Bohumil Ryba's Rules for transcription of Latin manuscript texts

Translated by Jan Odstrčilík

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The purpose of this translation is to make Bohumil Ryba's highly influential transcription rules for Latin texts from the early 1950s available to foreign users and to enable them to refer to them in non-Czech articles and editions.

The original rules were long available only in manuscript form, copied and distributed among Czech editors. However, they were also the basis for the transcription rules published by Jindřich Šebánek in 1958 as part of his textbook, which has been reprinted several times. See the summary of Šebánek's rules: https://www.scribd.com/document/408643073/Jindřich-Šebanek-Pravidla-Transkripce-Textů-Latinských.

As far as I know, Bohumil Ryba's rules were first published in a very limited form by the Center for Medieval Studies, Czech Republic, in 2000. A similar, but not identical version of Bohumil Ryba's rules can be found on the archived website Český raný středověk *Frühmittelalter in Tschechien - High Middle Ages in Czech Lands, Dušan Třeštík necnon sodales amicique* from 2001: http://web.archive.org/web/20070610011744/http://www.sendme.cz/trestik/pramenydejinces.htm.

Two versions can also be found on the website of the courses at the Masaryk University in Brno:

- 2011 - **PV2B62 Seminar on Editing** taught by PhDr. Helena Krmíčková, Dr., https://is.muni.cz/el/1421/jaro2011/PV2B62/um/Ryba.pdf

- 2012 - **LJMedA10 Seminar on Textual Criticism** taught by doc. Mgr. Petra Mutlová, M.A., Ph.D. https://is.muni.cz/el/phil/podzim2012/LJMedA10/um/ryba.pdf?kod=BHBP0442;predmet=1014386;lang=cs

Finally, the almost complete version of the transcription rules was published in Havel, Dalibor; Krmíčková, Helena. Paleografická čítanka : literární texty. 1. vyd. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014, pp. 89-96. https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/sites/default/files/pdf/131272.pdf

Most recently Bohumil Ryba's rules influenced UŘLS TEI Cookbook's Editorial style guide (Czech only): https://lindat.coders.tools/for-editors/ (checked in 29. 2. 2024).

This translation is based on the transcription rules published Center for Medieval Studies, Czech Republic in 2000.

If you find any errors, please, don't hesitate to contact me.

Jan Odstrčilík

Bohumil Ryba's Rules for transcription of Latin manuscript texts (Pravidla pro transkripci latinských rukopisných textů)

[Preface]

We present the rules, for which the elaboration of Prof. Dr. Bohumil Ryba was taken as a basis, discussed and amended in various committees, most recently in the Transcription Committee of the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (18. XI. 1953).

⚠ I. Basic Principle: With the exception of phenomena of a purely graphic nature, nothing may be added or subtracted from the spelling of Latin words.

⚠ II. Special provisions apply to proper names and numerals.

ad I. By phenomena of a purely graphic nature are meant mainly the following cases:

1. We do not maintain the distinction between the initial and middle ∫ on one side and the final -s on the other: manuscript *∫olutus, in∫i∫tere, dilecti∫∫imus* we transcribe **solutus, insistere, dilectissimus.**

2. Instead of the dotless and dashed *í* we transcribe the dotted **i**: the handwritten *nímis* is transcribed **nimis**, the handwritten *mínɪs* is transcribed **minis** as well.

3. Instead of the apparent *-ij (-ij-)* in older texts *(imperij, pij∫∫imo, abijt, adijciunt, obijciendis)* we transcribe **-ii (-ii-)**: **imperii, piissimo, abiit, adiiciunt, obiiciendis**.

   It is only in those modern texts that actually distinguish between *i* and *j* (i.e., that write *ejus, justitiam, jejunavit*), we transcribe in the same cases identically **imperii, piissimo, abiit,** but **adjiciunt, objiciendit.**

4. Instead of the apparent capital *J*, which in older texts appears before consonants (*Jbi, Jtem*) as before vowels (*Jam, Jurati*), we transcribe generally as **I** in the appellatives: **Ibi, Item, Iam, Iurati.** Only in those modern texts which in fact distinguish between *i* and *j* (i.e., which write *ejus, justitiam jejunavit*) we retain **I** for the vowel and **J** for the consonant: **Ibi, Item, Jam, Jurati**.

