Documentation for the modern manuscripts dataset, TranscriboQuest 2024 - Lyon, France

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Presentation

Data: https://github.com/gabays/TranscriboQuest_Modern

The repository the group uploaded on HTR United hosts the HTR ground truth created as part of the TranscriboQuest training in 2024, Lyon, France. The dataset contains information on modern manuscripts in Italian, French, and Latin, dating from the 17th to the 19th century. These manuscripts include working drafts, diaries, notebooks, and preparatory works. The manuscripts in this dataset exhibit a wide variety of handwriting styles, differing significantly in both the type of ink used and the time periods in which they were produced, as well as the individual hands that created them.

Corpus:

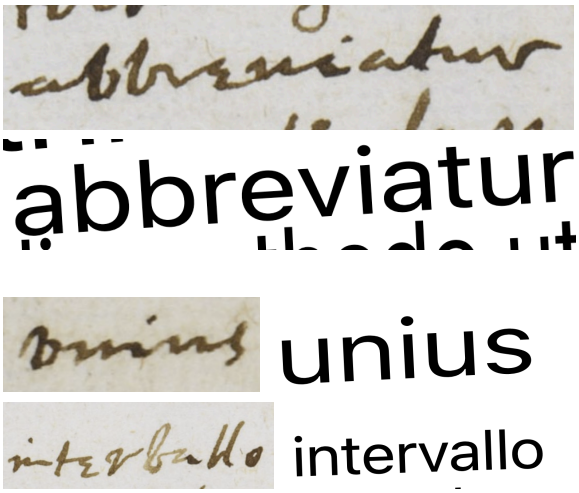
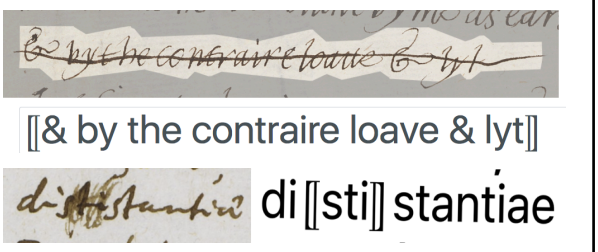
- French: Notes by Father Camille de La Croix, 19th century "*Copies de documents de 1812 à 1890, documents originaux (1853-1856), fichier de notes historiques de 1807 à 1902, notes historiques et bibliographiques.*" These loose pages are reading notes about a IVth century monument in Poitiers now known as the Church of Saint John. The papers and handwriting are various in quality.
- French: Flaubert, draft of l'*Éducation sentimentale*.
- French: G. W. Leibniz, mathematical manuscript (written in 1674, during his stay in Paris).
- Latin: Thomas Harriot, manuscript about arithmetics (probably written around the turn of the 17th c.).
- English : King James I, a draft version of the *Poetical and prose works* by, early 17th century, published later in the century.
- Italian: Ignazio Fabbroni, *Ricordi di villeggiatura di caccia e d'altro dal 1 ottobre 1665 all'11 settembre 1690*, Ms Rossi-Cassigoli 380, BNCF, Florence.

