The Alphabet Book

A guide to early modern English secretary hand

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Basic advice for reading secretary hand

1. paleography is NOT an exact science

2. forget what modern letters look like, and forget how to spell

3. OED is your best friend (it includes archaic spellings and obsolete words)

4. attention to detail, including punctuation, is paramount

5. every individual has an individual, inconsistent, hand, and when hurried or incapacitated, the hand degenerates

6. think of *how* the letters are formed—work out the directions of the pen strokes (the duct) and lifts—and try to reproduce those strokes in your mind (the pliancy of the quill pen means that lighter, thinner strokes are usually upstrokes and thicker strokes are usually downstrokes)

7. compile your own alphabet from letters in the manuscript, focusing especially on letters with unique ascenders, descenders, loops, bowls, spurs, etc.

8. minuscules and majuscules are often used inconsistently

9. watch out for interference from letters in the lines above and below the line you are working on

10. if you are not sure of a word, write the letters you know, and put dots or x's to indicate the illegible bits (and return to them later)

Editorial conventions for class (semi-diplomatic) transcriptions

Each transcription should begin with repository name, manuscript shelfmark, page or folio number, and a brief statement of editorial conventions (if diverging from the conventions below). Make the statement as concise and clear as possible.

If you are transcribing in MS Word, make sure that automatic spell-check and automatic capitalization at the beginning of lines are switched off. Always transcribe consistently and unambiguously in your notes, to avoid heartache and frustration later.

- Original spelling (including *u/v* and *i/j*, and *ff* for *F*), punctuation, capitalization, lineation, and indentation are maintained.

- Superscript letters are silently lowered.

- Abbreviations are expanded with the supplied letters italicized (except for forms of address (Mr, Mrs) and symbols for money (*l, s, d*)). The orthography of the scribe is observed when supplying letters.

- Thorns are replaced with italicized *th,* and terminal *-es* graphs with *–es*.

- Brevigraphs such as ampersands (& and &c.) are preserved.

- Cancelled words are ~~struck-through~~.

- Interlineal insertions remain superscript, and are marked by a caret symbol (^) if present.

- Indecipherable or obliterated words appear in square brackets with dots representing the number of letters thought to be missing [b....es].

- Accidental obliterations, flourishes, and line fillers are not represented in the transcription, but can be noted in a general description or textual note.

- Any other special feature requiring comment, such as a change in hand, ink, size of script, can also be mentioned in a textual note.

Pop-up Help Screen for Dromio

Glossary of XML buttons (with examples in parentheses):

Text of the Manuscript as viewed

- *ex* = for expanded text in common abbreviations, shows as italics (It*em*)
- ~~del~~ = for cancelled (i.e., crossed out) text (~~strikethrough~~)
- ins = for interlineal insertion text, often written above crossed out text (^{green})
- gap = for a gap in transcription, illegible letters replaced by periods (…)
- unc = for uncertain text (transcriber enters best guess) (uncl<mark>e</mark>ar)
- mrk = for notational mark (e.g. manicule, etc.), include one-word description of mark, strive for consistency (manicule)
- img = for image/illustration (e.g. drawing), include one-word description of image, strive for consistency (drawing)

Navigation/Tracking

- ? = shows help screen
- <xml> = shows text with xml tags in angle brackets
- HTML = default view (in the <xml> view, shows text with editor effects)
- Save = saves changes
- Done = indicates transcription/encoding of page is complete

Layout/Non-textual Elements

- pb = for two or more pages in one image (page break) (3r)
- cw = catchword, word or words repeated on bottom of page/top of next page
- hd = for obvious headings (Cooking w*i*th Clarified Butter)
- lbl = for labels in the margins (**For a toothe-ache**)
- ps = for postscript text in letters (Do not forgetteth to write)
- opn = for text of opening in letters (To my most lovinge husband)
- cls = for text of closing in letters (Your most dejected servant,)
- add = for added text by booksellers, etc. (only for additions obviously made much later) (V.a.110)
- note = for note at the end of the text file (Transcribed by W. Shakespeare.)

Content

- nm = for proper names (non-fictional) (Queen Elizabeth)
- pl = for identified places; (Stratford-on-Avon)
- amt = for specific monetary amounts (include numeral and currency symbol) (iii s v d)

Semi-Diplomatic Transcription

- **^** = for superscript text, not interlineal insertions, that should remain superscript to understand the meaning, such as with certain numbers (iiij^{xx} meaning four score)
- **\^/** = for superscript text to be lowered as per semi-diplomatic convention (Janua*r*y)
- **~** = macron (¯) or tilde (~), for letters such as "ñ" or "m̄" letters, following letter should be expanded (run*n*ing for ruñing)
- **y/th** = for thorn letter (looks like "y"), transcribed as "th" (ye = *th*e)
- **<es>** = for "es" graph (chyld*es*)
- **<er>** = for "er" graph (transcribed as "er," or ar/or/re) (pet*er*)
- **<p>** = for special "p" graph, following two letters should be expanded text, "pre," "pro," "par," or "per" (p*ar*tie)
- **ye**=transcribed as "the" (*th*e)
- **yt**=transcribed as "that" (*tha*t)
- **yr**=transcribed as "your" (y*ou*r)
- **wth**=transcribed as "with" (w*i*th)
- **wch**=transcribed as "which" (w*hi*ch)

Quick Reference on How to Encode Your Transcription in XML

It is important to select the letter(s) or word with your cursor that you wish to encode first, then apply the encoding tag. Click on an appropriate button from the menu to apply it to the selected text. The style of the text changes as you encode it (i.e. deleted text appears as ~~strikethrough~~). To remove an encoding, select the text and click on the button that applied the encoding; this will remove it. You can also switch to <xml> view and delete the actual angle brackets of the encoding.

Common early modern brevigraphs (abbreviated text) have their own buttons (ye=the, yt=that, yr=your, wth=with, and wch=which). Simply click on the appropriate button to insert the abbreviated word into the transcription.

The window has two views, HTML and XML. You can switch between HTML and XML by toggling the <xml>/HTML button.

You can apply more than one XML tag to a section of text e.g., a manuscript page could call for encoding "To the Earl of Leicester" as both a heading and a name (<heading>To the <name>Earl of Leicester</name></heading>). If you get an error message, switch to the XML view where you can view the actual encoding tags in brackets.

Remember to click the Save button frequently to save your work. Please select Done only when you have completed transcribing and encoding the entire page.

a

b   c

d   e

f   g

h   i   (in)

k   l

m   n   o

p   (xp)   q

r

s   t

u   v   w
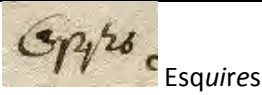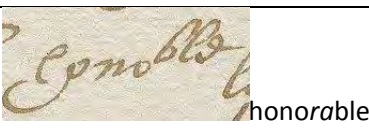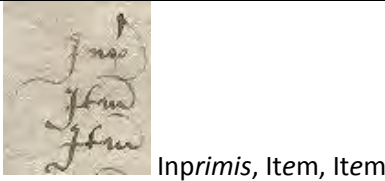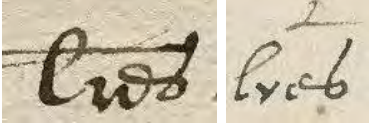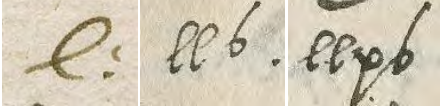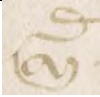
x   y   z
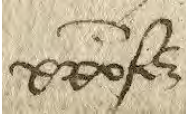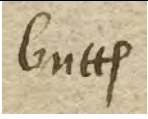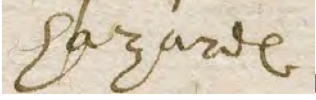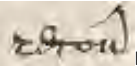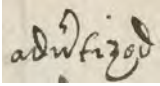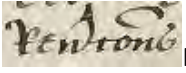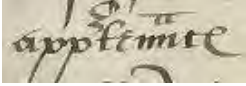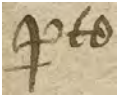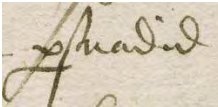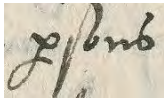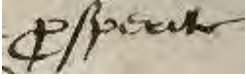
A   B

C   D

E   F

G   H

I, J   K

L   M   N

O   P

Q   R

S   T

U, V   W

X   Y   Z

McKerrow, "A Note on Elizabethan Handwriting," reprinted in Gaskell, A New Introduction to Bibliography
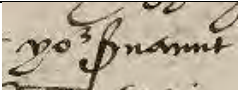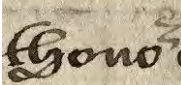
Common abbreviations
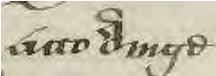
A°	Anno	
Esq.	Esquire	Esq*uire*s
Ex^t, Exaite	Examinant	Exa*minan*te
Ho:, hono^ble	Honorable	hono*rab*le
Imp, inp	Imprimis, in primis (in the first place)	In pr*imi*s
Itm, it	Item	Inp*rimis*, Item, Item
La:, La^p	Lady; Ladyship	
lre, lres	lettre, lettres	
L:, Lo, L^d, L^p **Lls, Llps, Lopps**	Lord or Lordship Lords or Lordships	
Ma^ty, Matie	Maiesty, Maiestie	
M^r	Master or Mister	
m^d, mem.	memorandum	
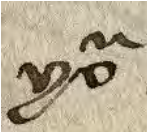
M^{rs}, M^{ris}	Mistress	
o^r	our	
p^d	paid	
S^r	Sir	
wor^{ll}, wo^r	Worshipful, worship	
w^{ch}	which	
wth, w^t	with	
y^e	the	
y^m	them	
y^t	that	
yor, y^r	your	
-m^t	-ment	procurem*entes*
-cõn,-sõn, -tõn	-cion, -sion, tion	affecc*i*on
~ above m, n, or vowel	add an **m** or **n**	ma*n* com*m*endac*i*ons

&c.	et cetera, or etc.	
xp	used for Christ (Greek *chi & rho*, the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ)	*Christ*ofer
-es graph	looped down stroke at end of word, signifying an -es	butt*es* pound*es* hazard*es*
-er graph	hook-shaped upstroke, usually for –er but could also be used for ar/or/re	eu*er* neu*er* recou*er* adu*er*tized gen*er*all Reu*er*cions
squiggle r	superscript r, need to supply the vowel	app*ur*ten*ances* (squiggle r, a graph, -es graph)
"special" p	pre-, pro-, par-, per-, depending on style and use	p*ar*te p*er*suadid p*er*sons p*ar*ish p*er*son p*re*misses and euery p*ar*te and p*ar*cell (the above example has two -er/re graphs and two special ps) p*ro*speritie
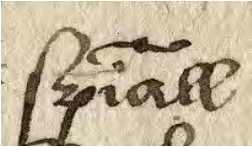
pnt[-es graph]	presentes (often found in bargain and sale documents)	presentes
"special" s	ser- or sir	your seruaunt
"the" elisions	e is dropped	thonor, or "the honor"

Sometimes something looks like an abbreviation, but actually isn't. It may contain a superfluous tittle or a letter that has been superscripted for no apparent reason.

 accordinge

 you

Sometimes a word is abbreviated, but not according to any of the rules above.

 speciall granted bargained

ALPHABETS

(1) *Bastard Hand:* c. 1432

A A B C D D E ff G H J K L M N O P Q R S T V W X

a b c c̃ d d̄ e fe g̃ hi ij k̄ l l m nno p q r r r r s s s̃ f ff ft fit t u v w x y z

a b₃ q̃d ħ pp pp p̄ p ppⁱ r̄ ȝ r r f q₃ ꝰ nec̄i cōn cō cō t t

(2) *Bastard Hand:* 1571   J. Brown, formal secretary cursive

a a b b c c c c d d e e f ff g g h h i J J k k l m n o oo

p p q q q r r s̃f ff t tt u u v w x x y y z z et et et et .
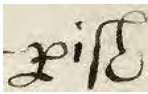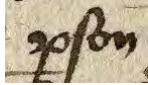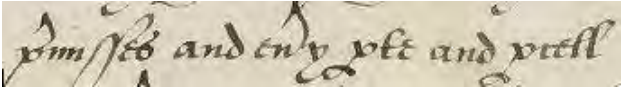
(3) *Fifteenth-Century Set Hand:* temp. Henry VII

A B C D E ff G H J K l M N O P R S T T V V W W X Y

a a b b c d d e e f g gh hiij k ll m nno p p q r r r s s s ff ft tt v w w x y

a ge ke ħ M r̄ r f tte u̅ li s d pe

(4) *Fifteenth-Century Set Hand changing to Secretary:* 1539

a b c d d̄ e f ff g h i ij   l m in im i unꝰ o

p p p p̄ pⁱ q q₃ r r s f f ft tt v w x z

(5) *Secretary Hand:* 1571

a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r ſ t u x. y z et ſt w et.

(6) *Printed Secretary Hand:* 1600

A   B   C D ff J   L M   N   O   Q   R   S   T

a b et c dr de eeẽ f ff gh i k ll m n o o p q re re rs ff ſh ſt th u v w x y z

(7) *Secretary Hand:* 1637

A   A   O   G   Q   T   S   C E F J ff

N   N   M   V   W   V   P   P   R   B   B   ↄ

B,   D   D   ſL   K   H   H   X   Y   Z   Z

a b c d ᵭ e e f f gh i k ll m n o p q rr. ſt s t v u w x y z

(8) *Engrossing Secretary Hand:* 1658

A a b c d de e ef f g h i k l ll m n o p q r ſs ſt t v u w x y z et

(9) *Sloped Secretary Hand:* 1663 (*but written much earlier*)

A   B   C D E F ff G   H J   K L M   N   O P P

Q   R   S   T V V W W   X Y Z A   B C D E F

A   a b c d e e e f g h th ik l m n o p p q rr ſs s t v u w x y y z et

14

(10) and (11) *Mixed Hands (Round-hand): c.* 1670

A a bc c d de e e ff g h h h i ij k k l all m n

(handwritten alphabet)

N n op p q q r r s fs st v u w w x y y z z ʔ

(handwritten alphabet)

A a b c c d de f g g h i k l m n opq r s t v u w x y z

(12) *Chancery Hand:* 1571

A a a B b ƀ C c cc̄ D đ dđ E e ee

(handwritten alphabet)

ff f̃ f̃ G g̃ gg̃ H hħ h J i J k̃ k̃ k̃

(handwritten alphabet)

l ħ l M m m̃ N n nñ O o oo o

(handwritten alphabet)

P p p P pp Q q q̦ R r r S s ſ s

(handwritten alphabet)

T tt̃ t v v w u x x y y z z ʔ ʔ ꝯ .

(13) *Chancery Hand:* 1618

A a a B b b C c cc D d đ E e ee ff f f ~

(handwritten alphabet)

G g g h h h J i ij k k k̃ l ħ l M m mm

N n n O o oo P p̃ pp Q q̦ qR r r R S s

(handwritten alphabet)

s̃ ſt T t tt v u u u w w x x y y z z ʔ ꝯ

(14) *Chancery Capitals:* 1580

(handwritten alphabet)

A B C D E ff G H J K l M N O P Q R S T V W X Y Z

(15) *King's Remembrancer's Hand:* 1572

A B C C D D E ff G H J K I M N O P Q R S T V W X

a a b c d e e f g h ij k l m ni o p q r r ʃ s ct v w x y

~ ꝗ ᵃ tᵉ đ ħ ñ p p̄ p̃ ꝛ r̃ ff ꝰ

(16) *Pipe Office Hand:* 1592

A B C D E ff G H J K l M N O P R S T W X

a b c d e f g h ij k l m nn o o p q r r s f ʃt t v v w x y z

ħ đ ƙ ũ ñ p p̄ s̃ t̃ x̃

(17) *Legal:* 1571

| ℙ | A | A | A | a | a | a | B | B | B | b | b | b | C | C | C | c | ct | c̃ |

| D | D | d | đ | d | E | E | e | e | ff | f | G | G | g | g̃ | H | h | J | J | i |

| k | k l | ħ M | M | M | m | nñ | N | N | n | nñ | O | O | o | oo | o | o P |

| P | P | P | P̄ | P̃ | Q | Q | q | q | R | R | r̃ | r | r̃ | S | S | s | s̃ | ff | ft |

| T | T | t | tt | V | V | v | v | u | W | W | x | x | y | y | z | z | Et | Et | ꝛ |

(18) *Small Legal:* 1663 (*but written much earlier*)

A A a a a B B b b b C C C c c c D D dd d̄ E e ee e ~

ff ff f f f G g g̃g̃ g hh h J i ij j k k l̵ k̵ l l ll M M num̄

mim̄ N inn inm̄ N O o oo P P p p p̃ p̃ Q Q q q q̃d q R R r r

S S s s ſt ſt T t t t̃ V u v W W W x x x y y z z ʒ

(19) *Large Legal:* c. 1664

A a B b C c c D d dd d̄ E e ee ff f̃ G g gg

H J i i ij i k l ll M m̄ m m̄ N n O o oo P p

p p p̃ Q q R r r S s ſt ſ ſt T t V v u W x y z ʒ

(20) *Medium Legal:* c. 1664

P A a B b C c c̃ cc D D̷ d dd dd E e ee ff f f̃ G g g̃ gg H J i i ij i k k̵ l ll M M m m̄ m̄ N n ñ

O o oo p p p̃ p̃ p p p̃ p̃ p p̃r Q q R r r̃ r or ꝝ eaʒ S s s̃ s̃ st ſ ſt T t tt v v u W x y z ʒ Et

Hilary Jenkinson, The later court hands in England (1927)

Wolfe

EXAMPLES
OF
HANDWRITING
1550 - 1650

Compiled by
W S B Buck

SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

1996

Abednego

Abel Abell Aboll

Abigalia Abigall Abigails

Abigaill A Bignile

Abrah Samuel Abraham Abram

Adam Adams Mary Adams

Adams Abriamus Adriana

Agatha Agnola Agatho Annis

Agnus Agnes Agnes Agnis

Mary Adams Allen

Alexander Alix Callozould

Alexander Alexander

Munby (1988)

LIGATURES AND CONTRACTIONS

In an age before shorthand or typing, economy in writing was achieved by using a kind of speedwriting, for example by running letters together as ligatures, and by adopting standard abbreviations or contractions. Among the commonest ligatures were

ch   ss

sh

th   ff

st

The most frequent form of contraction consisted of omitting letters and drawing a line above the word: *tenements* was written $\overline{tents}$. Often the writer was too lazy to lift his pen to make this line, so he continued in an upward curve from the end of the last letter. Something like a French circumflex accent also came to indicate omitted letters.

