored character models. The step of comparing further includes the steps of: decomposing the given input character into one or more segments in accordance with a segmentation scheme associated with the present character model; evaluating the segment or segments against a segment model associated with the present character model, such that the evaluation produces a score which measures the degree of conformity with the model; repeating said step of comparing for a plurality of character models in the series of character models; and selecting the character model which is assigned the highest score and classifying the input character as the character associated with that character model.