5. For practical reasons we distinguish in transcription the vowel *u, U* from the consonant *v, V* (we transcribe thus **varius, avarus, ubi, udus, ludus, vetuimus, vicarius, avia, ulna, unguentum, unus, nullus, voluntas, avarum, urbs, urceus, surdus, usus, ut, utriusque, uva, avus, sevus, uvidus, vulvula, uxor, nux, avolavit, invenit, involvit, convivum; Varius, Ubi, Udus, Vetuimus, Urbs).**

   (We do so without regard to medieval graphic systems (three!), one of which has generally *u*, i.e: *uarius, auarus, ubi, udus, ludus, uetuimus, uicarius, auia, ulna, unguentum, unus, nullus, uoluntas, auarum, urbs, urceus, surdus, usus, ut, utriusque, uua, auus, seuus, uuidus, uuluula, uxor, nux, auolauit, inuenit, inuoluit, conuiuum;* the other writes *v* at the beginning of words and *u* elsewhere - i.e: *uarius, auarus, vbi, vdus, ludus, vetuimus, vicarius, auia, vlna, vnguentum, vnus, nullus, voluntas, auarum, vrbs, vrceus, surdus, vsus, vt, vtriusque, vua, auus, seuus, vuidus, vuluula, vxor, nux, auolauit, inuenit, inuoluit, conuiuum;* the third is identical to the second, but on the joint of the compound words it writes *v*: *avolauit, invenit, involuit, conviuium*).

The advantage of our *u - v* distinction, besides its familiarity to us, is the ease of distinguishing cases such as: **volvit** - rolls, **voluit** - wanted.

Only in *gu-, qu-, su-* in front of a vovel we preserve the vovel **u** according to the most common convention: **lingua, queror, equus, itaque, suavis, persuasit, consuevit**.

Only in those modern texts where the distinction between *i - j* and *u - v* is consciously carried through to its consequences do we preserve the consonant **v** in the latter cases: **lingva, qveror, eqvus, itaqve, svavis, persvasit, consvevit**.

6. When transcribing the double *w* of the original, we proceed in two ways:

   a. If *w* has the value *v+u, u+u* or *u+v*, we do not keep them and transcribe the medieval graphics *aws, wlgariter, wlt, owm, ewm, praws, uidws, wifer* as **avus, vulgariter, vult, ovum, evum, pravus, viduus, uvifer**.

   b. If, however, *w* means only the consonant *v*, we maintain the occasional writing of **willa, lingwarum, caterwatim, praworum, gwerra, conswetus**, if so written in the original. We also transcribe with **w** those rare cases where a medieval scribe used a double *uu* in the same validity, e.g. we transcribe *pauuor* as **pawor**, we transcribe written *euuuangelium* (with a triple *u*) as **euwangelium**.

      NB. In the word *euangelium* we leave unchanged those graphic forms from which it is impossible to decide whether it was pronounced [eu-an...], [e-van...] or [eu-van...]; thus we do not change the graphics *euangelium, euuangelium, ewangelium*.

7. We simplify the doubled consonant only if in the original it represented the corresponding majuscule at the beginning of the word: we transcribe *ffilius, llaudamus* at the beginning of the sentence as **Filius, Laudamus**, in the middle of the sentence **filius, laudamus**.

8.

   a. Paleographic abbreviations are generally expanded and spelled out. If they allow a double spelling, e.g. *gratia - gracia*, *quatenus - quatinus*, *compulit - conpulit*, *communitas - comunitas*, we decide both according to the age of the text (earlier middle ages **-tia**, later **-cia**) and, if possible, according to the prevailing usus of the text in fully spelled out cases.

   b. In larger editions of documents of a certain type, some established abbreviations may be retained in the transcription, or some usual ones introduced and printed, e.g. for **pro XXIII sexag. gr. den. Prag., feria quarta prox., ante f. s. Pauli, die XXIV. m. ianuarii, ante f. ss. Symonis et Jude, S. C. M.ᵗᵃˢ , illᵐᵘˢ d.** etc. Such abbreviations, however, should always be unambiguous, strictly consistent, and an alphabetical list of them (with appropriate elaboration) should be appended to the introduction of the edition.

9. We consider the placement or non-placement of capital letters in older texts to be a superficially graphical phenomenon and we do not follow it in transcription.