The letter with which contractions are most often associated is *p*. *p* followed by a vowel and *r* was shown by an horizontal line through the stem of the *p*, or by an upward curve from the tail of the *p*, to the left, which turned back across the tail just below the line.

or   par, per, por

p followed by *r* and then by a vowel was shown in different ways:

pro

or   pre

Writers did not always use these contractions correctly, so what ought to be *por* or *per* could be *pro* or *pre* or vice-versa.

The other important form of contraction was the superscript letter, written above the line, which tells the reader that some letters before it have been omitted. It survives when we write 9th for *ninth*; we ought, incidentally, to write *Mr* as M^r.

z or $\mathcal{E}$ A superscript *r* commonly indicated an omitted *u*, as in *Savio*^{z} which should be transcribed as *Savio[u]r*.
The most common superscript was in familiar short words like w^t or w^{th} = w[i]th, w^{ch} = w[hi]ch.
When *that* or *the* or *them* was abbreviated, an old Anglo-Saxon letter called the 'thorn', written at first more like a modern *y*, was used for *th*; but soon thorn was written like the Secretary Hand *y*. The best modern practice is to transcribe thorn as *th*, not as *y* which was the habit of older scholars. So y^t is *th[a]t* and *ye* is *the*, NOT *ye*. But remember that there is a word 'ye', meaning 'you' in the plural, spelt with a real *y*! Incidentally, *y* was often written instead of *i*, particularly in words like *if* and *it* which should be transcribed as *yf*, *yt*.

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Letters	Symbols	Comments and references
a		Supralinear 14th century *a*, often reduced to a serrated line (really a superior letter). Still used in 16th century (nos. 12, 22). See *ra*.
and		Versions of Tironian nota for *et*. Used in gothic script throughout the period.
and		Common form in *Elizabethan secretary* (no. 22) and occasionally in *italic* (no. 59).
and		Ampersand. Main *italic* form; less common in gothic script.
c		Supralinear for *c* or *ac* (no. 26). Derived from 14th-century form.
ci, ti		More usual simply for *i* in *cion* and *tion* (no. 51).
com, con		In linear, initial position (no. 2). Tironian.
de		Uncommon after 15th century. Can be otiose.
e		In use by late 16th century to denote silent *e* in *ed*, *en* and *est* in poetry; sometimes placed after succeeding consonant (no. 31). See also *curtailment*, *elision*, and *apostrophe* section of *Punctuation*.
etc.		First form is *secretary*, the second *italic*.
er		Supralinear. Very common in all gothic scripts.
es, is, ys		Final linear, or supralinear position. First form more common than second (nos. 4, 13, 19, 20, 22, 26, 32, 40–2). Almost invariably *es* for English post-15th-century MSS, though very occasionally signifies simply *s*. In medieval and Scottish MSS *is* and *ys* are frequently intended.
ge		Uncommon after 15th century. Can be otiose.
i		In combinations *cion*, *tion*, and variants of them (see *contraction*).
ir, ier, ire		As for *er*. Uncommon (no. 26).
lle		See *curtailment*.

23

Letters	Symbols	Comments and references
m, n	— ‿ ᕽ	See *contraction*.
ne	n̄ n̄'	Can be otiose. See *curtailment*.
par, per	ꝑ ꝑ	Basic forms constant for all scripts of the period: *p* with a straight or convex bar through the stem.
pre	ꝑ̔ ꝑ'	Same sign as for *er* (nos. 26, 42).
pri	ꝑ'	Not very common in English (no. 1).
pro	ꝓ ꝓ	Basic difference from *par/per* is that the curve through the stem is concave not convex (nos. 5, 29, 36, 44).
quam	q̃	Used only in Latin (no. 18).
que	q; q₃	Appears in English as well as Latin because *c* and *ck* were often spelt *que* (nos. 6, 14, 18, 23, 56).
quod (quoth)	q̄	Used both for Latin and the vernacular, though the word had a different meaning in English.
ra	ᴀ ᷑	Supralinear. Both forms are current in late medieval period, but rare in the Renaissance (nos. 3, 12). Sometimes used for other combinations with *a*, e.g. *ac, ia* (nos. 26, 42).
re	ꝟ	Common in 15th century (nos. 9, 10).
rum	ꝝ	Used only in Latin.
ser, sir	ꝑ ꞵ	Quite common in period.
sieur	ꝑ̃	Anglo-Norman, basically the same sign as for *ser* (no. 1).
ter	ꝑ	Basically same brevigraph as for *er*.
ur	ᴀ ᴢ	First sign more common than the second in the vernacular (nos. 5, 6, 10, 22).
us	ꝰ ꝗ	Same sign as for *com/con*, but in final, linear or supralinear position (nos. 4, 44)

iv. *Superior* or *superscript letters* were really a form of contraction, whereby the raised position of one or more letters indicated that letters immediately preceding them had been omitted. Though the presence of superior letters was generally considered sufficient to denote contraction, a bar or an apostrophe was also occasionally added, or, more usually, a period placed at the end either on the line or beside the last superior letter. This method of abbreviation, though popular in the 12th and 13th centuries, seems to have fallen off a little and then to have come back into fashion in the 16th century, when it was extremely common for modes of address, numerals, relative and possessive pronouns and adjectives, and some prepositions. It should be noted that although they usually appeared at the end, superior letters could occur in the middle of a word (e.g. $w^{th}out$ for *without*); and in a few instances, the omission extended beyond the superior letter, as in w^t for *with*. Sometimes the raised letter was there from habit rather than for indicating omission, the most common example being $þ^e$ or y^e for *the*. Letters with which this is a frequent occurrence are *a*, *e* and *r*. The following tables give a sampling of the superior letters in general use both with (a) words and (b) numbers.

(a)

Anno Domini	$A^o Dni$	Regis	Re
Bishop	B^p	regni	^rni
Christo	X^o	Signor	Sig^{or}
Esquire	Esqre	Sir	S^r
Highness	$Highn^s$	servant	$serv^t$, ser^t or s^t
Iacobus	Iac^s	that	p^t or y^t
Knight	K^t	the	p^e or y^e
libri (pounds)	l^i	their (theyr)	$they^r$ or p^r
Lordship	$Lordsh^p$ or L^p	thou (thow)	tho^u, tho^w or p^u
Maiestie	$Maitt^e$ or $Mati^e$	which (wich)	w^{ch}
Master	M^r	with	wth or w^t
-ment	$-m^t$	without	$w^{th}out$
Mistress	M^{rs}	you (yow)	yo^u, yo^w, y^u or y^w
our	ou^r or o^r	your	yor or y^r
Regina	R^a		

(b)

primo	1°	decimo	x^o
secundus	2^{ndus} or 2^s	eleventh	11th or xi^{th}
tertio	3^{io} or iii^o	twenty	xx^{tie}
four (fowre)	$iiij^{or}$	vicesimo	xx^{mo}

It must be remembered that the use of superior letters was only an alternative method of abbreviation, and a given word might be abbreviated in several different ways, as instanced

24

salutem   domini   ipso   ipsi   domine   uxor   Anno   ibidem   summe   omni

This sort of contraction was also widely used with the more common Christian names.

Nycholas   Johannis   Willelmo   Ricardo   Johanna

A line above a vowel often indicates the omission of the letters *n* or *m*.

nomine   matrimonium   indentatum

But beware. There are some hands where a horizontal flourish over a final *n* or *m* is purely ornamental and does not imply any form of contraction.

commen   man

2. A hook-shaped mark above the word can sometimes be a general omission symbol, but it usually indicates the omission of the letters *er*.

Manerii   verba   termino   Reverend   every   forever   interest   terme

3. A superscript symbol, possibly based on the 2-shaped *r* used in medieval court hands but somewhat variable in form (as shown in the examples given here), commonly represents the letters *ur*. It normally appears at the end of a word, but not always.

your pore Oratour   saviour   nominantur   vocatur   Court   our   sequitur

4. A superior symbol, shaped like the Arabic numeral 9 and inserted at the end of a word, represents the ending *-us*.

huius *baptizatus* *Ricardus Hunt sepultus erat* *unius*

5. A symbol, similar to symbol number 4 but placed on the line at the beginning of a word, represents the prefix *con-* or *com-*.

confirmata *confidencia* *commendo*

6. A symbol at the end of the word shaped like the letter *z* can sometimes be a general suspension symbol, but there are a number of applications where it is much more specific.

Where the symbol follows the letter *-b*, the Latin ablative plural ending *-bus* is indicated.

duabus *omnibus* *nobilibus*

Where the symbol follows the letter *q* it always represents *-ue*

Annoque *uterque* *absque* *quinque*

The same symbol may also be used at the end of a word to indicate the letters *-et*, for example, in the abbreviation of Latin words such as *licet*, *debet*, etc.

7. Where words ending in *-ar* or *-or* finish with a 2-shaped *r* which has a downward curving mark through its horizontal baseline stroke, it indicates that letters have been suspended and in this case the genitive plural ending *-arum* or *-orum* is indicated.

Rotulorum *quorum* *librarum* *Annorum* *regnorum*

8. A looped stroke curving downwards appended to the last letter of a word generally indicates the suspension of one or more letters, although some scribes just used it as an embellishment, particularly with the letter *d*. In English texts, such a symbol commonly represents *–es* (but sometimes *–is*, *–ys* or simply *–s*).

| *subjectes* | *landes and tenementes* | *poundes* | *thereaboutes* | *profittes* |

9. Any superscript letter generally (although by no means always) implies the omission of at least one letter. Superscript vowels frequently imply the omission of the letter *r*.

| *principis* | *contra* | *praye* | *quam* |

After the letter *q*, however, the missing letter is always a *u*.

10. Where a word ends with the letter *t* and the cross stroke of the *t* finishes in an upward hook, this is a general abbreviation indicating that a letter or letters have been suspended.

| *tentam* | *Ducatus* | *viginti* |

11. There is a group of special contraction symbols associated specifically with the letter *p*.

Where the *p* has a horizontal line through the stem, this usually represents *per*, but it can also represent *par* or occasionally *por*.

| *per* | *super* | *corpore* | *parte* | *parish* | *personally* | *perfect* |

Where a pen stroke from the head of the *p* comes down to the left and loops back towards or across the stem, this represents an abbreviation for *pro*.

pro　　　　*proprias*　　*profyttes*　　*provyde*　　*proximus*
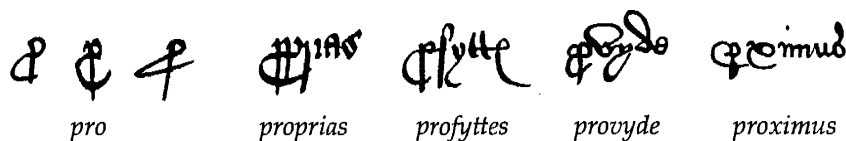
With a *p*, the presence of a hook-shaped mark above the letter similar to symbol number 2 represents *re*, rather than the *er* implied with other letters

predictam　　　*prefata*　　*premyssez*　　*prerogatyve*
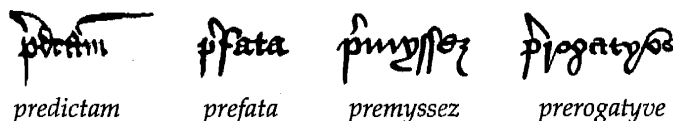
Another abbreviation mark is also used with *p* to represent *re*, but its use is far less common and it tends to be found only in some later documents.

presents　　　　*pretended*　　*prevencion*
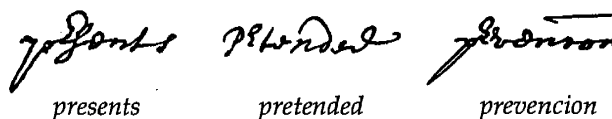
12. Scribes often found it convenient to represent the word *et* or its English equivalent *and* by a single symbol. The exact form chosen varied widely with different hands, but the reader will generally find no difficulty in identifying it from the context.

Et cetera was generally abbreviated to an *et* symbol followed by the letter *c*.

In Latin documents, there are many other conventional forms of abbreviation that were in common use but cannot be deduced directly from the above rules. Anyone who regularly transcribes such documents will find it essential to have access to one of the published lists of Latin abbreviations. *The Record Interpreter*, compiled by C. Trice Martin, contains a list of abbreviations based on English historical manuscripts as well a useful list of some of the abbreviations found in documents written in Anglo-Norman French.

　　A more comprehensive list of Latin abbreviations, based on documents in the Vatican archives but still highly relevant to British manuscripts, is the *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane* (otherwise titled *Lexicon Abbreviaturarum*) by A. Cappelli. Although this is an Italian publication, copies can be obtained from many of the better bookshops in the UK.

English county names and their abbreviations

Bedfordshire	Beds
Berkshire	Berk or Berks or Barks
Buckinghamshire	Bucks or Buck
Cambridgeshire	Cambs
Cheshire	Ches
Cornwall	Corn
Cumberland	Cumb
Derbyshire	Derb or Derbs
Devon	Dev
Dorset	Dors
Co. Durham	Dur
Essex	Ess
Gloucestershire	Glouc or Gloucs
Hampshire	Hants
Herefordshire	Heref
Hertfordshire	Herts
Huntingdonshire	Hunts
Kent	
Lancashire	Lancs
Leicestershire	Leic or Leics
Lincolnshire	Lincs
Middlesex	Middx
Norfolk	Norf
Northamptonshire	Northants or Nhants
Northumberland	Northumb
Nottinghamshire	Notts
Oxfordshire	Oxon
Rutland	Rut
Shropshire	Shrops/Salop
Somerset	Som
Staffordshire	Staff or Staffs
Suffolk	Suff
Surrey	Surr
Sussex	Suss
Warwickshire	Warw or Warws
Westmorland	Westmor
Wiltshire	Wilts
Worcestershire	Worc or Worcs
Yorkshire	Yorks

Abbreviations by parts of words.

The Abbreviations.		The Full words.
Agt.	——	Against.
Anſw.	——	Anſw.
Capt.	——	Captain.
Chap.	——	Chapter.
Eſq.	——	Eſquire.
Fol.	——	Folio, or Page; or ſide of a Leaf in a Book.
Gent.	——	Gentleman.
Knt.	——	Knight.
Ld.	——	Lord.
Ldp.	——	Lordſhip.
Lib.	——	Libr or Book.
Mr.	——	Maſter.
Mrs.	——	Miſtreſs.
Obj.	——	Objection.
Pd.	——	Paid.
Pr.	——	By.
Pſent.	——	Preſent.
Permit.	——	Permit.
Qu.	——	Queſtion, Query.
Reed.	——	Received.
Sd.	——	Said.
Sr.	——	Sir.
St.	——	Saint.
To wit.	——	That is, that is to ſay.
Viz.	——	That is, that is to ſay.
Wch.	——	Which.
Wn.	——	Whom.
Wt.	——	What.
With.	——	With.
Yd.	——	Yard.
Ye.	——	The.
Ym.	——	Them.
Yn.	——	Then.
Yr.	——	Your.
Yt.	——	That.
Yu.	——	Thou;

U 4   The

Abbreviations by parts of words.

ſentence; as in the following examples; Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own underſtanding. Be not wiſe in thine own eyes: fear the Lord; and depart from evil, Prov. 3. 5. and 7. And thus when you come to a Period or full Point in your reading, (it being the length of all Stops) you ought to ſtay your voice as long as one may in a ſpeedy way count about fifteen; or as long as may ſatisfie your Auditors whether you deſign to read further (at the ſame time) or not. This full point is alſo uſed after all Abbreviations, as you will find a larger account thereof in the following Abbreviations.

? A Note of Interrogation is always placed at the end or after a queſtion: as at the following words. What ſhall I do? Whither ſhall I flee? Whom ſhall I blame? What ſhall I pretend? And thus the note of Interrogation is, (or ought to be) placed after every queſtion.

! This Note of Admiration or Exclamation, is ſet after ſuch words or ſentences as are admirable or ſtrange! or at a crying out! as for example; Oh endleſs Endeavours! O how great is God! Oh how wonderful are the works of the Almighty!

Theſe two Notes, viz. ? and ! are Pauſes or Stops, but of an uncertain length; And therefore when the Reader cometh to them, he is to ſtay his voice ſo long as his own diſcretion ſhall direct him; or according to their poſitions in ſentences.

Of Abbreviations.

Abbreviations in Writing or Print, is the cutting of words ſhorter than full words, or to Compoſe words with fewer Letters than maketh a compleat ſound: or ſometimes words are ſignified by ſingle Characters, and ſometimes by Figures.

Firſt of Abbreviations by parts of words.

MAny are the Abbreviations by parts of words, I inſerted here but thoſe that are very commonly uſed in Writing and Print, and they are abbreviated as in the firſt Column hereof, and ſignifie the full words in the ſecond.

The

Abbreviations by parts of words.

The Names of the Books of the Bible are abbreviated as followeth.

