

APPENDIX G. EARLY LETTERFORMS AND SYMBOLS

G1. Introduction

This appendix provides guidance for transcription of archaic letterforms and characters, including marks of punctuation, and archaic conventions of contraction, known as brevigraphs. It generally applies only to European material produced before the seventeenth century, though some practices continued later. Although this appendix cannot be exhaustive, it is intended to provide sufficient guidance for the most common occurrences, and to give a basis for judgment in ambiguous situations.

G2. Early letterforms and symbols

According to the instructions for transcription in rule 0G1.1, earlier forms of letters and symbols are converted to their modern forms.

Early letterforms and symbols				
<i>Source</i>	<i>Transcription</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Transcription of example</i>	<i>Notes</i>
ḋ	d	de^he	dethe	
ij̄	ij	alijs ooghelijck	alijs ooghelijck	Ligated italic ij may look like ÿ
cIb Ib	M D	cIbIbccc v	MDCCV	Inverted C used to form Roman numeral M or D is called an apostrophus
ʀʀ	r	foʀ	for	
ʃʃʃ	s	refuse	refuse	Long s (an f has a crossbar on the stem; the bar on a long s , if present, extends from one side only)
ʃʃ ββ	ss	deʃ	dess	






ß	sz	Deß	desz	Long s and z are spaced normally, no ligature
ꝛ	-	West-Riding	West-Riding	
◦	◦	müß	müss	
◌̇	◌̇	büche	Büche	Superscript e functioning as an umlaut
⋈ ⋈ ⋈ ⋈	&	ꝛc.	&c.	

G3. Brevigraphs (early contractions)

According to the instructions for transcription in rule 0G8.2, brevigraphs, or symbols of contraction used in continuance of the manuscript tradition, are expanded to their full form, with cataloger-supplied letters or words enclosed in square brackets. The values of many brevigraphs are dependent on context, with the most common values provided here.

Brevigraphs				
Source	Transcription	Example	Transcription of example	Notes
̄	[missing letter(s)]	cōsummatū dñis	co[n]summatu[m] D[omi]n[u]s	Over a vowel, usually n or m ; over a consonant, often replaces several letters
⋈	[ae]	h⋈c	h[ae]c	
x̄ps	[Christus]			A brevigraph using both Greek and Latin letters
ꝛ	[con]	ꝛcor ^a	[con]cor[di]a	

ꝛ ꝛ	[es] [ius] [us] [m]	statutꝛ rossꝛ cuꝛ eiꝛ Ꝟmpressuꝛ	statut[es] Ross[es] cu[ius] ei[us] Impressu[m]	A highly versatile symbol; see also, for example, “[habet],” “[que],” “[scilicet],” and “[sed]” below
hꝛ	[habet]			
h	[hoc]			
p	[per] [par]	sup pticulariꝑ	su[per] [par]ticulari[bus]	
p	[pro]	ppter	[pro]pter	
p	[pri]	pma	[pri]ma	
q̄	[quam]	vnq̄	vn[quam]	
q̄	[quan]	q̄tum	[quan]tum	
qꝛ qꝛ qꝛ	[que]	quoqꝛ herculeæqꝛ quosqꝛ	quo[que] Herculeae[que] quos[que]	
q̄	[qui]	q̄bꝑ	[qui]b[us]	
qꝛ	[quia]			
q̄	[quo]			
qꝛ qꝛ	[quod]			
ꝛc.	[recta]			
ꝛ ꝛ	[rum]	quoꝛ libroꝛ	quo[rum] libro[rum]	
ꝛc	[scilicet]			
ꝛ	[sed]			

	[th]		[the] [that]	When y is used to represent the Old English/Icelandic character þ [thorn], enclose th plus additional letters in square brackets.
	[ur]	nascunt ^z	nascunt[ur]	
	[us] [bus]	reb ⁹ pticulari ⁹	reb[us] [par]ticulari[bus]	Superscript; a similar character at baseline represents “[con]”
	[ver]	xtuoso	[ver]tuoso	

G4. Letterforms I/J, U/V, i/j, and u/v

G4.1. Historical background. Some knowledge of the history of the letterforms I/J, U/V, i/j, and u/v is helpful when applying the provisions of 0G2.2.

Until the early seventeenth century, the standard Latin alphabet contained 23 letters. The letters we know as **i** and **j** were considered different minuscule shapes (or letterforms) of the same letter, as were the letters **u** and **v**. The letter **w** was not part of the standard Latin alphabet. The choice of the **u** letterform in preference to the **v** letterform (or the **i** to the **j**) depended on its placement in a word and was governed by convention. Conventions varied somewhat from person to person, but often reflected national and regional preferences. While there were variant letterforms for lowercase letters, in pre-modern practice there was only one letterform for each of these letters used as capitals: **I** (with the gothic form resembling a modern **J**), and **V** (with the gothic form resembling a modern **U**). For example, **Jacob** = Iacob; **Unspotted** = Vnspotted (capitalized as the first word of a title).