   Regardless of the fluctuating medieval practice, we capitalize:

   a. at the beginning of sentences after a full stop;

   b. in proper names (see below ad II.);

c. in dating formulas according to Sundays and holidays, e.g. **dominica proxima post Ascensionem domini, f. IIIª post festum Assumpcionis beatissime Marie virginis, f. IIII. in Capite ieiunii, in Cena domini, f. II. post Circumcisionem domini, f. IIª post Conductum pasce, f. VI. post Conversionem s. Pauli, f. II. post Corporis Christi, f. IIIIª ante Epiphaniam domini, dominica Esto michi, f. III. in festo Exaltacionis sancte crucis, in die Innocencium, f. IIIª post Iudica, sabbato dominice Iustus es, f. III. post Letare, dominica post Omnium sanctorum, f. VI. ante dominicam Palmarum, sabbato post Pascha, f. VI. ante Pentecosten, dominica VII. post Trinitatem, in die Visitacionis gloriosissime virginis Marie, f. VI. post Ad vincula Petri.**

d. in the first word of the title of a literary work, e.g. **Philosophus 2° libro De anima, Augustinus in De baptismate parvulorum;**

e. in the incipits of sections, paragraphs or quotations, e.g. **et habeatur De consecracione, distinccione IIIIª Si qui, Glosa dicit super verbo Non cogitetis.**

- Note: In the indication of days and months we use lower case letters: **pridie kalendas aprilis, II. idus februarii, VI. nonas iulii.**

10. We do not follow the medieval practice of joining a preposition to another word. For example, instead of *aparte, abiijs, inperpetuum* we write **a parte, ab iis, in perpetuum.** Note: also not *insolidum* (different meaning), but: **in solidum; una cum** (write as in the original).

Nor do we maintain such compound spellings that do not contribute to clarity, such as *idipsum, sibiipsi, eisipsis, idest.*

On the other hand, we retain common medieval compounds in expressions, such as **abolim (f. 1346 mart. 26. Brno - march. Karel), denovo, decetero, eiusmodi, exnunc, extunc, hincinde, abinde, huiusmodi, inpresenciarum, infrascriptum, necnon, protunc, supradictus;** of course also **imposterum, imperpetuum, impresenciarum, priusdictus, inantea, benemeritus, iamdictus, sepedictus.**

If in the original the old compounds are split into two words (e.g. *alius ve, dum modo, e contra, nobis met, ut pote, quod si, ubi cumque*), we transcribe them together: **aliusve, dummodo, econtra, nobismet, utpote, quodsi, ubicumque (tamdiu, quamdiu, econverso, eciamsi)**.

11. We neither preserve the placement nor the special punctuation marks (rhetorical) and replace them with logical punctuation, basically as in Czech.

Practical implications of the basic principle:

a. we do not change the spelling and leave as it is, if it is written: **quatinus, intelligite, negligimus, benivolus; paiulus, purgravius, stupa; bravium, balisiis; capud, set** (NB. we transcribe the crossed-out long ſ this way and not as *sed*); **epiphania, nephastus, dapipher; vigellator, fiola; magorem, abigerunt, gerarchia; ymmo, sinodus; karissimi, feniseka; anathematisat, baptismus; loycalis, lingwaii, amicicia, cicius, accio, suspitio.**

b. We do not make any additions [i.e. of any characters] if it is written **promtus (=** *promptus)***, saguis, ligua** *(= sanguis, lingua),* **cifus (=** *scyphus),* **ceptrum (=** *sceptrum),* **exequi** *(= exsequi),* **extirpare (=** *exstirpare),* **ortus (=** *hortus),* **ylariter** *(= hilariter),* **aduc (=** *adhuc),* **aleviare** *(= alleviare),* **opida** *(= oppida),* **anullamus (=** *annullamus),* **equs (=** *equus),* **sequntur**

(= *sequuntur*), **scisma (=** *schisma*), **erisma (=** *chrisma*), **spericus** *(=* *sphaericus),* **karaktere (=** *charaktere).* We retain the monophthong *e* if the original has **estimo, ecclesie, cenobium, seculum;** in the oldest writings (and again in humanistic texts), we keep so-called *ę caudata*: **apostolicę, sędis, hęc.**

Note: In the posthumanist texts, which in turn distinguish *e - ae* or *e - oe*,
we transcribe
ae, oe (for typographical reasons without using ligatures), i.e:

aestimo, ecclesiae, coenopius, poenae.

c. We do not take away [i.e. any characters] if it is written in the original **condempnare, scampnum, congnitus, angnus, ingnis, iniunexit, hostium (=** *ostium),* **heremita, perhemptorie, contrahire (=** *contra ire),* **cohaccio, theoloneum, legittimus, felliciter, neccessarius, peccunia.**

In Latin texts from the modern period we retain the facilitating diacritical marks if they are already in the original: **fixé illa memoriae haerent** (indicates an adverb), **suscepta ultro provinciá** (indicates an ablativ).