In Abbreviations.	In full Words or Names.
Act.	Acts, or the Acts of the Apostles.
Am.	Amos, or the Book of Amos.
Bar.	Baruch, or the Book of Baruch.
Cant.	Canticles, or the Song of Solomon.
Chro.	Chronicles, or the Books of Chronicles.
Col.	Colossians, or the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians.
Cor.	Corinthians, or the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians.
Dan.	Daniel, or the Book of Daniel.
Deut.	Deuteronomy, or the fifth Book of Moses.
Ecclef.	Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher; also Ecclesiasticus.
Eph.	Ephesians, or the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.
Efd.	Esdras, or the Books of Esdras.
Ef.	Esther, or the Book of Esther.
Exo.	Exodus, or the second Book of Moses.
Ezr.	Ezra, or the Book of Ezra.
Ezek.	Ezekiel, or the Book of Ezekiel.
Gal.	Galatians, or the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians.
Gen.	Genesis, or the first Book of Moses.
Hab.	Habakkuk, or the Book of Habakkuk.
Hag.	Haggai, or the Book of Haggai.
Heb.	Hebrews, or the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews.
Hift.Suf.	The History of Susanna.
Hift. Bel. &c.	The History of Bill and the Dragon.
Hof.	Hosea, or the Book of Hosea.
Ja.	James, or the General Epistle of James.
Jer.	Jeremiah, or the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.
Jo.	Job, or the Book of Job.
Joe.	Joel, or the Book of Joel.
Joh.	John, or the Gospel, or the Epistles of John.
Jon.	Jonah, or the Book of Jonah.
Jos.	Joshua, or the Book of the Prophet Joshua.

Abbreviations by parts of words.

Abbr.	In full Words or Names.
Isa.	Isaiah, or the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.
Jud.	Jude, or the Epistle of Jude.
Judit.	Judith, or the Book of Judith.
Judg.	Judges, or the Book of Judges.
Ki.	Kings, or the Book of Kings.
Lam.	Lamentations, or the Book of Lamentations.
Lev.	Leviticus, or the third Book of Moses.
Lu.	Luke, or the Gospel according to Saint Luke.
Mac.	Maccabees, or the Books of Maccabees.
Mal.	Malachi, or the Book of Malachi.
Mar.	Mark, or the Gospel according to Saint Mark.
Mat.	Matthew, or the Gospel according to Saint Matthew.
Mic.	Micah, or the Book of Micah.
Nah.	Nahum, or the Book of Nahum.
Neh.	Nehemiah, or the Book of Nehemiah.
Num.	Numbers, or the fourth Book of Moses.
Ob.	Obediah, or the Book of Obadiah.
Pet.	Peter, or the Epistles of Saint Peter.
Philem.	Philemon, or the Epistle of Paul to the Philemon.
Philip.	Philippians, or the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians.
Prov.	Proverbs, or the Proverbs of Solomon.
Pfal.	Psalms, or the Book of Psalms.
Rev.	Revelations, or the Revelation of St. John the Divine. (vide.)
Ro Rom.	Romans, or the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.
Ru.	Ruth, or the Book of Ruth.
Sam.	Samuel, or the Books of Samuel.
So. Child.	The Song of the Three Children. (Omitted)
Thef.	Thessalonians, or the Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessa
Tim.	Timothy, or the Epistle of St Paul to Timothy.
Tit.	Titus, or the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus.
Tob.	Tobit, or the Book of Tobit.
Wifd.	Wisdom, or the Wisdom of Solomon.
Zec.	Zechariah, or the Book of Zechariah.
Zeph.	Zephaniah, or the Book of Zephaniah.

In Reading several Books of Divinity, you'll find Quo Citations of Scripture; and instead of the Names of the Books of the Bible at large, you'll find the foregoing Abbreviations; (although I know very well that Scholars might not such Instructions;) in regard that every
imperfect

Abbreviations by single Letters.

The Cha-racters.	The words signified by them.
A.	Answer.
D.	Date, Penny or pence, Degree.
H.	How.
I. E.	That is, that is to say.
K.	King.
L.	A Pound or pounds.
M.	Minute, Month.
Q.	Queen, question.
R.	Rex or King.
S.	Saint, Shilling or shillings.
V.	Verse.

IN Titles of Books you will find (oftentimes) two or three Letters for Degrees of Learning, as followeth.

B. A.	Batchelor of Art.
B. D.	Batchelor of Divinity.
D. D.	Doctor of Divinity.
LL. D.	Legum Doctor, or Doctor of Law.
M. A.	Master of Art.
S. T. P.	Sanctæ Theologiæ Professor.
M. D.	Medicine Doctor.

Abbreviations by Astrological Characters.

IN the Art of Astrology, there are Twenty [even words (or terms) Abbreviated by single Characters, that is, the Twelve Signs, the Seven Planets, the Five Aspects, and the three Nodes, they are thus

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Abbreviations by single Characters.

imperfect Reader cannot apprehend all words by part of them, I thought it not amiss to explain such Abbreviations to the Learner, as heretofore.

All Abbreviations, (whether they be by single Letters, or by more,) are always noted with a full point after them, as you see those foregoing Abbreviations for example.

Abbreviations by single Characters.

Characters of Ab-breviations.	The words, or sentences signified by them.
& or &.	And.
&c. or &c.	And so forth.

' This small Character is called an Apostrophe, and noted thus ' being much like a Comma, but is placed higher than a Comma, viz. as a Comma is placed below the line thus , an Apostrophe is placed above the line thus ' This Apostrophe is an Abbreviation, and is much us'd for the Writers and the Reader's use, and that most commonly instead of [e] and oftentimes instead of [hi,] at other times instead of the other Vowel. As in the following examples.

A man's hand.		A man his hand.
Compos'd.		Composed.
Accomplish'd.		Accomplished.
John's Revelation.	Being much easier than to Write or Read,	John his Revelation.
God's Glory.		God his Glory.
Christ's Ascension.		Christ his Ascension.
Ofn. Reas'n.		Often. Reason.
Beak'n. Butt'n.		Beacon, Button.
Bas'n.		Bason.

This Apostrophe is much us'd in Verse, being very hard to make true sense into Meeters without the liberty of using it.

Abbreviations by Astrological Characters.

Characterd,	and Named.

The Twelve Signs:
- ♈ — Aries.
- ♉ — Taurus.
- ♊ — Gemini.
- ♋ — Cancer.
- ♌ — Leo.
- ♍ — Virgo.
- ♎ — Libra.
- ♏ — Scorpio.
- ♐ — Sagitarius.
- ♑ — Capricorn.
- ♒ — Aquarius.
- ♓ — Pisces.

The Seven Planets:
- ♄ — Saturn.
- ♃ — Jupiter.
- ♂ — Mars.
- ☉ — Sol.
- ♀ — Venus.
- ☿ — Mercury.
- ☽ — Luna.

The Five Aspects:
- ☌ — Conjunction.
- ⚹ — Sextile.
- □ — Quadrate.
- △ — Trine.
- ☍ — Opposition.

The Three Nodes:
- ☊ — Drago's head.
- ☋ — Dragon's tail.
- ⊕ — Part of Fortune.

Abbreviation by Medicinal Characters.

These Medicinal Characters are used by Physicians, Chymists, Apothecaries and Druglers; and are thus

Characterd

Abbreviations by Medicinal Characters.

Characterd,	and Expressed.

- lb — a Pound, or twelve Ounces.
- ℥ — an Ounce, or eight Drams.
- ʒ — a Dram, or Drachm, or the eighth part of an Ounce.
- Ə — a Scruple, or the third part of a Dram.
- gr. — a Grain, or the twentieth part of a Scruple.
- M. — a Handful.
- P. — a Pugil, or half a handful.
- p. — a Part.
- No. — Number.
- A. — Ana, or of each a like.
- ß. ſſ. — Semis, or half any quantity.
- q. s. — Quantum satis, or a sufficient quantity.
- q. v. — quantum vis, or as much as you please.
- ℞ — Recipe, or receive.
- S. A. — Secundum artem, or according to Art.
- ♄ — Saturn, or Lead.
- ♃ — Jupiter, or Tin.
- ♂ — Mars, or Iron.
- ☉ — Sol, or Gold.
- ♀ — Venus, or Copper.
- ☿ — Mercury, or Quicksilver.
- ☽ — Luna, or Silver.
- ♁ — Antimonii, or Stibium, a Purging stone.
- — Arsnick, or a kind of Poyson.
- — Sal. Gem.
- — Urine.
- — Vinegar.
- — Take.
- — Sublimate Spirit.
- — Fire.
- — Water.
- — Oil.
- B. — Balneum, or a Bath, or washing place.
- B. M. — Balneo Marie, or Virgin Maris Bath.
- B. V. — Balneo Vaporis, or Incense Bath.

Abbreviations by Dashes, and Numeration Figures.

Or thus in plainer Examples.

A Com'onwealth   A Commonwealth
is in danger   is in danger
where Wisd'   where Wisdom
is not predom'in't.   is not predominant.

Abbreviations by Numeration Figures.

THese Abbreviations (by Figures) are most used in long Measures, as a Yard is divided into 16 parts or Nails; the Dividual parts thereof are

Charac-tered	And commonly expressed
1/16	a Nail.
2/16	half a Quarter.
3/16	three Nails.
1/5	a Quarter.
4/16	five Nails.
1/6	a Quarter and a half.
6/16	half a Yard lack a Nail.
7/16	half a Yard, half any thing.
1/8	half a Yard and a Nail.
9/16	half an Ell, or half a Yard, and half (a Quarter.
10/16	three Quarters lack a Nail.
1/16	three Quarters.
4/3	three Quarters and a Nail.
1/4	three Quarters and a half.
8/5	
2.1	a Yard lack a Nail.

Also

Abbreviations by Medicinal Characters, and by Dashes.

V. ————— Alembick.
Æ. A F. ————— Aqua Fortis, or Violent water.
A R. ————— Aqua Regia, or Princely water.
A V. ————— Aqua Vitæ, or water of Life.
S V. ————— Spiritus Vini, or Spirit or Wine.
S S S. ————— Stratum Superstratum, or lay upon lay.
⊕ ✱ ————— Salt Armoniack.

————— Sulphur, or Brimstone.
————— Salt.
————— Cinnabar, or a kind of a red Stone.
————— Niter, or kind of Salt.
————— Tartar, or Lees.
————— Alum.
————— Vitriol.
————— Albus.
————— Glass.
————— Quicklime.

Abbreviations by Dashes.

THere is an Abbreviation by Dashes over the Vowels, which cuts off M or N as in the following examples.

ã ————— am. an.
ẽ ————— em. en.
ĩ ————— im. in.
õ ————— om. on.
ũ ————— um. un.

Or

43

Glossary: describing early modern handwriting

Nearly all terminology for paleographical description derives from M. B. Parkes, *English cursive book hands, 1250-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) and Anthony G. Petti, *English literary hands from Chaucer to Dryden* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977). Peter Beal's *Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology* alleviates the lack of standardization somewhat, but he focuses more on physical structures and types of manuscripts than on handwriting. In describing handwriting, try to follow the terminology listed here. While it is important to note stylistic characteristics, it is even more important to note individual characteristics because of their evidential value.

The overall impression of the English secretary script is one of broad strokes and hairlines in opposite diagonals, giving the script a splayed appearance (this diminishes as the 16th century progresses). Key features include angular broken strokes in lobes of letters (which gradually evolves into curved strokes in bastard secretary form), horns, exaggerated descenders, short ascenders with small rounded loops. *P* often has an approach stroke, *r* is often twin-stemmed, the tail of *g* crosses over its head, *d* increasingly loses definition, *c* looks like modern *r*, and *e* appears in three different forms: two-stroke *e*, reverse *e*, and greek *e*.

body	the part of the letter within the (imagined) base lines
linear	letters in which the entire body fits within the base lines (*a, c, e*)
supralinear	letters that ascend above the line (*d, b, h*)
infralinear	letters that descend below the line (*g, j, p*)
double-length	letters that go above and below the base line, such as *f, h* and long *s* (in contrast to linear, supralinear, and infralinear letters; some letters belong to more than one class depending on how they are formed)
minim	the most basic linear vertical stroke; *n* and *m* are composed of 2 and 3 minims, respectively; it is useful to count minims when trying to figure out a long string of letters that could be *u, m, n,* or *i*. Other letters with minims are *c* and certain forms of *r*
ascender	the part of the letter above the line; in secretary hands, ascenders tend to be short with small rounded loops
descender	the part of the letter below the line; in secretary hands, sometimes looped, often exaggerated. Sometimes referred to as the **tail**
stem	the upright support for linear letters such as *a* or *r;* secretary *r* is sometimes double-stemmed with crossbar at the base

lobe/bowl	the compartment of a letter. If the compartment is closed, use lobe, if it is open, use bowl (as in *b* or *d)*
shaft	the top part of double-length letters like *s* or *f*
cross-bar	a stroke joining two stems, as in twin-stemmed *r*
head-stroke	the cross-bar for letters like *t* or *f*, or to close a bowl, as in *g*
limb	the curved stroke coming off the ascender in the letter *h*
serif	cross-stroke, hook, club, or knob at bottom (foot) or top (head) of letters such as *l, f, t*
spur	a single stroke, straight or curved, often above an *a* or *c*, sometimes running upwards; also referred to as a horn or cusp
tilde/tittle	wavy diacritic mark placed above a letter, generally to imply omitted letters (but sometimes done out of habit even if not signifying an omitted letter). Usually indicates contraction of an *m*, *n*, *i*, and *–ion*, as in *celebracõn* for *celebracion*
uncial	rounded with bent ascender (instead of looped) as in secretary *d,* where the ascender slants over the lobe
thorn	the Old English letter that looks like a *y* but acts like a *th* (as in ye olde shoppe)
Tironian "et"	a form of ampersand that looks somewhat like a 7 with a cross-bar, named after Tiro, one of Cicero's amanuenses who derived a system of shorthand for recording Cicero's speeches
graph	character or letter form; may consist of a letter or set of letters (such as ligatures or digraphs [æ and œ]
ligature	the running of two or more letters together to form one graph, such as *st* or *ch*
	biting ligature when adjacent contrary curvy strokes meet, such as *b* followed by *o*
stroke	a single mark made by pen in any direction on the page
	upstroke thinner, upward stroke, sometimes hairline, light pressure from nib

downstroke	thicker, downward stroke	
otiose stroke	ornamental flourish with no function	
broken stroke	a stroke made of more than one movement without a penlift	
linking stroke	a short, narrow stroke that joins two letters, but is not part of either	

letter position

initial	a letter at the beginning of a word
medial	a letter in the middle of a word
terminal	a letter at the end of a word

majuscule   upper case

minuscule   lower case

autograph   written in the author's own hand (if not, then scribal); also referred to as holograph when the entire document is in the author's hand

script   established, prescriptive style of handwriting (as opposed to hand); the imagined perfect form of the hand

hand   the individual performance of the script, can be described in many ways. In addition to the terms below, other, vaguer terms are also often employed, such as compact, messy, economical, careless (often modified with "very")

set	formal, carefully-formed in accordance with an accepted style
facile	semi-formal, semi-cursive
current	free, running, rapid, or cursive
splayed	strokes at different diagonals
engrossing	set hand used for headings

abbreviations   includes **contractions** (omitting one or more letters from middle of a word, sometimes final letter or letters are superscript) **suspensions** (final letters of a word omitted), **brevigraphs** (ampersands and other symbols)

line filler   flourish or simple doodle at the end of a line to "justify" it

deletions   **erasure** (scraping the ink from the surface with a sharp knife; generally not suitable for paper), **cancellation** (most common form, text struck-through with straight lines, spirals, or criss-cross trellis pattern), **obliteration** (blotting, smudging, or otherwise completely

obscuring the text), **alteration** (superimposing one letter or word over another)

scribal errors   includes omission, addition, transposition, alteration

Transcribing early modern handwriting

The goal of transcription is to produce an accurate representation of a manuscript text, either for quotation in a scholarly work or in preparation for creating an edited text. There are three basic types of transcription: diplomatic, semi-diplomatic, and modernized. Each type of transcription has its own benefits and uses.

Diplomatic transcriptions attempt to represent typographically everything on the original page, including letter sizes, writing stints, abbreviations, blots, false starts, gaps, and interlineal insertions. Since it is nearly impossible to render all paleographical oddities in typescript format accurately, diplomatic transcriptions can be misleading and difficult to interpret. However, if you are working with pencil and paper rather than a computer, making an initial diplomatic transcription can actually be quite useful for writing physical descriptions and for understanding scribal habits.

The other extreme is **modernization**. Ignoring the idiosyncracies of a manuscript is as potentially misleading as trying to represent them typographically. Normalizing spelling and punctuation, ignoring line endings, and expanding abbreviations depersonalize a manuscript, making it impossible to draw conclusions based on the unique habits of the individual scribe or the nature of the physical format. For some editions and audiences, of course, a modernized text is preferred, but you should never automatically modernize while you are transcribing.

We'll focus primarily on **semi-diplomatic transcriptions** in order to produce a fluent readable text that is devoid of distracting apparatus but that still maintains individual characteristics of the manuscript. A semi-diplomatic transcription provides nearly all of the features of a diplomatic transcription, but in a cleaner, clearer format since some details are relegated to textual notes. Editorial interventions are clearly indicated so that a reader can clearly distinguish between the original text and the text as edited.

Physical description

Aside from the transcribed text itself, an edited text has five main parts: the general introduction (including rationale for the edition), physical description, textual conventions, textual commentary, and annotations. You might also want to consider including a glossary, biographical dictionary, and/or an index.

When describing a manuscript for an edition or other scholarly work, it is important to include an account of its main features, both to support any claims or arguments you are making, and to provide a level of access that is not generally included in online or print catalogues. The level of detail you provide depends upon the audience, the publisher, its relevance to your argument, and whether or not a description exists elsewhere. For good narrative versions of physical descriptions, consult the essays in any volume of the periodical *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*.