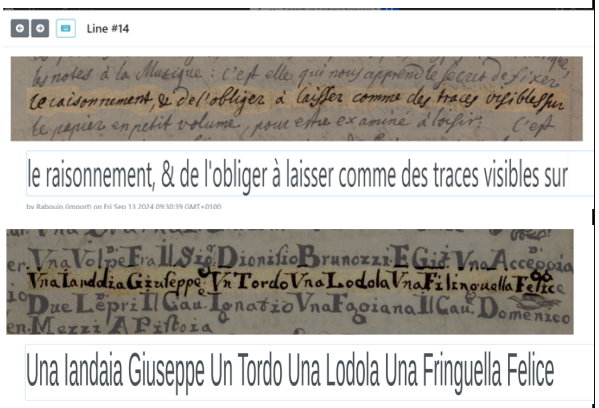
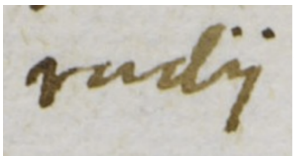
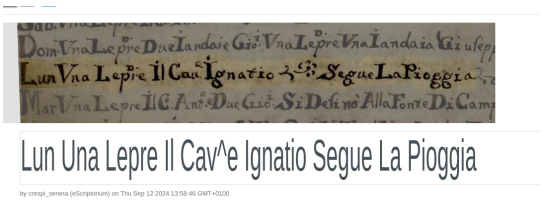
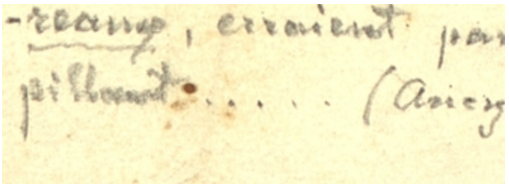
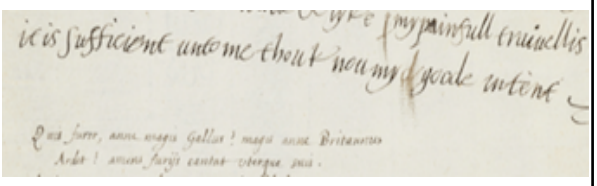
The transcriptions were manually completed in two rounds by a group of seven contributors from various disciplinary backgrounds (engineers, PhD students, researchers) and different universities across France.

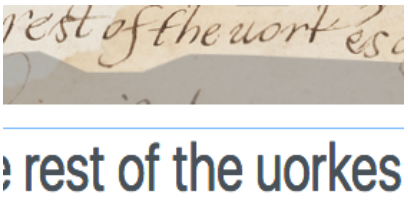
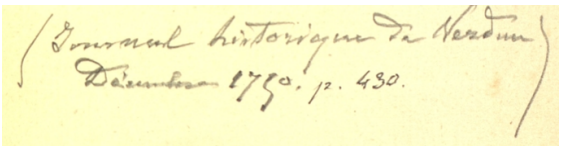
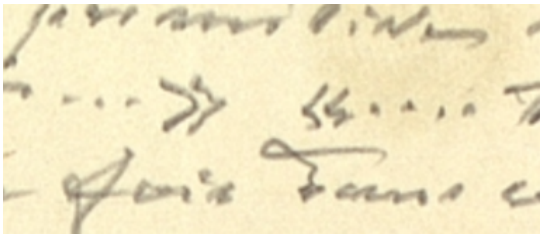
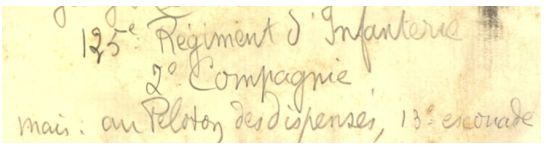
Rules we adopted for the transcription

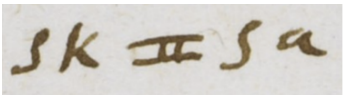
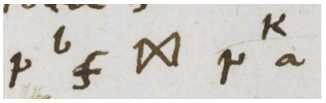
The working group responsible for the modern manuscript dataset has chosen to detail the decisions made throughout the training and transcription of the various manuscript witnesses. These choices were the result of collaborative discussions aimed at identifying the most effective solutions. Any unresolved challenges, for which no satisfactory solution could be agreed upon, have been carefully documented for further review.

Synthesis of the choices and difficulties

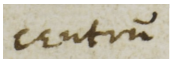
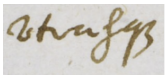
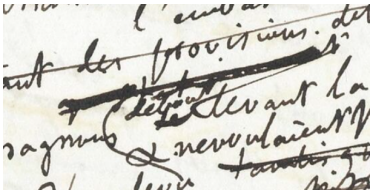
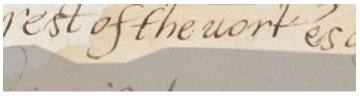
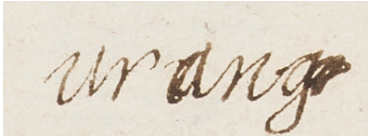
Case	Rule explanation	Image
V/v and U/u	*V and v are normalized to U and u, respectively.* *U and u are normalized to V and v, respectively.*	
Strikethrough	*Strikethroughs present in the manuscript are faithfully reproduced within double square brackets* ⟦⟧	
Illegible word	*When a word is illegible, include what can be understood, and place the rest between* ⟦ ⟧.	

