



Transcription standards for SLQ content in DigiVol: Letters & Diaries

DigiVol does not currently have the capability to allow transcribers to strikethrough or underline text. Any words that have used strikethrough or been underlined are to be indicated in the transcriber notes and added in post editing once exported.

OR

If text has been underlined/italicised/bolded for emphasis (rather than formatting), insert <start emphasis> before and <end emphasis> after the text.

SLQ Transcription Standards:

1. Lineation/paragraphs

- 1.1. Do not be overly concerned with formatting if it is difficult to reproduce on the computer. Generally, maintain the paragraphs and line breaks of the original document.
- 1.2. Word-separator spaces are rendered as single, no matter how small or large the physical gap between the words or between them and marks of punctuation. Words inappropriately joined are kept joined.

2. Pagination

- 2.1 If transcribing a diary, letter, etc, with numbered pages, include the page number in the transcription.
- 2.2 Page numbers should be entered in the same script as used in the manuscript, i.e. if the manuscript uses Roman numerals, these should be used in the transcript.
- 2.3 Insert the word 'Page' in square brackets before the page number.

Example: [Page] 45 [Page] xvi

3. Spelling & grammar

- 3.1. Spelling and grammar are retained as written even for the most obvious errors of inscription or slips of the pen.
- 3.2. The bracketed expression [sic] is used to indicate errors that were written 'thus in the original'.
- 3.3. If a manuscript is filled with misspellings, leave as is, reserving [sic] for those cases where a reader might be confused or suspect a transcriber error.

4. Capitalisation

- 4.1 Capitalisation is retained as written.
- 4.2 If in a particular instance the author's intent regarding uppercase/lowercase remains unclear after consideration of a letter's form, its relative size, and tendencies elsewhere in the manuscript(s), use modern practice.

5. Abbreviations & contractions

- 5.1. Abbreviations are retained as written and are never expanded. If the author has used '&' do not translate to 'and'.
- 5.2. Also note that in the 19th century, 'et cetera' was often written as '&c'. This should not be changed when transcribing.

6. Punctuation

- 6.1. Punctuation is retained as written.
- 6.2. Terminal punctuation is never inserted where it is lacking in the manuscript; nor, in such cases, are sentence endings indicated by the inclusion of an additional space.
- 6.2. Especially elaborate, idiosyncratic, or decorative usages of punctuation marks by particular writers, often in the context of dates and other numbers, may be modified or normalized to the keyboard.
- 6.3. Round brackets are used where brackets have been used by the author.

7. Uncertain/illegible readings

- 7.1. If a word is indecipherable, consult with colleagues.
- 7.2. If still uncertain, replace the unrecognisable word with three dots (ellipsis) within square brackets. Example: We were on our way to [...] within hours.
- 7.3. DO NOT use three dots by themselves as this is a punctuation mark called an ellipsis and may well be used by the author as part of his/her writing.
- 7.4. Illegible passages are indicated by [2 words illeg], [3 words illeg], and so on. The number of illegible words so indicated may be an approximation. Lines of illegible words are indicated by [1 line illeg], [2 lines illeg], etc.
- 7.5. If there is a good indication of what the unreadable word might be, the likely word is shown, followed by a question mark in square brackets [?]

8. Omissions /insertions

- 8.1. Square brackets are used to indicate any addition by someone other than the original author and that is not part of the original text.
- 8.2. The bracketed expression [sic] is used to indicate errors that were written 'thus in the original'. Example: [page 4a] Friday 30th [August 1833] at noon proceeded in the yawl amidst the intricacies of the mud banks arrived at Pilots House, proceeded old horses & got to Guardia at 9 oclock Saturday

- 8.3. Markings or notations regarded as extraneous to the content of a manuscript are silently omitted.
- 8.4. Later editorial commentary is not typically transcribed, but is referenced in transcriber notes.

9. Underlining

- 9.1. Underlined words or passages are indicated with underscoring.
- 9.2. Different underlining practices (i.e., single or double underlining; continuous or broken underlining) are regularized to a continuous, single-line underscoring.

10. Special characters

- 10.1. In earlier times, final double 's' was written with the first 's' extended above and below the line, so that it looks like an 'f'. Type as double s. Example: 'Mifs' = 'Miss', 'harnefs' = 'harness', etc.

11. Non-textual additions

- 11.1. Non-textual manuscript elements that are essentially decorative in function are not represented. This includes post office stamps.

The details of the stamp or other non textual additions can be added in Transcriber notes.

12. Deletions/crossed out words

- 12.1. Crossed out words or passages that remain legible have been indicated with strikethrough type, as have readable erasures; illegible cross outs are silently omitted.

13. Interlineated words or passages and use of ^ symbol to insert words

- 13.1. Matter inserted by the author by interlineation and/or use of the caret symbol (^) is shown as part of the running text in the order apparently intended by the author. If in the hand of the author, these are silently incorporated into the text at the point indicated by the author (or, lacking this, at the point in an adjacent line that renders the text most coherent).
- 13.2. Where the word order of revised or rewritten text may serve to confuse readers, editorial clarification is usually provided in a note.

14. Marginal text

- 14.1. Marginal matter by the author, not apparently part of the running text, is shown within square brackets, thus: [Marginal note: text of note. End Margin].
- 14.2. Matter not written by the author of the document but added later by an editor or curator, is not transcribed. Such inscription is sometimes noted or discussed in the annotations.