The following details are often included in a physical description:

place, repository, shelfmark

title, date (with evidence, if necessary), place of creation (if known)

general condition

summary of contents

writing surface: paper (with watermark description), vellum, or parchment

dimensions (height followed by width, millimeters; if leaves vary, provide dimensions for largest and smallest); evidence of cropping

pagination or foliation (contemporary, modern, obsolete, ink, pencil, location on page). If unfoliated, then number of leaves (front end-leaves in roman numerals, book leaves in Hindu-Arabic numerals, back end-leaves in roman numerals)

collation (if binding is not too tight), noting quires, stubs, missing leaves, inserted leaves, cancelled leaves (see Gaskell's *A new introduction to bibliography* for formulas)

description of handwriting, number of hands, identity of scribe or scribes

ruling, decoration, or other special features

corrections, marginalia

binding

provenance and ownership marks (contact curatorial staff if necessary)

RENAISSANCE SCRIPT AND MANUSCRIPT

DESCRIBING MANUSCRIPTS

DESCRIBING MANUSCRIPTS

On the following page is a guide to information which you should record when examining a manuscript. It is set out in such a way as to enable you to produce from it a full description of the manuscript. The exact format of that description will depend on the type of manuscript, its complexity, and how much is known about it, and will involve work subsequent to your initial examination: for instance, identifying watermarks or contents. In your initial examination you should remember to bear in mind the sorts of questions which do not arise in the case of printed books: e.g., was this manuscript assembled and bound before, during, or after its contents were written? were pages removed before or after binding? You should remember also to expect the book to be multiple in various ways: more than one paper stock, scribe, stage of transcription…

Aside from the usual sources (Gaskell, Briquet, Heawood), an excellent introductory guide to binding techniques and terminology is:

P.J.M. Marks, *The British Library Guide to Bookbinding: History and Techniques* (London: British Library, 1998)

See also:

Howard M. Nixon and Mirjam M. Foot, *The History of Decorated Bookbinding in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), B620.4 (Rare Books Room) and other books at B610 and B620

For provenance research try:

David Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History: a Handbook* (London: British Library, 1994), B873.26
David Pearson, *Provenance Indexes for Early Printed Books and Manuscripts: a guide to present resources* (Huntington: D. Pearson, 1987), B910.7

And remember:

Peter Beal, *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology, 1450-2000* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2008)

GRA

DATING AND DESCRIBING HANDS

See the introduction to Petti, and the less dogmatic introduction to Dawson and Kennedy-Skipton, for the evolution of handwriting between 1500 and 1700. Study also the descriptions of hands in these and other volumes.

An adequate description of a hand will include information about the type of hand, whether or not it is scribal, how formal/cursive it is, and how the document is laid out, and will comment on particular characteristics of the hand and individual letter forms, both in support of the description and with a view to determining a range for dating. Try to convey an impression of how the hand relates to the evolution of handwriting in the Renaissance, including whether it typifies certain tendencies or is atypical.

HANDS

Book hands	the hands found in books produced by scriptoria prior to the spread of printing; such hands are more accommodating of attempts at codification
Court hands	general business/literary hands, including stylised hands in particular offices/professions which survive alongside Secretary (e.g. chancery hand, exchequer hand, etc.)
Secretary	an offshoot of the court hands of the beginning of the C16 (early-, mid-, late-Tudor, Jacobean)
Italic	created in Italy c. 1400 and popular with English Humanists from the early C16 on; only once the hand becomes widespread does it start to infect secretary and produce...
Mixed	/hybrid/transitional hands, the next stage of the Italic conquest, leading to
Round hand	mid-late C17 Italic: the hand we have inherited

Martin Billingsley, *The Pens Excellencie* (1618)
the Secretary . . . *is so termed (as I conceive) partly because it is the Secretaries common hand; and partly also, because it is the onely usuall hand of England, for dispatching of all manner of businesses for the most part, whatsoever.*

[Italic] *is conceived to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is usually taught to women, for as much as they (having not the patience to take any great paines, besides phantasticall and humorsome) must be taught that which they may instantly learne*

SCRIBAL/NON-SCRIBAL

Though how do we define a scribe? Someone who was paid to write and copy MSS, whether in a scriptorium, or as someone's amanuensis/secretary? And what do we call non-scribes? Amateurs? Features such as speed, regularity, legibility, use of contractions, consistency, systematic use of punctuation and letter forms, and clarity of layout may indicate scribal habits at work. But there was no school for scribes. Words like 'professional' may come in useful, but do not aim at too clear-cut a set of distinctions.

SPEED/DEGREE OF FORMALITY

Set/facile/rapid
or
Formal/cursive [and such scientific intensifiers as 'very', or 'fairly']

DESCRIBING FEATURES OF WRITING AND LETTER FORMS
terms from English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500, *by M.B. Parkes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)*

script	the model which the scribe has in his mind's eye when he writes
hand	what he actually puts down on the page
graph	another name for a letter form
stroke	single trace made by the pen on the page
minim	the shortest and simplest stroke, used to form the letters **i**, **m**, **n**, **u**
otiose stroke	a superfluous stroke, which does not form part of a letter, or indicate an abbreviation
biting	when two adjacent contrary curved strokes coalesce, e.g. **b** followed by **o**

letter forms: **b** comprises a *stem* or mainstroke which rises above the general level of the other letters (*ascender*) and a *lobe* made with a curved stroke to the right of the stem

    p comprises a *descender* and a lobe

    h comprises an ascender and a *limb*

    t comprises a *shaft* and a *headstroke*

The *body* of a letter form is that part which does not include an ascender or descender

MORE TERMS

flourish

holograph/autograph written in the author's hand (e.g. letter, poem)

capital/majuscule/upper case

minuscule/lower case

linear (a, c, e), supralinear (d, b, h), infralinear (g, j, p), and double-length (f, long s) letters

initial, medial, terminal/final

text hand and glossing hand [if within one passage the same writer uses two scripts, one for text, the other for commentary and headings]

engrossing = the most formal variety of a script

EVEN MORE TERMS [see Petti, pp. 8-9, *cum grano salis*]

DATING

Don't be fooled by the contents - these may give a *terminus a quo* but never give a *terminus ad quem* unless you *know* the MS is autograph. Remember that it may take some subtlety to distinguish a good Humanist Italic c. 1550 from one c. 1620; that old men might write a hand in 1640 which they learnt in 1580, with very little difference; and that attempts to comment on the age or gender of the writer are almost certainly doomed. So aim at a date-range (e.g. 1575-1600) or a rough date (c. 1600, which I would interpret as 1590-1610). Or (clever) use periods: early-Tudor, mid-Tudor, [early-/mid-/late-] Elizabethan, [early-/late-] Jacobean, Caroline, mid-century, late seventeenth-century. Combine these ('late-Elizabethan/early-Jacobean'). They have the virtue of accommodating anomalies (the old man/ultra-modern young man syndrome), so a hand can be described as having typical late-Elizabethan features even though the MS may turn out to date from 1565 or 1620. You do know your dates, don't you? (Henry VIII 1509-47; Edward VI 1547-53; Mary I 1553-58; Elizabeth I 1558-1603; James VI and I 1603-25; Charles I 1625-49; Charles II 1660-1685; James II 1685-88; etc.) Try to get a feel for the general appearance of hands of a certain date, their slope, economy, degree of flourish, use of nib, etc. Remember that spelling provides evidence of sorts (y for i; u/v), as does punctuation. And notice how the evolution of handwriting is the sum of its parts - a single archaic letter form may refine the dating of a hand which might otherwise be only roughly dated. Expect on the exam a hand from each half-century. And expect to be surprised.

GRA

LOCATION AND CLASS MARK [plus, e.g., James, Beal numbers]

TITLE [quasi facsimile]

ASCRIPTION OF CONTENTS if known, with references to printed editions or other manuscripts

STATEMENT OF CONTENTS [fols <first page of main text> - <last page> '<first line of prose/two line of verse>...<last line/two lines>'; if there are discrete sections (e.g. different paper, different scribe), list each in the same way; if the contents are miscellaneous, list whatever might be identifiable]

PAPER [watermark reference]; ENDPAPERS [watermark reference if not modern]

LEAF SIZE, <length>mm x <width>mm, gilding? MISE EN PAGE [e.g. written within a ruled frame 000mm x 000mm approx.]

NUMBER OF LEAVES (including endleaves) ff. xx [roman numerals] + 000 + xx. End leaves original? Statement of (original/current) foliation/pagination. Old shelfmarks, etc.

FORMULA [numerical, e.g. 1^3 2-43^4]. Catchwords? Other details of collation.

HAND [including dating]

BINDING [including book size]

PROVENANCE

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS Mu 782 (formerly MS 52.D.25): the John Bull Manuscript

Contains part music, keyboard music, and songs of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Described in *Cambridge Music Manuscripts 900-1700*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1982), pp. 146-49. Keyboard music edited *in toto* as *Tisdale's Virginal Book*, ed. Alan Brown (London: Stainer and Bell, 1966). Songs by Ferrabosco edited in *Alfonso Ferrabosco II: Manuscript Songs*, ed. Ian Spink, The English Lute-songs, second series, 19 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1966).

PAPER
Printed music manuscript paper signed 'T[homas]. E[ste].', 293x190 mm (cropped at original binding), with 10 5-line staves per page arranged, sigs 1-19, as 2 systems of 5 staves each, and, sigs 20-42, as 1 system of 10 staves; printed from at least 3 paper stocks, 2 with a pot and grapes type watermark, the third with no watermark; the staves are framed left and right by ruled margins leaving a writing space approx. 260x158 mm (2 systems) or 245x158 mm (1 system); a 4th paper type, with a different watermark and unprinted, is contained in the last 4 leaves, 43^4, only. The first, single-handled, pot watermark is similar to the type represented by Heawood 3548-54, all found in books in England from the 1580s and 1590s.

COLLATION
When the volume was repaired in 1982 two sets of stubs representing the first two gatherings were mounted on the inside front cover; they were designated A^4 and B^8 (-B8) by the binder. These are not included in the collation below, which is based on the binder's note and is confirmed by the pattern of watermarks, with the exception of sig. 1 which contains not two conjugate leaves as indicated by the collation, but two half sheets each with a watermark (the next simplest explanation, given the apparent presence of stubs between 1_1 and 1_4, is therefore 1^6 (wanting 4 leaves) but I have been unable to clarify this because of the tightness of the repaired binding):

2° mostly in 8s: 1^4 ($-1_{2,3}$) 2^8 ($-2_{4,6}$) 3^8 ($-3_{1,2,5}$) 4^8 ($-4_{1,2}$) 5^8 (-5_4) 6^8 7^8 (-7_8) 8^8 ($-8_{1,2}$) 9^8 ($-9_{6,7,8}$) 10^8 ($-10_{2,7}$) 11-12^8 13^8 (-13_8) 14^8 (-14_1) 15-20^8 21^6 22^8 23^8 (-23_4) 24-35^8 36^{10} ($-36_{4,5}$) 37-42^8 43^4

Each gathering has its number in pencil, bottom right of 1^r. The numbering is duplicated at 15 and 19 but this is not noticed, so the collation in Fenlon and in the binder's note records only 41 gatherings; the numbering of signatures above does not, therefore, coincide with the numbering in the volume after sig. 14.

ff. i + 313 + i (front and rear endleaves are modern), foliated subsequently 1-126 in sequences interspersed with 187 blank and unnumbered leaves: 1-70, [9], 71-72, [60], 73-97, [115], 98-116, [3], 117-126. Original foliation (at some points pagination): 3^v-70^r numbered 1-81 plus 82 on recto of next (unnumbered) leaf; 74^v-97^r numbered 1-24. The original numbering postdates the early removal of a large number of leaves during transcription. The different sections do not coincide with beginnings and ends of gatherings: the volume was bound before writing commenced.

CONTENTS
1^r blank; 1^v-2^r part music, hand B; 2^v-3^r blank; 3^v-60^r part music, hand A;[1] 60^v-70^r madrigals, lute songs (voice only), and part songs (text in all cases incomplete: either in one part only or incipit only), hand A, including 61^v-65^r (bass) vocal lines with incipits only of songs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 from John Dowland, *The First Booke of Songes or Ayres* (1597); 9 blank leaves; 71^v-72^v part music (hand C?); 60 blank leaves; 73^{r-v} two songs, hand B, the second, 'Shall I come sweet love to the[e]' from Campion's *Third Booke of Ayres* (c. 1617); 74^r blank; 74^v-97^v keyboard music, hand A, except 75^v-76^r 'Dowlands Lacrimae, out of my Cosine Maryes booke', hand B; 115 blank leaves; 98^v-116^r continuo songs, hand B, including 5 MS songs (4 unique to this source) by Alfonso Ferrabosco II, all indicated with a digraph cipher 'AF' except 'Was I to blame' which is headed 'Ferrabosco;', theatre and other songs by Wilson (2 songs), Lanier (1), Johnson (5), Campion (1), Henry Lawes (1), 'T.E.' (2) and anon. (3), including three songs from Fletcher's *The Mad Lover* (c. 1616), one from Middleton's *The Witch* (c. 1616), and one from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian* (c. 1614), none unique to this source except for the two songs by 'T.E.' and two by anon.; 116^v blank; 3 blank leaves; 117^v-122^v settings of psalms and devotional material, hand B, including a catechistic octave, 122^{r-v}; 123^r-126^r on the unprinted paper, poems and notes, hand B, including 123^r more catechistic octaves following from 122^v, and 124^r 'Like to the damask rose', a disputed lyric dated by Ault to the 1620s. A binder's note, after repair February 1982, is on the verso of the rear endleaf.

HANDS
While there may be a third hand (hand C) at 71^v-72^v there is evidence elsewhere of only two hands (Fenlon sees the material ascribed above to hand B as dividing between two hands but they are probably two versions of the same hand; Edwards supports the latter view). Both are transitional, with the earlier hand basically italic and the later hand containing more secretary features; they are distinguished clearly by their musical notation. Fenlon does not believe that Bull's hand is found in the MS. Brown reproduces fol. 77^r and fol. 75^v, Fenlon fol. 83^r.

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[1] Identified as textless madrigals by Edwards; for a list of those identified see Edwards, *Elizabethan Consort Music*, I, pp. 163-65.

Gavin Alexander, University of Cambridge, 2009

DATING

Thomas Este worked as Byrd's assignee after 1587; printed manuscript paper of the type used here is seen in other music MSS of the 1590s, such as the Cambridge lute MSS. Jorgens, *English Song 1600-1675*, XII, includes lyric texts from the MS but does not reproduce the volume in facsimile (Jorgens provides further notes on many of the song texts under their respective first lines; most are not unique to this source). The evidence of dating, assuming that transcription may have occurred over a number of years, as inconsistencies in hand and notation conventions might indicate, suggests a period of 1615-1630 for the third portion of the MS, including 'Was I to blame' and hand B's other entries. Hand A's entries would seem to date from the period of Bull's ownership, i.e. around 1600, a speculation encouraged by the composers named in its portions, as Fenlon notes. Dart suggests c.1595-1610 for the keyboard music; Brown, who believes the scribe of the keyboard music to be William Tisdall because pieces by him are attributed to 'Tisdale' not 'Mr Tisdale', suggests c.1615.[2]

BINDING

Brown calf, with elaborate gold tooled designs on covers, edges and spine (spine rebacked); top, bottom and foredge gilt and gauffered; book size 303x210 mm. A photograph of the binding is included in *Cambridge Music Manuscripts*, p. 147. As Fenlon notes, 146, another of Bull's volumes, Cambridge University Library Rel.c.56.4, containing Sebastiani's *Bellum Musicale* (1563), Arbeau's *Orchésographie* (1596 edn), and Holborne's *Cittharn Schoole* (1597), although smaller uses the same tools and decorative techniques, only differing in the text on the front cover; Fenlon further observes that 'these bindings are, except for the inscription, almost identical with that of *My Ladye Nevells Booke*, a prime source for Byrd's keyboard music evidently compiled in circles close to the composer and completed in 1591; it seems likely that all these books were bound in the same shop'.

PROVENANCE

The gold tooling on the front cover records John Bull's ownership: 'IOHN BVLL | DOCTER OF | MVSIQUE ORGA | NISTE AND GENT | ELMAN OF HER MAIES | TIES MOSTE HONORABLE | CHAPPELL'. Bull (1563?-1628) was probably Mus.D. at Cambridge by 1589 and became D.Mus. at Oxford by incorporation in 1592; he was organist of the Chapel Royal 1591-1613; the execution of the binding must therefore date from 1589-1603; he fled the country after an adultery scandal, worked in Brussels c. 1614, and was organist of Antwerp Cathedral 1617-28.[3] The volume may have returned to England at his death, but it is more likely that it stayed in the country when Bull left: the contents of the later portion of the volume coincide in date with this period but do not reflect the interests of Bull and go far beyond the likely extent of his access to current English songs in manuscript. We may speculate about the identity of the volume's second owner. Bull did have connections in circles close to the Sidneys: he was apprenticed to the Earl of Sussex, and Sussex's brother-in-law Sir Henry Sidney made the recommendation which secured the young Bull the post of organist at Hereford Cathedral in 1582. A later owner's name is blind tooled almost invisibly in the centre of the elaborate central device on the front and rear covers; the reading 'IOSEPH AMES' is confirmed by the C18 heraldic bookplate 'AMES OF NORFOLKE' pasted on fol. 1ᵛ and ruled round in red ink. Joseph Ames (1689-1759), the bibliographer and antiquary, was descended from the ancient Norfolk family and collected assiduously. His library was sold by Abraham Langford in May 1760. The catalogue includes our volume as lot 1004: 'A Book of Musique of Dr. John Bull, Organist and Gentleman of her Majesties most Honourable Chappell, with two Letters from Dr. Ward, relating to this curious Book fol.'.[4] These letters are no longer found with the volume, but their contents may be surmised. John Ward, Gresham Professor of Rhetoric, wrote the life of Bull in his *The Lives of the Professors of Gresham College* (London, 1740). After a long list of Pepusch's collection of Bull works in MS he refers unmistakably to our volume (208): 'There is likewise extant a *folio* volume, handsomly bound, in red Turkey leather, and gilt, with the following words stamped on the cover. IOHN. BVLL. | DOCTER. OF. | MVSIQUE. ORGA. | NISTE. AND. GENT | ELMAM. [sic] OF. HER. MAIES | TIES. MOSTE. HONORABLE. | CHAPPELL. Besides this inscription, the ruled paper shews, that the book was made at that time, by the letters T.E. marked upon every sheet, which stand for *Thomas East...* However, few of the tunes have the words put to them, or the name of the composer; and Dr. Bull's name is not to any of them, but only those of other persons; so that whether any of them were really made by him, or not, is uncertain.' A footnote here tells us that 'This manuscript is now in the possession of Mr. Ames...' I have not traced the volume's earlier or later history. It was acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1925 (Dart, 103).