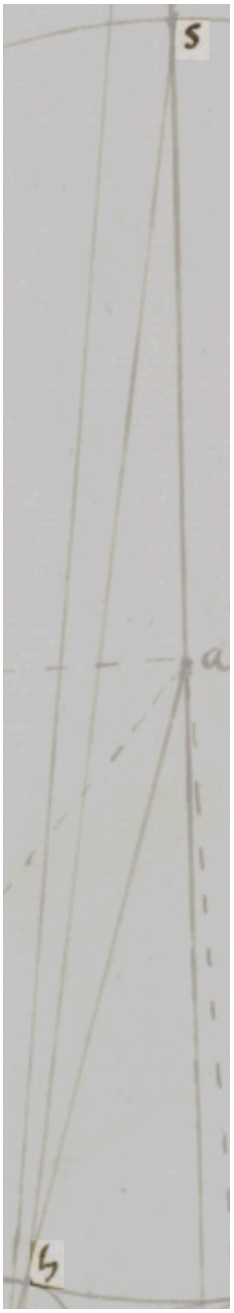
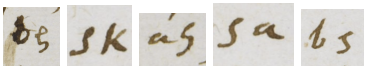
Symbols & and α	*The symbols "&" and "α" are preserved as they appear in the transcription.*	  
“long s” and “round s”	*No distinction is made between forms, for example, between the long "s" and the round "s".*	
« i » and « long i »	*There is no distinction between « i » and « long i »*	 
Capital letters	*Capital letters are preserved, even if they do not appear at the beginning of a sentence.*	
Series of points	*Addition of as many points in the transcription as are visible in the original document*	
Change in handwriting	*When the handwriting changes in the manuscript, only the main hand is transcribed,*	

	and the secondary hand is not taken into account.	
(/)	*Slashes (/) are preserved as they appear in the transcription.*	
Parenthesis encompassing several lines	*Parenthesis encompassing several lines are only integrated to the first line if they are not specifically aligned with the first and last line.*	
Quotation mark	*There is no space after an opening quotation mark or after a closing quotation mark.*	
Abbreviations	*Textual superscripts for textual abbreviations (ordinals, Saint in St, etc.)* preceded by a ^ sign	

Symbols	*For specific symbols, we decided to transcribe it by the actual equivalent when it was available.*	 sk = sa.
Mathematical exponent	*For mathematical exponent, we used Unicode exponent characters.*	 $p^bf \infty p^ka$

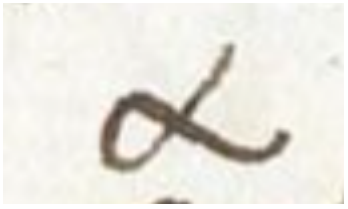
Difficulties

Cas		
Ligatures	*We decided to transcribe the ligature when it was available (first image) but we developed it when it was not (second image)*	 centrũ  utrasque
Undecipherable crossed words or sentences (*ratures* in French)	*As the piece of advice was to put blank spaces for each character between double square brackets* [[]] *(Ariane Pinche), it's difficult to decide the numbers of blanks space to insert when you can't count them. See recommendation for "Strikethrough"*	
u for w (esp. in English)	*We kept the* u *when used as a* w *(it is too difficult to choose whether* w *works as a semi-vowel or a semi-consonant)*	 rest of the uorkes  *vrang* (for *wrong*)