d. We do not normalize inconsistencies in the spelling of the respective manuscript text. We thus retains various spellings, if the original has *villanus* here and *willanus* there; *sigillo - sigilo*; *immo - ymmo; lacrima - lachryma; exsecutus - executus*.

e. As a rule, we never convert older spelling to younger spelling or vice versa. A 13th century charter preserved only in a 17th century copy must, even in our transcription (**in praesentia ejusdem dominae Annae**), reveal at first glance that it is not preserved in its original form (we will therefore not convert it into the artificially reconstructed spelling of the time of its actual creation - *in presencia eiusdem domine Anne*).

Ad II. Special provisions apply to proper names and numerals

1.

    a. In principle, proper names are left completely unchanged in the transcription, including both geographical and personal names, e.g. **Bohemia, Grecz, Novadomus, Czrquicz, Vtuina (=** *Útvina),* **Leta curia, Wltauia, Zrzit, Uuencezlaus, Uvenceslaus, Wenceslaus, Coyatha, Wlricus de Vzk, Vrbanus papa, Heinricus Institaris.**

    For these the rules of ad I., paragraphs 3 to 6 do not apply, but paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 do (the manuscript *ffranciſcus, llodouicus* is transcribed **Franciscus, Lodouicus).**

    Diacritical marks, if present, are retained: **in Teplá.**

    Even if proper names are written with lowercase first letters in the manuscript, we use capital letters consistently in the transcription.

    The same applies to adjectives derived from city names **(Romanus, Pragensis, Treuerensis, Cracowiensis, Sczedliczensis).** Example: if in Latin it is written *petrus et ludewicus uenetus*, we transcribe **Petrus et Ludewicus Uenetus;** manuscript *Vlricus ultraiectinus,* we transcribe as **Vlricus Ultraiectinus;** manuscript *Vrbanus vrbi et orbi,* we transcribe as **Vrbanus urbi et orbi.**

b. Deviation from this strict transliteration practice, binding for the Codex diplomaticus, is allowed for all historical and literary editions (including the Regesta) in two directions:

    a. in accordance with I., paragraphs 3 - 5, to transcribe the manuscript sentence *Vrebatur igne domus Vrie Cracouiensis et Jgnacij Jglauiensis*, which would have the form *Urebatur igne domus Vrie Cracouiensis et Jgnacij Jglauiensis* in the codex practice, using the practice for transcribing appellatives as follows: **Urebatur igne domus Urie Cracoviensis et Ignacii Iglaviensis;** i.e. to write **Ulricus, Urbanus, Lodovicus,** etc.

    b. in addition, for reasons of practical usefulness and conformity with the prevailing us, to transcribe proper names with the initial *J* as **Jacobus, Jeronimus, Johannes, Josephus, Judas.**

2. Unlike adjectives derived from city names, we keep the initial letter lower case for adjectives formed from the names of countries, regions, tribes and nationalities. E.g. **in sermone gallico, in ligwaio boemico, vinum australe, floreni ungaricales, ius theutonicale, moravici pogamenti.**
The same applies to derived adverbs: **bohemice, gallice, latine.**

3. The proper names are not *deus, diabolus, dominus, salvator, redemptor, pater, filius, trinitas*, etc. We therefore transcribe: **anno domini, dixit deus ad Hyeu, in nomine patris et filii, individue trinitatis, etc.**

4. We keep the traditional transcription of the abbreviation *xpc* in the form **Christus** and the abbreviation *ihc* in the form *Ihesus*, although we know that it was pronounced and written (! - less often) Christus and Jesus. Note: In the derivation, however, we transcribe **cristianus** (not Christianus), e.g. **inter cristianos et iudeos.**

5. For numerals, we replace the use of minuscule forms with capital Roman numerals. E.g. manuscript form *dedit ei vi florenos vngaricales, florenum conputando per XXVIj grossos*

transcribe **dedit ei VI florenos ungaricales, florenum conputando per XXVII grossos.** For fractional numbers, we mark the half with the usual arithmetic fraction (½).

In documents of a purely accounting nature we replace Roman numerals by Arabic ones for practical convenience.

As an exception, we do not expand abbreviations in the dating. If the original *Anno ab incarnacione domini M°ccc°lviij°* is written in the original, we transcribe **Anno ab incarnacione domini M°CCC°LVIII°** .

We never replace the year written in words in the original by mere Arabic numerals, even in the case of regest.