Note

Observe how and where this differs from the guide (which is a reminder of what needs recording *in situ*). The order in which you give information and the attention you give to each feature will depend on the purpose of the description and the nature of the manuscript.

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[2] Thurston Dart, 'New Sources of Virginal Music', *Music and Letters*, 35 (1954), 93-106. The two pieces by Tisdall are also edited from this MS in William Tisdall, *Complete Keyboard Works*, ed. Howard Ferguson (London: Stainer and Bell, 1958; rev. edn, 1970).

[3] See *New Grove*, sv 'Bull'.

[4] [Abraham Langford], *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of Scarce printed Books, and curious Manuscripts, of Mr. Joseph Ames, F.R.S....* (London, 1760), p. 71 (the sixth night's sale).

RENAISSANCE SCRIPT AND MANUSCRIPT

EDITING TEXTS FROM MANUSCRIPT

Any reproduction of a text is of course an edition. One might even say that every text is an edition, even a unique autograph manuscript. But some are more edited than others. Whether you are attempting to edit a manuscript or portion of a manuscript as a task in itself, or are simply quoting from a manuscript source as part of some other project, decisions have to be made about how best to present the information. These decisions will be about your purposes in presenting the information, your understanding of the nature of the document, and your understanding of its relation to your readership. Difficult decisions, made more difficult when the manuscript contains information which is hard to represent in print.

It is perhaps only possible to say that a transcription is not an edition if you are its reader, and that is our assumption with the weekly transcriptions. In editing a text you will have to think about what features need to be communicated and which can be forgotten, about whether the reader needs to be given, somehow, a flavour of the text in its original manuscript form, or will only require the words. And about what sort of commenting function you as editor will take on. Decisions which you must be able to justify...

Diplomatic $\rightarrow$ semi-diplomatic $\rightarrow$ old spelling $\rightarrow$ regularise punctuation $\rightarrow$ modernise punctuation $\rightarrow$ modern spelling?
Parallel text (edited text opposite diplomatic transcription/facsimile)?
Annotate?
Collate?
Emend?

Numbers

roman numerals

- last i-digit is always represented as a long-i, but we will transcribe as a regular i
- don't confuse "x" with "v" (or "p")
- be prepared for inconsistency and mixing of forms (xx, xx^{tie}, xx^{ti}, xx^{ty})
- Sometimes roman numerals appear above other roman numerals

j	1
ij	2
iij	3
iiij	4
v	5
vj	6
vij	7
viij	8
viiij or ix	9
x	10
xj	11
xij	12
xiij	13
xiiij or xiv	14
xv	15
xvj	16
xvij	17
xviij	18
xviiij or xix	19
xx	20
l or L	50
C	100
D	500
M or M^l	1000

Examples of roman numeral forms

^{xx}**iiij**	four-score, 4x20=80
^{c}**vj**	600
^{m}**iij**	3000
C ^{xx}**iij iiij**	164
ij ^{m}**ix** ^{c}**j** ^{xx}**vj**	2926

Hindu-Arabic numbers

- See Tannenbaum, *The handwriting of the Renaissance*, for different forms
- "1" often looks like a modern "2"
- "5" often looks like a modern "s"

Money

conversions

1 pound   =   20 shillings

1 shilling   =   12 pence

1 mark   =   13 shillings, 4 pence (2/3 of a pound)[1]

abbreviations

note: abbreviations for money are never expanded in transcriptions

l or **li**	libri	pounds
s	solidus[2]	shillings
d	denarius	pence
ob	obolus	half-penny
q or **qua**	quadrans	farthing

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[1] Not an actual coin, but an amount.
[2] Solidus, denarius, and obolus are derived from names of Roman coins.

Dates

<u>**days**</u>
- Days are often represented in Latin
- There are many variations in how ordinal numbers are represented. For example: **22°** or **22**[th] or **xxij**[th] or **xxij°** = two and twentieth, or, in modern parlance, 22nd

<u>**ordinal numbers**</u>

1°	primo	first
2°	secundo	second
3°	tertio	third
4°	quarto	fourth
5°	quinto	fifth
6°	sexto	sixth
7°	septimo	seventh
8°	octavo	eighth
9°	nono	ninth
10°	decimo	tenth
11°	undecimo	eleventh
12°	duodecimo	twelfth
13°	decimo tertio	thirteenth
14°	decimo quarto	fourteenth
15°	decimo quinto	fifteenth
16°	decimo sexto	sixteenth
17°	decimo septeo	seventeenth
18°	decimo octo	eighteenth
19°	decimo nono	nineteenth
20°	vicesimo	twentieth
21°	vicesimo primo	twenty-first
22°	vicesimo secundo	twenty-second
30°	tricesimo	thirtieth

months

Months appear in numerous forms, sometimes blending Latin, English, and Roman and Hindu-Arabic numbers.

January, Januarius, Januarij
February, Februarius, Februarij
March, Martius, Martij
April, Aprilis
May, Maius, Maij
June, Junius, Junij
July, Julius, Julij
August, Augustus, Augustij
September, Septembris, 7^{ber}, 7^{bris}, vij^{ber}
October, Octobris, 8^{ber}, 8^{bris}, $viij^{ber}$
November, Novembris, 9^{ber}, 9^{bris}, $viiij^{ber}$, ix^{ber}
December, Decembris, 10^{ber}, 10^{bris}, x^{ber}

regnal years

Regnal years are calculated from the date of accession (see photocopy from Cheney for regnal years for Henry V through William and Mary).

Note that Charles II came to the throne in May 1660, but his regnal year is calculated from the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649; hence, the first year of his reign is regnal year 12.

Happy New Year!

In early modern England, the beginning of the historical year was celebrated on January 1 (this is when New Year's gifts were exchanged), but the civil/legal year began on March 25 (Lady Day). Thus, the days between January 1 and March 24 were usually dated the previous year.

Thus, the day after December 31, 1601 was January 1, 1601. The day after March 24, 1601 was March 25, 1602.

Later in the seventeenth-century, double-dating was often used in documents to avoid ambiguity (for example, 1656/57), and January 1 is occasionally observed as the beginning of the year. But the beginning of the year was not officially changed to January 1 until 1752.

However….
Germany, Spain, France, and other Continental countries adopted January 1 as the official beginning of the year in the sixteenth century, followed by Scotland in 1600.

old style (Julian) vs. new style (Gregorian), or the 10 day lag

England observed the Julian, or Old Style calendar (O.S.) until 1752.

Beginning in October 1582, Catholic countries on the continent began using the Gregorian, or New Style calendar (N.S.) (named after Pope Gregory), skipping ahead ten days to realign with the solar cycle, since the Julian calendar (named after Julius Caesar), which introduced Leap Year, had over-corrected the problem by eight days each millennium.

This means that:

Letters sent to/from the continent may contain double-dating (12/22 November) to avoid ambiguity, and/or include "O.S.," "N.S.," "stylo novo," etc.

Thus, a letter dated 10/20 March 1625/26 signifies March 10, 1625 in England, March 20, 1626 on the Continent, and March 20, 1626 in modern reckoning.

legal calendar

Legal documents often represent the date in terms of the regnal year, followed by the legal term. Almanacs, the preliminary matter of the Book of Common Prayer, and clerks' manuals, usually included dates and formulas for calculating the dates of the four legal terms, which were tied to moveable feast days. Dates were sometimes altered by proclamation, during plague time or other events.

term	approximate duration
Michaelmas	early October to late November or December (before Advent)
Hilary	mid-January, for two to four weeks
Easter	17 days after Easter (Quindene Pasche), for ca. four weeks
Trinity	2-5 weeks, June-July (second Tuesday after Whit Sunday to the day after Corpus Christi)

Easter, moveable feasts and saints' days

Sometimes letters and other documents contain some combination of month, day, feast day, day of the week, or regnal year. It is often possible to determine the precise date by referring to the various tables in Cheney.

Henry V

Regnal year		Table 8
1	21 March 1413–20 March 1414	33, 18
2	21 March 1414–20 March 1415	18, 10
3	21 March 1415–20 March 1416	10, 29
4	21 March 1416–20 March 1417	29, 21
5	21 March 1417–20 March 1418	21, 6
6	21 March 1418–20 March 1419	6, 26
7	21 March 1419–20 March 1420	26, 17
8	21 March 1420–20 March 1421	17, 2
9	21 March 1421–20 March 1422	2, 22
10	21 March 1422–31 Aug. 1422	22

Henry VI

Regnal year		Table 8
1	1 Sep. 1422–31 Aug. 1423	22, 14
2	1 Sep. 1423–31 Aug. 1424	14, 33
3	1 Sep. 1424–31 Aug. 1425	33, 18
4	1 Sep. 1425–31 Aug. 1426	18, 10
5	1 Sep. 1426–31 Aug. 1427	10, 30
6	1 Sep. 1427–31 Aug. 1428	30, 14
7	1 Sep. 1428–31 Aug. 1429	14, 6
8	1 Sep. 1429–31 Aug. 1430	6, 26
9	1 Sep. 1430–31 Aug. 1431	26, 11
10	1 Sep. 1431–31 Aug. 1432	11, 30
11	1 Sep. 1432–31 Aug. 1433	30, 22
12	1 Sep. 1433–31 Aug. 1434	22, 7
13	1 Sep. 1434–31 Aug. 1435	7, 27
14	1 Sep. 1435–31 Aug. 1436	27, 18
15	1 Sep. 1436–31 Aug. 1437	18, 10
16	1 Sep. 1437–31 Aug. 1438	10, 23
17	1 Sep. 1438–31 Aug. 1439	23, 15
18	1 Sep. 1439–31 Aug. 1440	15, 6
19	1 Sep. 1440–31 Aug. 1441	6, 26
20	1 Sep. 1441–31 Aug. 1442	26, 11
21	1 Sep. 1442–31 Aug. 1443	11, 31
22	1 Sep. 1443–31 Aug. 1444	31, 22
23	1 Sep. 1444–31 Aug. 1445	22, 7
24	1 Sep. 1445–31 Aug. 1446	7, 27
25	1 Sep. 1446–31 Aug. 1447	27, 19
26	1 Sep. 1447–31 Aug. 1448	19, 3
27	1 Sep. 1448–31 Aug. 1449	3, 23
28	1 Sep. 1449–31 Aug. 1450	23, 15
29	1 Sep. 1450–31 Aug. 1451	15, 35
30	1 Sep. 1451–31 Aug. 1452	35, 19
31	1 Sep. 1452–31 Aug. 1453	19, 11
32	1 Sep. 1453–31 Aug. 1454	11, 31
33	1 Sep. 1454–31 Aug. 1455	31, 16
34	1 Sep. 1455–31 Aug. 1456	16, 7
35	1 Sep. 1456–31 Aug. 1457	7, 27
36	1 Sep. 1457–31 Aug. 1458	27, 12
37	1 Sep. 1458–31 Aug. 1459	12, 4
38	1 Sep. 1459–31 Aug. 1460	4, 23
39	1 Sep. 1460–4 Mar. 1461	23, 15
and		
49[77]	Sep.–Oct. 1470–11 Apr. 1471	32, 24

Edward IV

Regnal year		Table 8
1	4 March 1461–3 March 1462	15, 28
2	4 March 1462–3 March 1463	28, 20
3	4 March 1463–3 March 1464	20, 11
4	4 March 1464–3 March 1465	11, 24
5	4 March 1465–3 March 1466	24, 16
6	4 March 1466–3 March 1467	16, 8
7	4 March 1467–3 March 1468	8, 27
8	4 March 1468–3 March 1469	27, 12
9	4 March 1469–3 March 1470	12, 32
10	4 March 1470–3 March 1471[78]	32, 24
11	4 March 1471–3 March 1472	24, 8
12	4 March 1472–3 March 1473	8, 28
13	4 March 1473–3 March 1474	28, 20
14	4 March 1474–3 March 1475	20, 5
15	4 March 1475–3 March 1476	5, 24
16	4 March 1476–3 March 1477	24, 16
17	4 March 1477–3 March 1478	16, 1
18	4 March 1478–3 March 1479	1, 21
19	4 March 1479–3 March 1480	21, 12
20	4 March 1480–3 March 1481	12, 32
21	4 March 1481–3 March 1482	32, 17
22	4 March 1482–3 March 1483	17, 9
23	4 March 1483–9 April 1483	9

Edward V

Regnal year		Table 8
1	9 April 1483–25 June 1483	9

Richard III

Regnal year		Table 8
1	26 June 1483–25 June 1484	9, 28
2	26 June 1484–25 June 1485	28, 13
3	26 June 1485–22 Aug. 1485	13

Henry VII

Regnal year		Table 8
1	22 Aug. 1485–21 Aug. 1486	13, 5
2	22 Aug. 1486–21 Aug. 1487	5, 25
3	22 Aug. 1487–21 Aug. 1488	25, 16
4	22 Aug. 1488–21 Aug. 1489	16, 29
5	22 Aug. 1489–21 Aug. 1490	29, 21
6	22 Aug. 1490–21 Aug. 1491	21, 13
7	22 Aug. 1491–21 Aug. 1492	13, 32
8	22 Aug. 1492–21 Aug. 1493	32, 17
9	22 Aug. 1493–21 Aug. 1494	17, 9
10	22 Aug. 1494–21 Aug. 1495	9, 29
11	22 Aug. 1495–21 Aug. 1496	29, 13
12	22 Aug. 1496–21 Aug. 1497	13, 5
13	22 Aug. 1497–21 Aug. 1498	5, 25
14	22 Aug. 1498–21 Aug. 1499	25, 10
15	22 Aug. 1499–21 Aug. 1500	10, 29
16	22 Aug. 1500–21 Aug. 1501	29, 21
17	22 Aug. 1501–21 Aug. 1502	21, 6
18	22 Aug. 1502–21 Aug. 1503	6, 26
19	22 Aug. 1503–21 Aug. 1504	26, 17
20	22 Aug. 1504–21 Aug. 1505	17, 2
21	22 Aug. 1505–21 Aug. 1506	2, 22
22	22 Aug. 1506–21 Aug. 1507	22, 14
23	22 Aug. 1507–21 Aug. 1508	14, 33
24	22 Aug. 1508–21 Apr. 1509	33, 18

Henry VIII

Regnal year		Table 8
1	22 Apr. 1509–21 Apr. 1510	18, 10
2	22 Apr. 1510–21 Apr. 1511	10, 30
3	22 Apr. 1511–21 Apr. 1512	30, 21
4	22 Apr. 1512–21 Apr. 1513	21, 6
5	22 Apr. 1513–21 Apr. 1514	6, 26
6	22 Apr. 1514–21 Apr. 1515	26, 18
7	22 Apr. 1515–21 Apr. 1516	18, 2
8	22 Apr. 1516–21 Apr. 1517	2, 22
9	22 Apr. 1517–21 Apr. 1518	22, 14
10	22 Apr. 1518–21 Apr. 1519	14, 34
11	22 Apr. 1519–21 Apr. 1520	34, 18
12	22 Apr. 1520–21 Apr. 1521	18, 10
13	22 Apr. 1521–21 Apr. 1522	10, 30
14	22 Apr. 1522–21 Apr. 1523	30, 15
15	22 Apr. 1523–21 Apr. 1524	15, 6
16	22 Apr. 1524–21 Apr. 1525	6, 26
17	22 Apr. 1525–21 Apr. 1526	26, 11
18	22 Apr. 1526–21 Apr. 1527	11, 31
19	22 Apr. 1527–21 Apr. 1528	31, 22
20	22 Apr. 1528–21 Apr. 1529	22, 7
21	22 Apr. 1529–21 Apr. 1530	7, 27
22	22 Apr. 1530–21 Apr. 1531	27, 19
23	22 Apr. 1531–21 Apr. 1532	19, 10
24	22 Apr. 1532–21 Apr. 1533	10, 23
25	22 Apr. 1533–21 Apr. 1534	23, 15
26	22 Apr. 1534–21 Apr. 1535	15, 7
27	22 Apr. 1535–21 Apr. 1536	7, 26
28	22 Apr. 1536–21 Apr. 1537	26, 11

77. Edward IV fled the country on 29 Sep. 1470; Henry VI was released on 3 Oct. and re-crowned on 13 Oct.; letters patent and close in Henry VI's name are known from 9 Oct. onwards, dated in his 49th year 'et readeptionis nostre regie potestatis anno primo'. His restoration ended with his capture by Edward IV on 11 Apr. 1471.

78. See note 77 above.

Henry VIII (cont.)