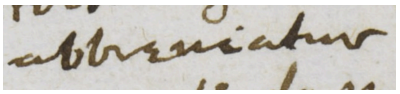
Similar character	*For very similar character that are used in diagrams : there is no solution to distinguish with 100% accuracy without context.*	  h and s very similar 

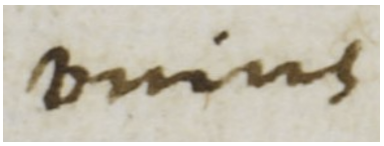
Developed rules and Examples

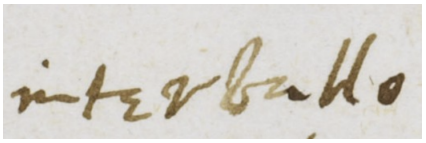
1. Flaubert - use of alpha for “et” (“and”). We transcribe by the ampersand “&”
   Example : page 10 (folio Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises) 17599 f°8r = https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60000866/f22.item



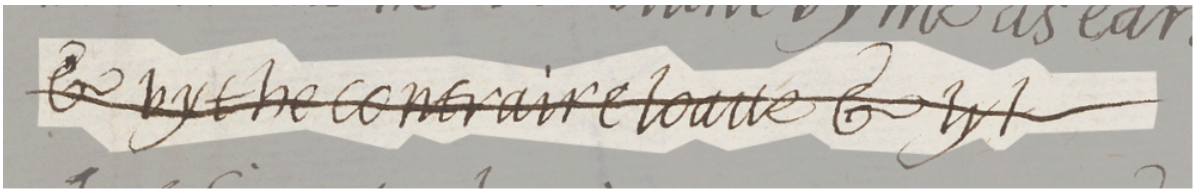
2. Normalization of the V/v and U/u for the XVIIth Century hands

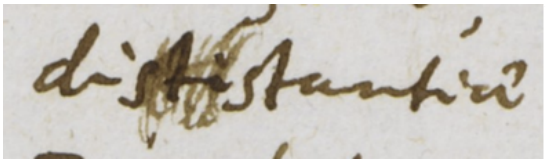






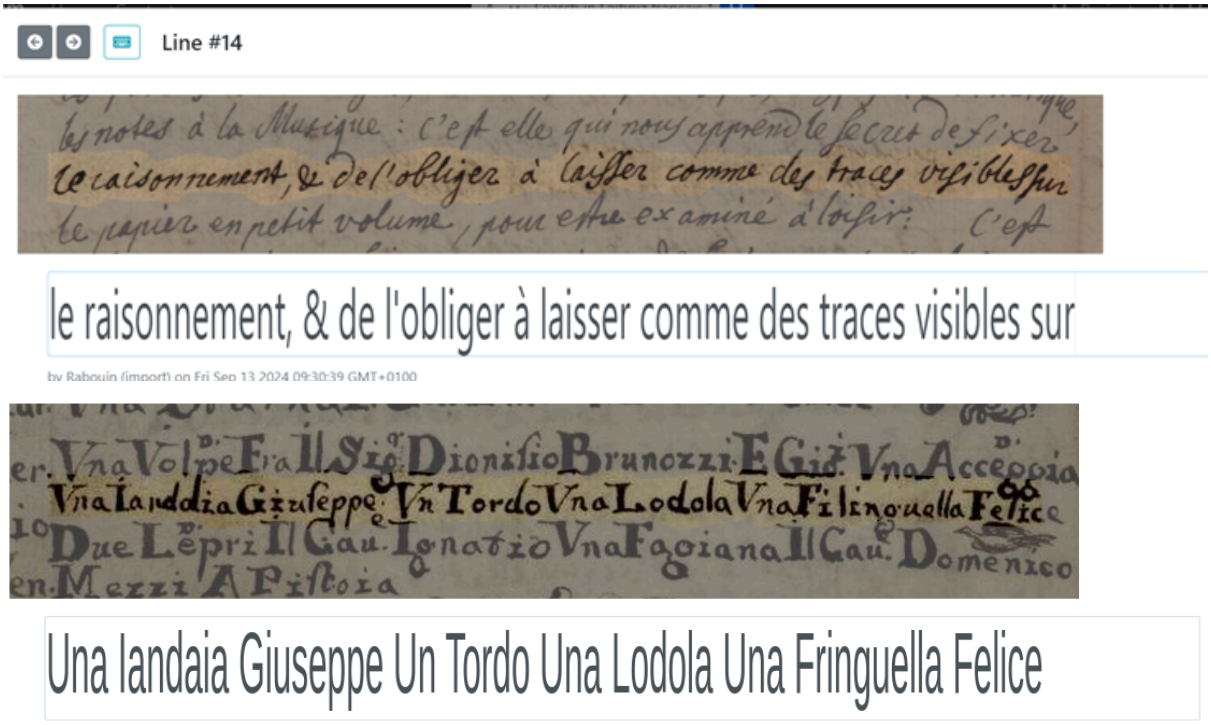
3. We transcribe the crossed passages into double brackets :



