Ex scriptore: Transcription Guidelines

The aim of *Ex scriptore* is to provide 'semi-diplomatic' transcriptions, in other words to offer texts which, on the whole, respect manuscript readings but also facilitate their understanding by the addition of punctuation, paragraphs, capitalisations and a few basic transcription rules.

Since medieval texts vary in many ways, it is anticipated that the guidelines below may not be sufficient in all cases. Any additional rule adopted by the transcriber must be applied <u>consistently</u> throughout their transcription and be explained clearly at the beginning of the text. In case of doubt, please contact the relevant *Ex scriptore* editor for further guidance.

<u>General Guidelines</u>:

Whenever possible word division and capitalisation should follow modern usage. Abbreviations and manuscript corrections are expanded silently (except for 'etc' which is not expanded). In case of abbreviations where the manuscript also has occurrences of the non-abbreviated word, that spelling should be preferred when expanding abbreviated forms. End of words flourishes (usually expanded by a final 'e') should be ignored, exceptions being made for Latin when the final 'e' denotes a grammatical case or for poetical works when a final 'e' is necessary for the metre.

Manuscripts spelling should be respected (for exceptions to this rule, see below <u>Specific Guidelines</u>). Emendations should only be used when obvious mistakes have been made (for example: <u>haplography</u>, i.e. copying once what appeared in the exemplar twice 'that that' (MS) reduced to 'that'; and its opposite, <u>dittography</u>: mechanical repetition, i.e. 'that that' when the original reads 'that' (MS); <u>metathesis</u>: i.e. reversing letters, words, phrases in such a way that it does not make sense. Letters / words lost in a manuscript crease or under a stain should also be added by the transcriber when it is obvious what they should be.

In all these cases, when the transcriber emends these obvious errors the corrected text (letters or words) should be inscribed within square brackets.
For example: 'How thys mayden sey her soule [in] a foule garnement', where 'in' is lost in a crease.

When the text is faulty and does not make sense but the mistake is not obvious the manuscript reading should be given followed by [sic] to indicate the error. As *Ex scriptore* does not provide critical editions, the transcriber should not attempt to guess at what may have gone wrong.

Superscript / underscript letters or words, as long as missing words added in the margin should be indicated by ` ´.
For example: 'And how `our´ lorde put hys', where 'our' is superscript / underscript or in the margin.

Marginal notes are not usually recorded unless they contain a correction to be inserted in the text or they are deemed to be an integral part of the work.

In vernacular texts with Latin quotations the latter will be in *italic* font with the first word of the quotation in uppercase. If rubricated in the manuscript, descriptions of chapters should also be in red in the transcription.

Within the transcribed text indicate the folio numbers using the abbreviation 'fol.' for folio in **bold** font in-between parentheses. The r / v for recto and verso should be in uppercase.
For example: **(fol. 33^r)**
In case of manuscripts available online but where folios are not indicated in the metadata, i.e. cannot be used to go to a specific folio, please also indicate the computer pagination in the following format:
For example: **(34/208 // fol. 32^v)** *i.e. this is page 34 out of 208 of digitised pages and folio 32^v*.

Words written across two folios should not be cut off by the indication of the folio (fol. xr/v) but written in their entirety before adding the new folio.
For example: 'humilitee (fol. 50r)' and not 'humi-(fol. 50r)-litee'.

Punctuation should be used sparingly and mostly in order to assist readers with the understanding of the text. Therefore, medieval punctuation should only be taken into account if it abides by the two principles of scarcity and clarity. However, since texts differ widely and separate vernaculars follow distinct punctuations rules, how to apply punctuation to the

transcription should ultimately be decided by the transcriber, <u>consistency</u> throughout being paramount.

Again in order to facilitate the understanding of the texts, paragraphs should in general not exceed six to eight sentences.

Each transcription should be headed by the following information, the * entries being mandatory:

***Manuscript shelfmark**: *(for example: London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, fols 1ʳ-54ᵛ)*
***Incipit**: *(at least two lines of text if one sense unit, or longer if not)*
***Explicit**: *(ibid.)*
***Date**: *(century if no more exact date is unknown)*
***Transcribed by**: *(your name and affiliation)*
Permalink: *(if MS is available online)*
Additional information: *(this should <u>be kept to a minimum</u>, i.e. not more than one paragraph, but could include the manuscript title for the work, the name of the author and / or of the scribe, the presence of illustrations /illustrated intials, etc.)*
Put online: *Date to be added by Ex scriptore editors.*

<u>Specific Guidelines:</u>

<u>English:</u>
The medieval letters: þ, ð and ȝ are retained, but i/j/y and u/v follow modern usage. Initial ff is ignored.

If necessary the *Middle English Dictionary* (Middle English Compendium, University of Michigan) or the *Oxford English Dictionary* should be consulted.

For an example of a Middle English text transcription, see *The Articles of the Feyth*, etc. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 549, fols 77^v-79^r

French:

Diachritics (i.e. é, ù, including diaeresis) are only used to avoid possible confusion and insure the understanding of the text.

For example 'aprés' (afterwards) / 'apres' (rough); 'païs' (country) / 'pais' (peace).

The letters i/j, u/v and c/ç follow modern usage. If the manuscript does not differentiate between c/t, the transcription should also follow modern usage.

If necessary the *Dictionnaire du moyen français* (http://www.atilf.fr/dmf), the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (http://www.anglo-norman.net/gate/), and other dictionaries available on Lexilogos (https://www.lexilogos.com/francais_dictionnaire_ancien.htm, including the *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* by Godefroy) should be consulted.

For an example of a Medieval French text, see *Le dyalogue de la duchesse de Bourgongne a Jhesu Crist*, London, British Library, MS Add. 7970.
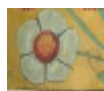
German:

A modern punctation should be silently interposed. Punctuation marks should follow English convention.

Abbreviations to be expanded silently (nasal bars, *er*-hooks and shortened versions of *unde*).

Diachritics (e.g. ů) should be maintained.

The grapheme ß should be used. If a long ∫ and a short *s* appeard next to each other (particularly at the end of a word) the transcription should mark this. If a long ∫ appears on its own *s* should be used.

Word separations should be marked by an empty space, even if the manuscript does not do this.

The letters i/j and u/v follow modern usage. If the manuscript does not differentiate between c/t, the transcription should also follow modern usage.