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
11, 31	29	22 Apr. 1537–21 Apr. 1538
31, 16	30	22 Apr. 1538–21 Apr. 1539
16, 7	31	22 Apr. 1539–21 Apr. 1540
7, 27	32	22 Apr. 1540–21 Apr. 1541
27, 19	33	22 Apr. 1541–21 Apr. 1542
19, 4	34	22 Apr. 1542–21 Apr. 1543
4, 23	35	22 Apr. 1543–21 Apr. 1544
23, 15	36	22 Apr. 1544–21 Apr. 1545
15, 35	37	22 Apr. 1545–21 Apr. 1546
35, 20	38	22 Apr. 1546–28 Jan. 1547

Edward VI

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
20, 11	1	28 Jan. 1547–27 Jan. 1548
11, 31	2	28 Jan. 1548–27 Jan. 1549
31, 16	3	28 Jan. 1549–27 Jan. 1550
16, 8	4	28 Jan. 1550–27 Jan. 1551
8, 27	5	28 Jan. 1551–27 Jan. 1552
27, 12	6	28 Jan. 1552–27 Jan. 1553
12	7	28 Jan. 1553–6 July 1553

Jane

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
12	1	6 July 1553–19 July 1553

Mary

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
12, 4	1	19 July 1553–5 July 1554
4	2	6 July 1554[79]–24 July 1554

Philip and Mary

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
4, 24	1 & 2	25 July 1554–5 July 1555
24	1 & 3	6 July 1555–24 July 1555
24, 15	2 & 3	25 July 1555–5 July 1556
15	2 & 4	6 July 1556–24 July 1556
15, 28	3 & 4	25 July 1556–5 July 1557
28	3 & 5	6 July 1557–24 July 1557
28, 20	4 & 5	25 July 1557–5 July 1558
20	4 & 6	6 July 1558–24 July 1558
20	5 & 6	25 July 1558–17 Nov. 1558

Elizabeth I

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
20, 5	1	17 Nov. 1558–16 Nov. 1559
5, 24	2	17 Nov. 1559–16 Nov. 1560
24, 16	3	17 Nov. 1560–16 Nov. 1561
16, 8	4	17 Nov. 1561–16 Nov. 1562
8, 21	5	17 Nov. 1562–16 Nov. 1563
21, 12	6	17 Nov. 1563–16 Nov. 1564
12, 32	7	17 Nov. 1564–16 Nov. 1565
32, 24	8	17 Nov. 1565–16 Nov. 1566
24, 9	9	17 Nov. 1566–16 Nov. 1567
9, 28	10	17 Nov. 1567–16 Nov. 1568
28, 20	11	17 Nov. 1568–16 Nov. 1569
20, 5	12	17 Nov. 1569–16 Nov. 1570
5, 25	13	17 Nov. 1570–16 Nov. 1571
25, 16	14	17 Nov. 1571–16 Nov. 1572
16, 1	15	17 Nov. 1572–16 Nov. 1573
1, 21	16	17 Nov. 1573–16 Nov. 1574
21, 13	17	17 Nov. 1574–16 Nov. 1575
13, 32	18	17 Nov. 1575–16 Nov. 1576
32, 17	19	17 Nov. 1576–16 Nov. 1577
17, 9	20	17 Nov. 1577–16 Nov. 1578
9, 29	21	17 Nov. 1578–16 Nov. 1579
29, 13	22	17 Nov. 1579–16 Nov. 1580
13, 5	23	17 Nov. 1580–16 Nov. 1581
5, 25	24	17 Nov. 1581–16 Nov. 1582
25, 10	25	17 Nov. 1582–16 Nov. 1583
10, 2	26	17 Nov. 1583–16 Nov. 1584
29, 21	27	17 Nov. 1584–16 Nov. 1585
21, 13	28	17 Nov. 1585–16 Nov. 1586
13, 26	29	17 Nov. 1586–16 Nov. 1587
26, 17	30	17 Nov. 1587–16 Nov. 1588
17, 9	31	17 Nov. 1588–16 Nov. 1589
9, 29	32	17 Nov. 1589–16 Nov. 1590
29, 14	33	17 Nov. 1590–16 Nov. 1591
14, 5	34	17 Nov. 1591–16 Nov. 1592
5, 25	35	17 Nov. 1592–16 Nov. 1593
25, 10	36	17 Nov. 1593–16 Nov. 1594
10, 30	37	17 Nov. 1594–16 Nov. 1595
30, 21	38	17 Nov. 1595–16 Nov. 1596
21, 6	39	17 Nov. 1596–16 Nov. 1597
6, 26	40	17 Nov. 1597–16 Nov. 1598
26, 18	41	17 Nov. 1598–16 Nov. 1599
18, 2	42	17 Nov. 1599–16 Nov. 1600
2, 22	43	17 Nov. 1600–16 Nov. 1601
22, 14	44	17 Nov. 1601–16 Nov. 1602
14, 34	45	17 Nov. 1602–24 March 1603

James I[80]

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
34, 18	1	24 March 1603–23 March 1604
18, 10	2	24 March 1604–23 March 1605
10, 30	3	24 March 1605–23 March 1606
30, 15	4	24 March 1606–23 March 1607
15, 6	5	24 March 1607–23 March 1608
6, 26	6	24 March 1608–23 March 1609
26, 18	7	24 March 1609–23 March 1610
18, 3	8	24 March 1610–23 March 1611
3, 22	9	24 March 1611–23 March 1612
22, 14	10	24 March 1612–23 March 1613
14, 34	11	24 March 1613–23 March 1614
34, 19	12	24 March 1614–23 March 1615
19, 10	13	24 March 1615–23 March 1616
10, 30	14	24 March 1616–23 March 1617
30, 15	15	24 March 1617–23 March 1618
15, 7	16	24 March 1618–23 March 1619
7, 26	17	24 March 1619–23 March 1620
26, 11	18	24 March 1620–23 March 1621
11, 31	19	24 March 1621–23 March 1622
31, 23	20	24 March 1622–23 March 1623
23, 7	21	24 March 1623–23 March 1624
7, 27	22	24 March 1624–23 March 1625
27	23	24 March 1625–27 March 1625

Charles I

Table 8	Regnal year	Period
27, 19	1	27 March 1625–26 March 1626
19, 4	2	27 March 1626–26 March 1627
4, 23	3	27 March 1627–26 March 1628
23, 15	4	27 March 1628–26 March 1629
15, 7	5	27 March 1629–26 March 1630
7, 20	6	27 March 1630–25 March 1631
20, 11	7	27 March 1631–26 March 1632
11, 31	8	27 March 1632–26 March 1633
31, 16	9	27 March 1633–26 March 1634
16, 8	10	27 March 1634–26 March 1635
8, 27	11	27 March 1635–26 March 1636
27, 19	12	27 March 1636–26 March 1637
19, 4	13	27 March 1637–26 March 1638
4, 24	14	27 March 1638–26 March 1639
24, 15	15	27 March 1639–26 March 1640
15, 35	16	27 March 1640–26 March 1641
35, 20	17	27 March 1641–26 March 1642
20, 12	18	27 March 1642–26 March 1643
12, 31	19	27 March 1643–26 March 1644
31, 16	20	27 March 1644–26 March 1645
16, 8	21	27 March 1645–26 March 1646
8, 28	22	27 March 1646–26 March 1647
28, 12	23	27 March 1647–26 March 1648
12, 4	24	27 March 1648–30 Jan. 1649

79. Mary dated her second year from 6 July, ignoring Jane's intrusion.

80. When James VI of Scotland became James I of England, he was in the thirty-sixth year of his reign in Scotland. He used the regnal years of England and Scotland in subsequent dating. As the 36th year of Scotland did not end till 23 July 1603, one may ascertain the year of Scotland by adding to the regnal year of England 35 for dates up to 23 July and 36 for dates after 23 July.

Rulers of England

The Commonwealth

After the execution of King Charles I on 30 January 1649, the kingship was abolished (17 March 1649) and government by a Council of State was set up on 14 February 1649. The council was dissolved on 20 April 1653 and replaced by another Council of State on 29 April 1653. Oliver Cromwell took the office of Lord Protector on 16 December 1653 and held it till his death on 3 September 1658. His son, Richard Cromwell, succeeded to the same office on the day of his father's death and abdicated on 24 May 1659. After a year of parliamentary government Charles II was proclaimed king on 5 May 1660 and arrived in London on 29 May 1660. During the whole of the period 1649–60 English official documents were dated by the year of grace. In proclaiming Charles II to be king, parliament declared that he had been *de jure* king since his father's death. Therefore Charles's establishment on the throne came in his twelfth regnal year, deemed to have begun on 30 January 1660. Before parliament proclaimed him, the king had already dated his declaration at Breda 'this 14th day of April 1660 in the twelfth year of our reign'.

Charles II[81]

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
12	29 May 1660–29 Jan. 1661	32, 24
13	30 Jan. 1661–29 Jan. 1662	24, 9
14	30 Jan. 1662–29 Jan. 1663	9, 29
15	30 Jan. 1663–29 Jan. 1664	29, 20
16	30 Jan. 1664–29 Jan. 1665	20, 5
17	30 Jan. 1665–29 Jan. 1666	5, 25
18	30 Jan. 1666–29 Jan. 1667	25, 17
19	30 Jan. 1667–29 Jan. 1668	17, 1
20	30 Jan. 1668–29 Jan. 1669	1, 21
21	30 Jan. 1669–29 Jan. 1670	21, 13
22	30 Jan. 1670–29 Jan. 1671	13, 33
23	30 Jan. 1671–29 Jan. 1672	33, 17
24	30 Jan. 1672–29 Jan. 1673	17, 9
25	30 Jan. 1673–29 Jan. 1674	9, 29
26	30 Jan. 1674–29 Jan. 1675	29, 14
27	30 Jan. 1675–29 Jan. 1676	14, 5
28	30 Jan. 1676–29 Jan. 1677	5, 25
29	30 Jan. 1677–29 Jan. 1678	25, 10
30	30 Jan. 1678–29 Jan. 1679	10, 30
31	30 Jan. 1679–29 Jan. 1680	30, 21
32	30 Jan. 1680–29 Jan. 1681	21, 13
33	30 Jan. 1681–29 Jan. 1682	13, 26
34	30 Jan. 1682–29 Jan. 1683	26, 18
35	30 Jan. 1683–29 Jan. 1684	18, 9
36	30 Jan. 1684–29 Jan. 1685	9, 29
37	30 Jan. 1685–6 Feb. 1685	29

James II

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
1	6 Feb. 1685–5 Feb. 1686	29, 14
2	6 Feb. 1686–5 Feb. 1687	14, 6
3	6 Feb. 1687–5 Feb. 1688	6, 25
4	6 Feb. 1688–11 Dec. 1688	25

Interregnum 12 Dec. 1688–12 Feb. 1689 (Table 8/25,10)

81. Dating by Charles II's regnal year occurs very seldom until the Declaration of Breda. For an example, see Eng. His. Rev., 5 (1890), 117–18: 'Given at our Court at Worcester this six & twentieth days of Aug' in the third yeere of our reigne.' It should be remembered that Charles was proclaimed in Edinburgh in proper form within a week of his father's execution.

2/II Regnal years from AD 1154

William and Mary

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
1	13 Feb. 1689–12 Feb. 1690	10, 30
2	13 Feb. 1690–12 Feb. 1691	30, 22
3	13 Feb. 1691–12 Feb. 1692	22, 6
4	13 Feb. 1692–12 Feb. 1693	6, 26
5	13 Feb. 1693–12 Feb. 1694	26, 18
6	13 Feb. 1694–27 Dec. 1694	18

William III

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
6	28 Dec. 1694–12 Feb. 1695	18, 3
7	28 Dec. 1695–12 Feb. 1696	3, 22
8	28 Dec. 1696–12 Feb. 1697	22, 14
9	28 Dec. 1697–12 Feb. 1698	14, 34
10	28 Dec. 1698–12 Feb. 1699	34, 19
11	28 Dec. 1699–12 Feb. 1700	19, 10
12	28 Dec. 1700–12 Feb. 1701	10, 30
13	28 Dec. 1701–12 Feb. 1702	30, 15
14	28 Dec. 1702–8 March 1702	15

Anne

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
1	8 March 1702–7 March 1703	15, 7
2	8 March 1703–7 March 1704	7, 26
3	8 March 1704–7 March 1705	26, 18
4	8 March 1705–7 March 1706	18, 3
5	8 March 1706–7 March 1707	3, 23
6	8 March 1707–7 March 1708	23, 14
7	8 March 1708–7 March 1709	14, 34
8	8 March 1709–7 March 1710	34, 19
9	8 March 1710–7 March 1711	19, 11
10	8 March 1711–7 March 1712	11, 30
11	8 March 1712–7 March 1713	30, 15
12	8 March 1713–7 March 1714	15, 7
13	8 March 1714–1 August 1714	7

George I

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
1	1 Aug. 1714–31 July 1715	7, 27
2	1 Aug. 1715–31 July 1716	27, 11
3	1 Aug. 1716–31 July 1717	11, 31
4	1 Aug. 1717–31 July 1718	31, 23
5	1 Aug. 1718–31 July 1719	23, 8
6	1 Aug. 1719–31 July 1720	8, 27
7	1 Aug. 1720–31 July 1721	27, 19
8	1 Aug. 1721–31 July 1722	19, 4
9	1 Aug. 1722–31 July 1723	4, 24
10	1 Aug. 1723–31 July 1724	24, 15
11	1 Aug. 1724–31 July 1725	15, 7
12	1 Aug. 1725–31 July 1726	7, 20
13	1 Aug. 1726–11 June 1727	20, 12

George II

Regnal year	Dates	Table 8
1	11 June 1727–10 June 1728	12, 31
2	11 June 1728–10 June 1729	31, 16
3	11 June 1729–10 June 1730	16, 8
4	11 June 1730–10 June 1731	8, 28
5	11 June 1731–10 June 1732	28, 19
6	11 June 1732–10 June 1733	19, 4
7	11 June 1733–10 June 1734	4, 24
8	11 June 1734–10 June 1735	24, 16
9	11 June 1735–10 June 1736	16, 35
10	11 June 1736–10 June 1737	35, 20
11	11 June 1737–10 June 1738	20, 12
12	11 June 1738–10 June 1739	12, 32
13	11 June 1739–10 June 1740	32, 16
14	11 June 1740–10 June 1741	16, 8
15	11 June 1741–10 June 1742	8, 28
16	11 June 1742–10 June 1743	28, 13
17	11 June 1743–10 June 1744	13, 4
18	11 June 1744–10 June 1745	4, 24
19	11 June 1745–10 June 1746	24, 9
20	11 June 1746–10 June 1747	9, 29
21	11 June 1747–10 June 1748	29, 20
22	11 June 1748–10 June 1749	20, 5

Beginners' Latin

Dating Latin documents

Between 1086 and 1733, a variety of methods were used to date Latin documents.
This page will give you a basic introduction to these methods.
We will look at

- Numbers
- Dates
- Roman numerals
- Months
- Days of the week
- Feasts
- Octave

Remember that this is **not** a definitive guide.
If you would like to look at dating documents in more detail, C.R. Cheney and M. Jones (eds), *A Handbook of Dates: for students of British history* (Cambridge University Press, revd 2000) is the standard reference work.

Numbers

When numbers are written in full, they are given in these forms.

Latin	English	Latin	English
unus, *-a*, *-um*	one	*primus*, *-a*, *-um*	first
duo, *due*, *duo*	two	*secundus*	second
tres, *tria*	three	*tertius*	third
quattuor	four	*quartus*	fourth
quinque	five	*quintus*	fifth
sex	six	*sextus*	sixth
septem	seven	*septimus*	seventh
octo	eight	*octavus*	eighth
novem	nine	*nonus*	nineth
decem	ten	*decimus*	tenth
undecim	eleven	*undecimus*	eleventh
duodecim	twelve	*duodecimus*	twelfth
tredecim	thirteen	*tertius decimus*	thirteenth
quattuordecim	fourteen	*quartus decimus*	fourteenth
quindecim	fifteen	*quintus decimus*	fifteenth
sedecim	sixteen	*sextus decimus*	sixteenth
septemdecim	seventeen	*septimus decimus*	seventeenth
duodeviginti	eighteen	*duodevicesimus*	eighteenth

undeviginti	nineteen	*undevicesimus*	nineteenth
viginti	twenty	*vicesimus*	twentieth
viginti unus	twenty one	*vicesimus primus*	twenty first
viginti duo	twenty two	*vicesimus secundus*	twenty second
viginti tres	twenty three	*vicesimus tertius*	twenty third
viginti quartus	twenty four	*vicesimus quartus*	twenty fourth
viginti quintus	twenty five	*vicesimus quintus*	twenty fifth
viginti sex	twenty six	*vicesimus sextus*	twenty sixth
viginti septem	twenty seven	*vicesimus septimus*	twenty seventh
viginti octo	twenty eight	*vicesimus octavus*	twenty eighth
viginti novem	twenty nine	*vicesimus nonus*	twenty ninth
triginta	thirty	*tricesimus*	thirtieth
quadraginta	forty	*quadragesimus*	fortieth
quinquaginta	fifty	*quinquagesimus*	fiftieth
sexaginta	sixty	*sexagesimus*	sixtieth
septuaginta	seventy	*septuagesimus*	seventieth
octoginta	eighty	*octogesimus*	eightieth
nonaginta	ninety	*nonagesimus*	ninetieth
centum	one hundred	*centesimus*	hundreth
centum et unus	one hundred and one	*centesimus primus*	hundred and first
ducenti, *-ae*, *-a*	two hundred	*ducentesimus*	two hundredth
trecenti	three hundred	*trecentesimus*	three hundredth
quadringenti	four hundred	*quadringentesimus*	four hundredth
quingenti	five hundred	*quingentesimus*	five hundredth
sescenti	six hundred	*sescentesimus*	six hundredth
septingenti	seven hundred	*septingentesimus*	seven hundredth
octingenti	eight hundred	*octingentesimus*	eight hundredth
nongenti	nine hundred	*nongentesimus*	nine hundredth
mille	one thousand	*millesimus*	thousanth

Don't feel that you have to learn them all at once.

If you know any French or Italian, can you see any similarities with the numbers in these languages?

☆ **Handy Hints**
1. Keep looking for patterns when you read through the numbers.
   If you understand how the words are made up, you are more likely to remember them.
2. Can you see any similarities with English numbers or dates? For example

- September is our seventh month (*septem* means seven)
- The decimal system is based on units of ten (*decem* means ten)

Remember that a few numbers **decline**

- *unus, -a, -um*
- *duo, due, duo*
- *tres, tria*
- *ducenti, -ae, -a* two hundred declines like *novus, -a, -um*

Dates

Dates are expressed using 'first', 'second', 'third', rather than 'one', 'two', 'three'. These are always in the [ablative] ⬛ case. Generally, the 'us' ending becomes an 'o'.

secundo on the second
centesimo primo die on the hundred and first day
anno regni regis Johannis filii regis Henrici sexagesimo in the sixtieth year of the reign of King John son of King Henry
anno domini millesimo ducentesimo quinto decimo in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and fifteen (or, 1215 AD)

Roman numerals

Numbers were expressed in [Roman numerals] ⬛ throughout the period covered by this tutorial.

Arabic numerals ('1', '2', '3' etc.) were also used in England from the sixteenth century onwards.