The dominant patterns in use before the seventeenth century were:

- **i** used in the initial, medial, and final position, without signifying vocalic or consonantal use; e.g., iustice (modern form: justice)
- **j** used in the medial or final position only after a preceding **i** (more typical on the European continent), signifying vocalic use; e.g., commentarij (modern form: commentarii)

- **u** used in the initial, medial or final position, without signifying vocalic or consonantal use; e.g., oeuures (modern form: oeuvres)
- **v** used in the initial position, without signifying vocalic or consonantal use; e.g., vtilita (modern form: utilita)
- **I** used in all positions, without signifying vocalic or consonantal use; e.g., Iuan (modern form: Juan)
- **V** used in all positions, without signifying vocalic or consonantal use; e.g., Vrsprung (modern form: Ursprung)

A gradual shift took place over time, from the late fifteenth century through the middle of the seventeenth century, with **U/u** coming to phonetically signify a vowel and **V/v** to signify a consonant, regardless of case or position in the word. Likewise with **i** and **j**, although the shift was more irregular, with **I/i** coming to phonetically signify a vowel and **J/j** a consonant. In the modern 26-letter Latin alphabet, **i** and **j** and **u** and **v** are all considered separate letters.

G4.2. Transcription. When the rules for capitalization require converting **I** or **V** to lowercase or **i**, **j**, **u**, or **v** to uppercase, follow the pattern of usage in the text to determine which letterform to use in the transcription.¹⁰ Establish the pattern of usage by examining text in the same script (i.e., roman, italic, or gothic) in the material being described. Look for letters expressed in the opposite case from the letterforms to be converted, but having the same function (vowel or consonant) and same relative position (appearing in initial, medial, or final positions) as the letterforms to be converted. If the pattern of usage differs according to script, follow the pattern of usage identified for each script. If a pattern of usage can be determined for one but not all of the scripts present, follow the single pattern of usage for all scripts. If no pattern of usage can be determined within a reasonable amount of time, use this conversion table as a solution of last resort.

¹⁰ An uppercase **J** in the source usually signals that **i** and **j** are functioning as separate letters, requiring no special consideration of **I**, **J**, **i**, or **j** while converting case in text of that script. Likewise, an uppercase **U** in the source usually signals that **u** and **v** are functioning as separate letters, requiring no special consideration of **U**, **V**, **u**, or **v** while converting case in text of that script.

<i>Uppercase letterform to be converted</i>	<i>Lowercase conversion</i>
I (vowel or consonant) anywhere in word ¹¹	i
II at end of word	ij
II elsewhere in word	ii
V (vowel or consonant) at beginning of word	v
V (vowel or consonant) elsewhere in word	u
VV representing single letter ¹²	vv

<i>Lowercase letterform to be converted</i>	<i>Uppercase conversion</i>
i (vowel or consonant) anywhere in word	I
j (vowel or consonant) anywhere in word	I
u (vowel or consonant) anywhere in word	V
v (vowel or consonant) anywhere in word	V
vv representing single letter ¹²	VV

G5. Letter w

G5.1. Historical background. The representation of the letter **w** is not to be confused with the developments of the **u/v** letterforms. The **w** letterform was part of the standard alphabet for Germanic languages. Most early printing was in Latin, shifting gradually to include a greater proportion of vernacular languages throughout Europe. **W** and **w** must have been scanty in cases of roman type, and they appear to have been frequently exhausted when setting text in Dutch, English, or German. When that happened, compositors usually did one of two things: used **VV** or **vv** to stand in for **W** or **w**, or permanently altered **V** or **v** type

¹¹ Do not convert a final uppercase **I** meant to represent an **ii** ending.

¹² This must be distinguished from **VV** or **vv** as a combination of a vowel and a consonant as in the examples **VVLT** or **vvlt** (vult, "he wants") and **VVA** or **vva** (uva, "grape").

pieces—achieved by filing or shaving one of the serifs, often the right serif on the left piece—so that the two type pieces would sit closely together in the forme, thereby more closely resembling a **w**. In early German texts, printers sometimes used a curved **r** followed by a **v** to approximate a **w**.

G5.2. Transcription. When **VV** and **vv** letterforms have been used to represent the single letter **W** or **w**, transcribe them as **VV** or **vv** as appropriate. When there is clear evidence of the filing of one or both pieces of type showing the intention of creating the **W** or **w** letterform, transcribe as **W** or **w**, making an explanatory note, if considered important. In cases of doubt, transcribe as **VV** and **vv**. When separate **rv** letterforms have been used by the printer to approximate the single letter **W** or **w**, transcribe as **W** or **w**, making an explanatory note, if considered important (see 0G7.3).

Forms of W				
<i>Source</i>	<i>Transcription</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Transcription of example</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VV	vv	VVhole	vwhole	
W	w	W H O L E	whole	
ꝛv	w	ꝛveyſe	weysse	