In Latin documents, Roman numerals were often written in lower case, rather than in capital letters. If a number ended in an 'i', this was often written as a 'j'.

Classic Roman numerals	Roman numerals in medieval Latin documents
I = 1	i or j = 1
II = 2	ii or ij = 2
IV = 4	iiii or iiij = 4 (not usually iv)
V = 5	V or v = 5
X = 10	X or x = 10
XL = 40	xl = 40 A smaller numeral in front of a larger numeral indicates subtraction.
L = 50	l = 50 Don't confuse this with 'i'.
LX = 60	lx = 60 A larger numeral in front of a smaller numeral indicates addition.
C = 100	C = 100
D = 500	D = 500
M = 1000	M = 1000

Months of the year

menses anni   *mensis, -is* (m.) month

'month of ...'

Latin word and English meaning
Januarius, -i (m.) January   *mensis Januarii*
Februarius, -i (m.) February   *mensis Februarii*
Martius, -i (m.) March   *mensis Martii*
Aprilis, Aprilis (m.) April   *mensis Aprilis*
Maius, -i (m.) May   *mensis Maii*
Junius, -i (m.) June   *mensis Junii*
Julius, -i (m.) July   *mensis Julii*
Augustus, -i (m.) August   *mensis Augusti*
September, Septembris (m.) September   *mensis Septembris*
October, Octobris (m.) October   *mensis Octobris*
November, Novembris (m.) November   *mensis Novembris*
December, Decembris (m.) December   *mensis Decembris*

decimo Januarii   on the tenth of January
tricesimo primo Decembris   on the thirty first of December
vicesimo octavo die mensis Augusti   on the twenty eighth day of the month of August

Days of the week

dies septimane   *septimana, -e* (f.) week

dies Lune   Monday
dies Martis   Tuesday
dies Mercurii   Wednesday
dies Iovis   Thursday
dies Veneris   Friday
dies Sabbati   Saturday
dies Dominica   Sunday

Feasts

As medieval England was a [Catholic] 🔲 country, a large number of religious feast days were celebrated. Many feasts related to a particular [saint] 🔲. These feasts were often used to date events.

For example, a charter might have been granted

in festo sancti Edwardi martiris   on the feast of Saint [Edward the Martyr] 🔊

              festum, -i (n.) feast   martir, martiris (m.) [martyr] 🔊

in vigilia festi   on the eve of the feast   *vigilia, -e* (f.) [eve] 🔊
in crastino festi   on the morrow of the feast   *crastinum, -i* (n.) [morrow] 🔊

Events were also dated

          ad festum   on the feast
          ante festum   before the feast
          apud festum   at the feast
          post festum   after the feast

For example

ad festum sancti Johannis baptiste   at the feast of Saint [John the Baptist] 🔊

apud festum beati Thome martiris   at the feast of the Blessed [Thomas the Martyr] 🔊

          beatus, -a, -um (m.) blessed *Thomas, -e* (m.) Thomas

ante festum sancte Marie virginis   before the feast of Saint Mary the Virgin

          virgo, virginis (f.) virgin

A list of the main feasts, with the calendar dates that they correspond to, is given in C.R. Cheney and M. Jones (eds), *A Handbook of Dates: for students of British history* (Cambridge University Press, revd 2000).

Octave

An [octave] 🔊 is a period of eight days inclusive.

          octaba, -e (f.) octave
          octava, -e (f.) octave

You will often see this term used in dates.
For example

in octava festi sancti Michaelis   on the octave of the feast of [Saint Michael] 🔊

          Michael, Michaelis (m.) Michael

The feast of Saint Michael is on 29 September. Therefore, the octave of the feast is a period of eight days inclusive later: 6 October.

The table below shows you how to calculate the octave of Saint Michael. You can use the same principle to calculate the octave of any feast.

Feast	Calendar date	Day number
Saint Michael	29 September	1
	30 September	2
	1 October	3
	2 October	4
	3 October	5
	4 October	6
	5 October	7
octave of the feast of Saint Michael	6 October	8

There are ten stages:

		Seconds
1	Cut off the end of the quill barrel.	1 (see below)
2	Soak in water.	2
3	Remove surplus water.	8
4	Remove internal membrane.	6
5	Prime with hot sand.	4
6	Insert in heated sand.	1
7	Inspect result.	4
8	Re-insert if necessary.	
9	Empty sand, scrape off the membrane and mould the barrel if necessary.	8
10	Test for consistency when cooled.	4

Approximate timing when reasonably skilled

38 seconds total.
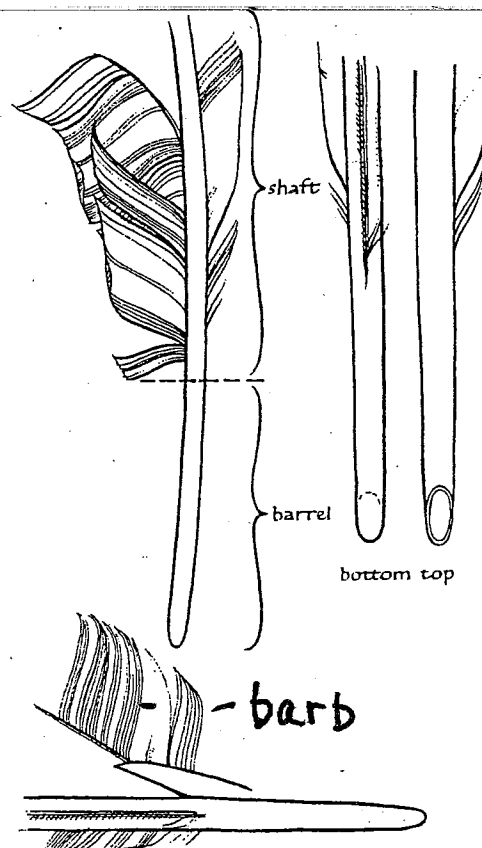
Illus. 1: The parts of a quill. Cutting the end of the stripped barb before it can tear into the barrel wall.
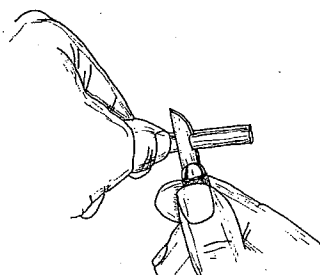
Hold the hardened feather in your left hand (right if you are left-handed) with the top uppermost. Turn the feather over and make a long scoop cut starting about 2·5 cm (1 in) from the tip, towards the tip and which goes about half way through the barrel.
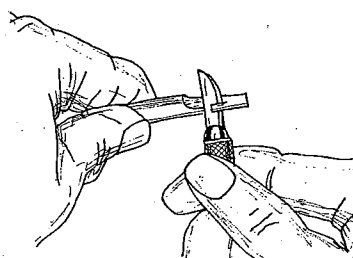
Place the blade of the knife against the side of the feather, about 1·5 cm (0·75 in) from the tip and make a cut which curves in and then goes straight towards the tip.
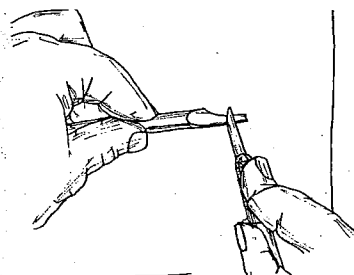
Place the knife at the point where you started the previous cut. Rotate the feather anti clockwise so that the top is underneath, and as you do so the knife will be in the correct position for making a similar scoop cut to the previous one, which shapes the nib.
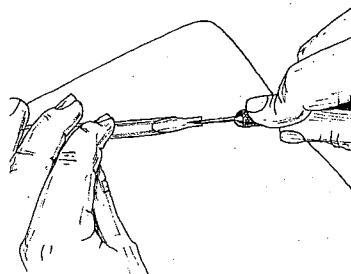
Trim the end from the quill by placing the feather – top side down – on a flat surface such as a cutting mat. Make a slit by placing the point of the knife at the centre of the nib. Press downwards until it clicks.
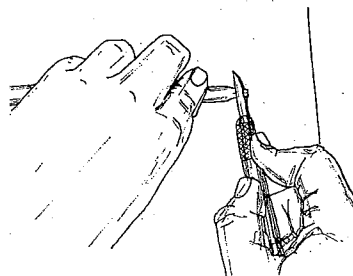
Shape the end of the nib by holding the feather on a cutting mat – top side uppermost. Place the knife at an angle of about 45° at the very tip of the nib and shave the end. This makes a bevel cut and adds a spring to the quill.
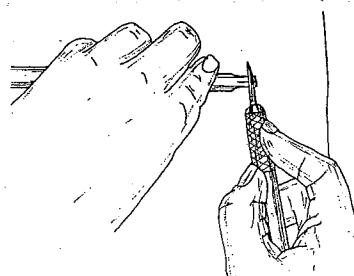
Now trim the tip to ensure that it is straight (or left or right oblique) by rocking the knife for the last nib cut. Again you will hear the click as the knife takes the smallest amount from the quill tip.

72

RVLES MADE BY E. B. FOR
Children to write by.

To make cōmon ink, of wine take a quart,
Two ounces of gumme let that be a part,
Fiue ounces of gals, of copres take three,
Long ftanding doth make it better to be:
If wine ye do want, raine water is beft,
And then as much ftuffe as aboue at the (leaft:
If inke be too thicke, put vineger in,
For water doth make the colour more dimme.

To make Inke in hafte.

In hafte, for a fhift, when ye haue great need,
Take wooll or woollen, to ftand you in fteed,
Which burnt in the fire, the powder beat fmall,
With vineger or water make inke withall.

To keepe Inke long.

If inke ye defire to keepe long in ftore,
Put bay falt therein, and it will not hore.

To make fpeciall blacke Inke.

If that common inke be not to your mind,
Some lampblacke thereto with gumme water grind.
Each painter can tell you how it fhould be done,
The cleaner out of your pen it will runne,
The fame to be put in horne or in lead,
No cotton at all: when long it hath ftayd,
The bottome will thicke, put more common inke:
And it will be good, well ftird, as I thinke.

To make ftanch graine.

Make ftanch graine with allume beaten full fmall,
And twice as much rofin beaten withall:

With that in a faire clout knit very thin,
Rub paper or parchment before ye begin.

To chufe your Quill.

Take quill of a goofe, that is fomewhat round,
The third or fourth in the wing to be found:
And if fometime of thofe ye do want,
Take pinion as next when rauens quill is fcant,
And riue it iuft in the backe as may be,
For ragged your flit elfe fhall you fee,
Amidft the flip that runnes vp the quill:
Were it of gander ye do it not fpill:
The feather fhaue off, the quill do not pare,
The ftronger in hand your pen ye may beare.

To make your Pen.

Make clift without teeth, your pen good and hard,
Thinner, and fhorter, on right hand regard:
The clift fomewhat long, the neb not too fhort,
Then take it in hand in moft comely fort.

To hold your pen.

Your thombe on your pen as higheft beftow.
The forefinger next, the middle below:
And holding it thus in moft comely wife,
Your bodie vpright, ftoupe not with your head:
Your breaft from the boord, if that ye be wife,
Left that ye take hurt, when ye haue well fed.

To make a good Pen-knife.

Your pen-knife as ftay in left hand let reft,
The mettall too foft nor too hard is beft:

A 2

Good

Good

Naught

Naught
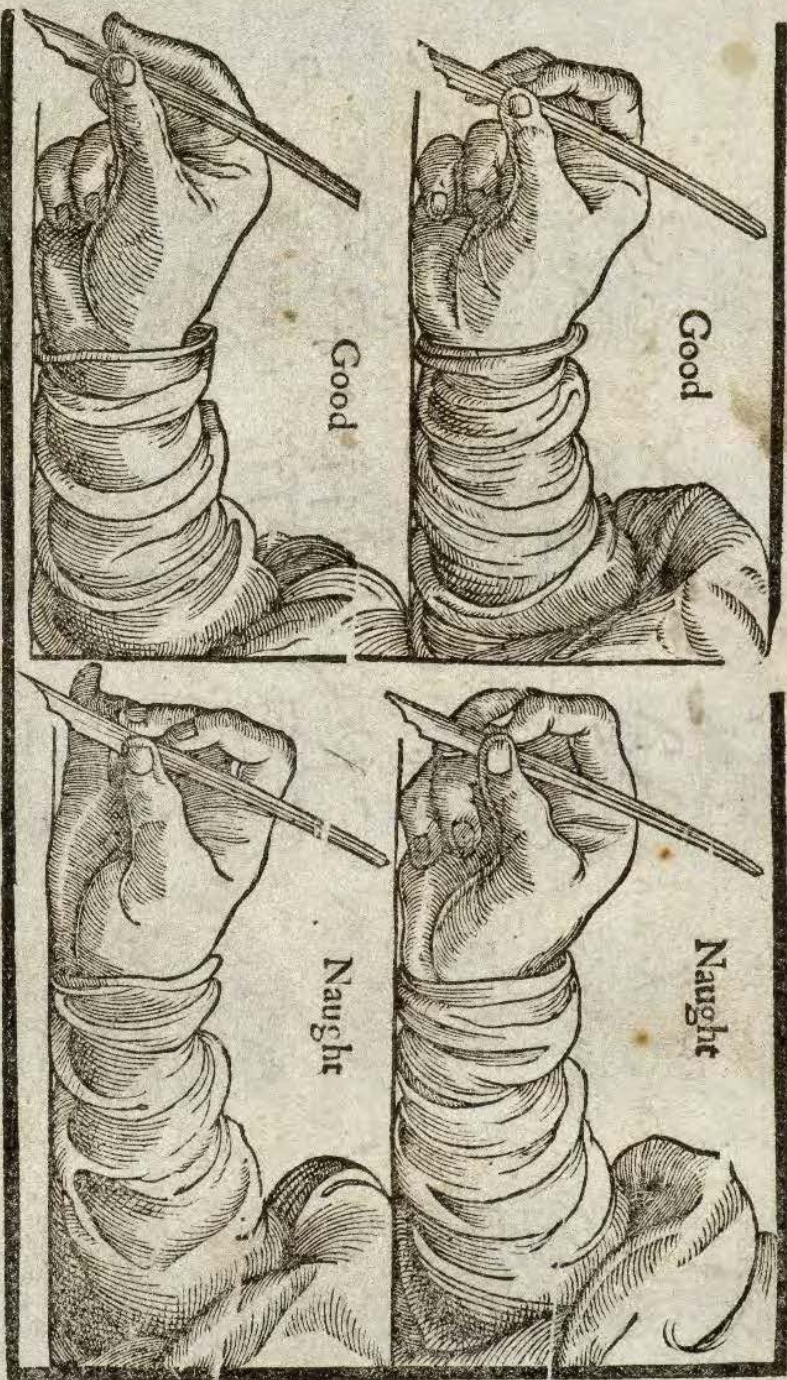
The Breakes of sett Secretary Letters. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

3 nib widths.
⅛ in. (3 mm) pen.
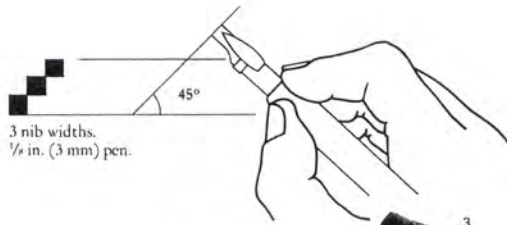
Gothic cursive dating from 1413. The double stroked median *s* is of particular interest. This Gothic script is easily identified by the reversed loops of the letters *d*, *g*, *n*, *y* and *z*.

s at the end of a word

Arabic numerals used in the West in the 15th century.

Opposite: Capital alphabet 6 nib widths high.
Above: Detail of Jean le Bègue's inventory, Paris, 1413.

Claude Mediavilla, Calligraphy

76

Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor Quickly

Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor Qui

Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor Quick

Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor Qu

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Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor

Job a Righteous man of uz waxed poor

Stephen paying his R Book Ju Cu

To make excellent Blacke Inke.

Take 3. pintes of Raine wat῀; a quart῀
of Beere vineg῀; a pound of good gumble
Arabeck; thoue Gystlis but beate a dramme
Grynd the fine powder, put all this into
a Glasse, or Erthe pott; lett it stande
in Raine 7. or 8. dayes, then put thereto
Gaull a pound of Gumes beaten togethe
it stande 2. dayes of long, in
a Glasse, stirringe them often together; then
nofe a litle; The Inkk it bettes a nofe
hige putt it to Rasenbrugs nofe
take it from Gire againe, nofe it is
almost boyle though it through a
then put it into Gpo pott againe, though
4. Gs of y olounghgume Gpo Gome pott.

print resources for early modern English paleography

paleography manuals

Dawson, Giles and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton. *Elizabethan handwriting, 1500-1650: a manual*. New York, 1966.

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place-names, family names, dating, unfamiliar words

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making sense of terminology, legal and official documents

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WHAT IS IT?

Flowchart to help in identifying deed forms

Does the document date from before c.1500?

→ Yes → **See Section A**

→ No → Does the document date from after c.1500?

→ Yes → Is it an indenture (wavy top edge) or deed poll (straight top edge) ?

→ indenture → **See Section B**

→ deed poll → **See Section C**

SECTION A

Deeds dated up to around 1500

This table assumes the deeds continued into the 16th and 17th centuries and beyond

n.b. some of these deed forms continued into the 16th and 17th centuries and beyond

Most deeds were in Latin. Most deeds were in Latin until c.1500 and many continued in Latin until 1733

Does the document date from before c.1500?

Is it very large and impressive?

Is it headed by the name of the monarch, and 'Omnibus ad quos presentes litere pervenerint Salutem...'?

LETTERS PATENT

Does it mention the name of a court of law?

COMMON RECOVERY

Does it contain the phrase 'dedi concessi et ... confirmavi'?

Does it also contain the phrase 'de capitalibus dominis feodi'

Yes

FEOFFMENT

No

Does it transfer real property?

GIFT

Does it transfer incorporeal property?

GRANT

QUITCLAIM

Does it contain the phrase 'remisisse relaxasse et ... auiete clamasse'?

Does it begin 'Hec est finalis concordia'?

FINAL CONCORD

Does it contain the phrase 'ad firmam dimisi'?

LEASE

Does it contain the phrase 'fecisse et attornasse or 'attornasse deputasse et in loco meo posuisse'?

LETTER OF ATTORNEY

Does it include the phrase 'teneri et firmiter obligari'?

Is it in two parts?

BOND

Does it contain the phrase 'penam Statut'?

DEFEASANCE

Does it refer to a bond, statute staple, statute merchant, recognizance or other deed executed on the same day?

STATUTE STAPLE/ STATUTE MERCHANT / RECOGNIZANCE

SECTION B

Deeds dated from after around 1500

n.b. most of these deed forms developed after 1536. However, some deeds of the 16th and 17th centuries retained medieval forms, for which see Section A

This table gives wordings in Latin and English. Many deeds were in Latin until 1733

Is it made up of two documents dated on consecutive days?

Does it contain a proviso for redemption?

No

Yes

MORTGAGE BY CONVEYANCE

LEASE AND RELEASE

! CHECK ! MIGHT BE PART OF A **MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT**

Is it for 6 months or a year, with a peppercorn rent?

LEASE PART OF A LEASE AND RELEASE

! CHECK ! MIGHT BE PART OF A **MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT** or a **MORTGAGE BY CONVEYANCE**

Does it contain the words 'bargindisavi et vendidi' / have given, granted, bargained and sold; and is it endorsed with a memorandum of enrolment?

BARGAIN AND SALE

Does it contain the word 'feoffavi' or 'enfeoffed' and/or is it endorsed with a memorandum of livery of seizin?

FEOFFMENT

! CHECK ! MIGHT BE A HYBRID DOCUMENT CONTAINING ELEMENTS OF BOTH

Does it contain the phrase 'as beneficial owner conveys...' ?

Does it begin 'Hec est finalis concordia' / 'This is the final agreement' ?

GRANT OR CONVEYANCE (1845-)

FINAL CONCORD

Does it contain the phrase 'ad firmam dimisi' ? / 'set and to farm let' ?

Does it contain a proviso for redemption?

Yes

No

MORTGAGE BY DEMISE

Does it contain the phrase 'assign and set over'?

Does it refer to a bond, statute staple, statute merchant, recognizance or other deed executed on the same day?

ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE Or **ASSIGNMENT OF MORTGAGE**

! CHECK THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS TO FIND OUT WHICH !

LEASE BUILDING LEASE Or **TENANCY AGREEMENT**

! CHECK THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS TO FIND OUT WHICH !

DEFEASANCE

Does it contain the phrase 'covenant promise and agree', and contain a schedule of deeds?

DEED OF COVENANT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF TITLE DEEDS

SECTION C

Deeds and related documents, dated from after around 1500

n.b. most of these deed forms are continuations of medieval forms, for which see Section A

This table gives wordings in Latin and English. Many deeds were in Latin until 1733

Is it very large and impressive?

Does it contain the phrase 'remisisse relaxasse et … quiete clamasse' / 'quitclaimed'?

Is it headed by the name of the monarch, and 'Omnibus ad quos presentes litere pervenerint Salutem…' / 'To all to whom these present letters shall come…'?

Does it mention the name of a court of law?

LETTERS PATENT

COMMON RECOVERY

QUITCLAIM

Does it contain the phrase 'fecisse et attornasse' or 'attornasse deputasse et in loco meo posuisse' / 'authorized … as my lawful attorney'?

LETTER OF ATTORNEY

Does it include the phrase 'teneri et firmiter obligari / 'held and firmly bound' ?

Is it in two parts?

BOND

Does it begin with the name of a manor?

Does it contain the phrase 'penam Statut' / 'penalty of the Statute' ?

STATUTE STAPLE/STATUTE MERCHANT / RECOGNIZANCE

Does it name a manor and contain the word 'enfranchised' ?

ADMITTANCE SURRENDER Or **HYBRID OF BOTH**

ENFRANCHISEMENT

Does it contain the phrase 'as beneficial owner conveys…' ?

CONVEYANCE (1881–)

Does it contain the words 'Last Will and Testament', 'testator', and 'executor'?

WILL

Does it contain the words 'probatum' / 'proved' ?

PROBATE CERTIFICATE

Table of deeds and documents

Type of Deed	Physical Form/ Date	Key Phrases	Consideration	Term (how long the transaction lasts)	Covenants and Provisos	Other Notable Features
Abstract of title	Paper, often secured at the top by string or cord 18th-20th centuries	Abstract of the title of [owner] to [description of land]	n/a	n/a	n/a	Usually highly abbreviated
Admittance	Parchment. Headed by name of a manorial court 17th century onwards	Is admitted tenant	Not usually	According to the custom of this manor...	May contain covenants and provisos	Signed by the steward of the manor
Affidavit	Paper Mostly 16th century onwards	X makes oath and states ... ... this deponent...	n/a	n/a	n/a	Signed by the deponent and also by the person taking his oath
Articles of agreement	Parchment or paper Mostly 16th century onwards	Articles of Agreement made concluded and agreed...	Sometimes	n/a	Covenant to execute the final deed	Articles are often in numbered paragraphs
Assignment of lease	Parchment - paper by 19th century. Indented top edge 17th century onwards	Bargained, sold, assigned and set over	Sometimes	For the rest and residue of the said term	Covenants as in the original deed	Will include 'whereas' clauses reciting terms of original

						lease. Rent referred to in opening 'whereas' clause
Assignment of mortgage	Parchment. Indented top edge 17th century onwards	Bargained, sold, assigned and set over	No consideration	For the rest and residue of the said term ... [in a mortgage by demise] *Or* For ever [in a mortgage by conveyance]	Provided always ... [proviso for redemption of the property]	Will include 'whereas' clauses reciting terms of original mortgage
Bargain and sale	Parchment. Indented top edge Early 16th century onwards	Bargindis avi et vendidi Have given, granted, bargained and sold/	Yes	Imperpetuum For ever	May include a covenant to levy a fine	Memorandum of enrolment usually endorsed on reverse
Bond	Parchment or paper. In two parts, on either side, or (from 17th century) one above the other.	Noverint universi per presentes...teneri et firmiter obligari Know all men by these	Penal sum reserved to be paid if the conditions in the bond were not met	n/a	Specifies what is to be done in order to make the bond null and void	Until 1733, first part in Latin and second part in English

		presents... am held and firmly bound				
Building lease	Parchment - paper by 19th century. Indented top edge 17th century onwards	Demised, granted, set and to farm let	Sometimes	Specified number of years	Covenants relating to building on the land	Yielding and paying ... a certain amount of rent per annum and/or services
Certificate of acknowledgment of deeds by married women	Written onto a deed, or written on small piece of parchment and attached to a deed 1833-1882	We do hereby certiy that the said X was at the time of acknowledging the said deed of full age and competent understanding...	No	n/a	None	Signed by Commissioners appointed for each county
Common Recovery	Large. Parchment. Exemplifications written in archaic legal writing, and have large seal. 15th century-1833	Tenant to the praecipe/ demandant/ vouchee	No	n/a	None	Property only described very vaguely
Conveyance or Grant (after 1845)	Parchment. Large up to 1881, then smaller folded folios Usually deed poll after	AB 'as beneficial owner hereby conveys' unto CD...	Yes	For ever	May include covenants and provisos	Often includes a plan of the premises drawn onto one of the

	1881, despite describing itself as 'This indenture' 1845-1925					folios or attached
Covenant for production of title deeds	Parchment. Indented top edge. 17th century onwards	Do covenant promise and agree	Nominal consideration e.g. 10 shillings	n/a	May include further covenants and provisos	Often has a schedule of title deeds appended or attached
Defeasance	Parchment All dates	[another deed, bond or recognizance referred to] will be void and of non effect	Usually mentions a consideration or penal sum in another document of even date	A term may be specified	May include further covenants and provisos	Makes reference to a bond, recognizance, statute staple or other deed executed on the same day
Enfranchisement	Parchment Mostly 19th century, up to 1926	Hath granted bargained sold aliened released and enfranchised ... exonerated enfranchised acquitted released and discharged ... from all ... yearly and	Yes	For ever	May include covenants and provisos	First party will be the Lord of the Manor or his trustee/s

		other payments ... rent fines heriots ...				
Feoffment (medieval)	Small, rectangular, parchment, straight top edge 12th-c.16th century	Dedi concessi (feoffavi) et confirmavi	Considerations appear from the 16th century onwards	De capitalibus dominis feodi / to be holden of the chief lord of the fee Imperpetuum / For ever	Covenants for warranty and quiet possession	Transfers *real* property - land or buildings
Feoffment (modern)	Parchment. Usually with indented top edge 16th century-1845	Concessi bargindisavi (feoffavi) et vendidi Have given, granted, (alienated, bargained, sold, enfeoffed) and confirmed	Yes	Imperpetuum For ever	May include a covenant to levy a fine	Memorandum of livery of seizin usually endorsed on reverse
Final concord / Fine	Small, rectangular, parchment. Archaic legal writing 12th century-1833	This is the final concord Hec est finalis concordia	Yes - but a round, vague sum of money	n/a	None	Property only described very vaguely
Gift	Small	Sciant	No	Imperpe	Covena	Transfers

	rectangular, parchment, straight top edge\n\n12th-c. 15th century	presentes et futuri ... dedi, concessi et ... confirmavi\n\nKnow all men present and future ... have given, granted and confirmed	consideration	tuum / For ever	nts for warranty and quiet possession	*real* property - land or buildings
Grant (medieval)	Small, rectangular, parchment, straight top edge\n\nNo date, or up to c. 15th century	Sciant presentes et futuri ... dedi, concessi et ... confirmavi\n\nKnow all men present and future ... have given, granted and confirmed	No consideration	Term of years; or for ever	Covenants for warranty and quiet possession	Transfers *incorporeal* property - money or rights
Grant or conveyance (after 1845)	Parchment. Large up to c.1880, then smaller folded folios\n\nUsually deed poll, despite describing itself as 'This indenture'\n\n1845-1925	AB 'as beneficial owner hereby conveys' unto CD...	Yes	For ever	May include covenants and provisos	Often includes a plan of the premises drawn onto one of the folios or attached

Lease	Parchment - paper by 19th century. Indented top edge All dates.	Ad firmam dimisi Demised, granted, set and to farm let	Sometimes	Specified number of years [lease for years] *Or* For the term of named people's lives [lease for lives]	Will normally include covenants relating to the maintenance of the property	Yielding and paying ... a certain amount of rent per annum and/or services
Lease and release	Two parchment documents, usually dated on subsequent days, sometimes folded separately and sometimes sewn together. Lease normally smaller than release Indented top edges 1535-1845	Lease: have bargained and sold Release: hath granted bargained, sold, alienated, released and confirmed … in his actual possession by virtue of a bargain and sale dated the day next before the date of these presents	Lease: 5s or 10s (nominal rent) Release: full consideration money	Lease: usually one year, sometimes a few months Release: for ever	Often, covenants of warranty, quiet possession and further assurance of title	Lease: may state that it is to allow lessor to take possession Release: may go on to detail the purpose of the conveyance (for a mortgage, feoffment to uses, marriage settlement etc.)
Letter of attorney	Parchment or paper. Straight	Fecisse et attornasse (attornass	No consideration	Time period someti	The thing to be done	Clauses can be part of

	top edge All dates	e deputasse et in loco meo posuisse)... meum verum legitimum attornatum Made, constituted, named and authorized ... as my lawful attorney		mes stated, or until the thing is done	by the attorney is stated in detail	other documents (e.g. feoffments)
Letters patent	Large. Parchment. Impressive illumination and portrait of monarch in top left corner Great Seal attached	Omnibus ad quos presentes litere pervenerint Salutem To all those to whom these present letters shall come, greeting	Consideration may be stated, or may not	Depends on the purpose of the letters patent - a grant would be for ever; an appointment for the life of the appointee etc.	May include covenants and provisos	-
Mortgage by conveyance	Parchment. Indented top edge In form of a feoffment, bargain and sale, or lease and release 17th century onwards	Bargained and sold Given, granted, sold [enfeoffed], aliened, released and confirmed	Yes (the consideration is the money lent on the mortgage)	For ever	Provided always ... [proviso for redemption of the property]	-

					Covenants and conditions regarding repayment	
Mortgage by demise	Parchment. Indented top edge In form of a lease 17th century onwards	Demised, granted, set and to farm let...	Yes (the consideration is the money lent on the mortgage)	Usually 500 or 1,000 years	Provided always ... [proviso for redemption of the property] Covenants and conditions regarding repayment	-
Quitclaim	Parchment or paper, with straight top edge. Often associated with other deeds from 16th century onwards Any date	Omnibus Christi/ Pateat Universis/ Noverint Universi ... remisisse, relaxasse et ... quiete clamasse Have remised (given, granted, bargained, sold) released	Usually no consideration	n/a	May include a covenant to levy a fine	-

		and quitclaimed				
Recognizance / statute staple / statute merchant	Usually parchment 13th century-1863	Noverint universi per presentes...teneri et firmiter obligari Know all men by these presents... am held and firmly bound	Penal sum reserved to be paid if the conditions in the bond were not met	A time period might be stated	Specifies what is to be done in order to make the bond null and void	In addition, mentions penalties 'under the form of the statute', sometimes specifying statute merchant or statute staple
Requisitions on title	Mostly 19th century	Usually described as 'requisitions on title' at the top or on the cover	n/a	n/a	n/a	Requisitions in the left hand column; replies written in by another solicitor in the right hand column
Statutory declaration	After 1835	... and I make this Solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true...	n/a	n/a	n/a	Signed by the declarer
Surrender	Parchment. Headed by name of a manorial court	Do surrender into the hands of the Lord	Not usually	According to the custom of this	May include covenants and proviso	Signed by the steward of the manor

	17th century onwards	of the Manor		manor...	s	
Tenancy agreement	Parchment - paper by 19th century. Indented top edge 17th century onwards	Demised, granted, set and to farm let	Sometimes	'From year to year'	Will normally include covenants relating to the maintenance of the property	Yielding and paying ... a certain amount of rent per annum and/or services
Will	Parchment or paper All dates	This is the last Will and Testament Probatum, approbatum.. Proved, approved	No consideration	n/a	n/a	Original will is signed and sealed. Probate copy has small probate certificate attached.

20 Good Questions to Ask Your Manuscript
Heather Wolfe, Folger Shakespeare Library (hwolfe@folger.edu)

These questions can be tweaked depending on the time period, place of production, and genre of the manuscript you are consulting. I've divided them into five categories: Before, First impressions, A closer look, Past relationships with other textual artifacts, and Previous ownership and other interventions. The goal of these questions is to gain a 360° understanding of your manuscript and be able to tell a story about it by 1) relating the material evidence to the textual evidence and 2) placing it within networks of manuscript production, circulation, transmission, readership, and ownership.

Before the first date, do your background check.

1. Is there a catalog record for this item?
2. If so, what questions do you have after reading it? Is it detailed enough for your purposes? (Also, check the description for accuracy once you have the item in hand and let the reading room know if you find any errors or ambiguities)
3. Is there a digital surrogate or edition or transcription or print facsimile or scholarly work related to it? Bring it with you!

Hello manuscript, nice to meet you!

4. Is it bound (quarto, folio, etc.) or unbound (bifolium or fragment or sheet or halfsheet?) or some other format (roll, membrane)?
5. If the manuscript consists of multiple leaves, how are the leaves connected to each other? What's the sewing structure?
6. Does it have a wrapper or binding as a cover? What is it, and is it original or later?
7. If it is a bound volume, did it start out as a pre-bound blank book or were quires gathered and bound after they were written on?
8. Does it contain more than one intellectual work?

Mind if I have a look around?

9. What is the substrate?
    - If paper, is it laid or woven? If laid, can you identify the watermarks? Has the paper been trimmed? Can you see deckle? Is it made using Western or Eastern paper-making techniques? Gilt edges? Fine or ordinary? Thick or thin?
    - If parchment, can you identify the animal or quality (look for imperfections, use of hair-side vs. flesh-side)? Calf, goat, sheep?

10. Is the manuscript complete? Are there any leaves missing or added or loose? Does the quiring make sense? If it is a fragment, where could the rest of it be?
11. Is it autograph or scribal or signed by the creator or compiler or scribe, or is it in multiple hands? How many? Are they all from the same period? Are they interacting with each other in any way?
12. Are the handwriting, layout, paper, binding, folding, sealing, or other details consistent with a draft or administrative copy or presentation copy or personal copy? Is it typical for the time period and place of production?
13. If it is a transactional manuscript (a letter, will, bond of obligation, agreement, warrant, deed, receipt, blank form, etc.), is there evidence that the transaction was completed (was it delivered, received, executed, witnessed, probated, sealed, signed, registered, enrolled, etc.)?

Do you have any friends or family I might want to meet?

14. Is the manuscript part of a larger collection or archive that is still intact or has since been dispersed? Is there intellectual or physical evidence for this, such as filing holes, docketing, or other internal or external evidence?
15. If an "orphan," was it de-archived before or after it arrived at its current location? Is it possible to locate or determine the context of its production and whether its "family" actually survives? Was it created as part of a bureaucratic workflow that resulted in the creation of other manuscripts as well?
16. Do any other versions of this manuscript exist (drafts, fair copies, scribal copies, presentation copies)?
17. Is the manuscript copied from a printed source or sources, or is it the source for a printed work?

Any previous readers or owners? And I can't help but notice that you might have had some "work" done?

18. Are there any marks of ownership or signs of use or readership (shelfmarks, signatures or initials, gift inscriptions, stamps, book plates, prices, initials, bookmarks, dog-ears, marginalia, underlinings, etc.) and what can we learn from this information?
19. When and how did the institution acquire the item (consult the reference librarian if this information is not in the catalog record)? If possible, check the bookseller or auction catalogue to see if related material was sold at the same time or if the description contains additional details.

20. What sort of repair work, if any, has been done to the binding or the text block or the leaf/membrane/fragment? When and why? Ask the conservation lab for additional details!