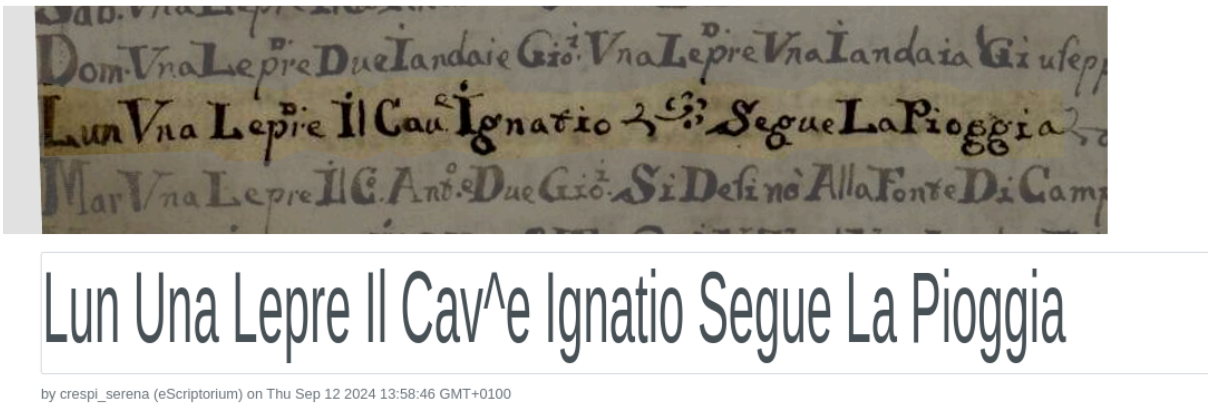


4. We keep the ampersand “&”

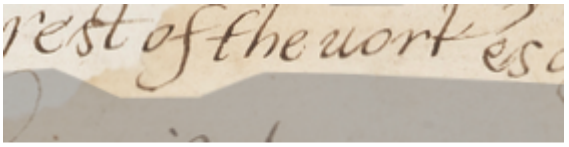
5. No distinction between long and rond “S”



6. We keep capital letters, even if they are not at the beginning of the sentences

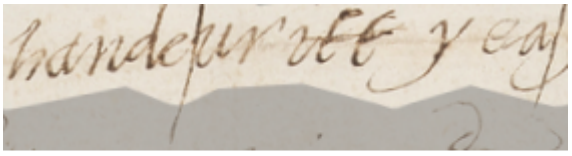


7. We keep u for w when it is in the manuscript:



rest of the uorkes

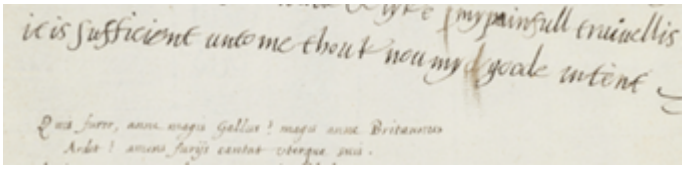
8. We keep the slash inside sentences



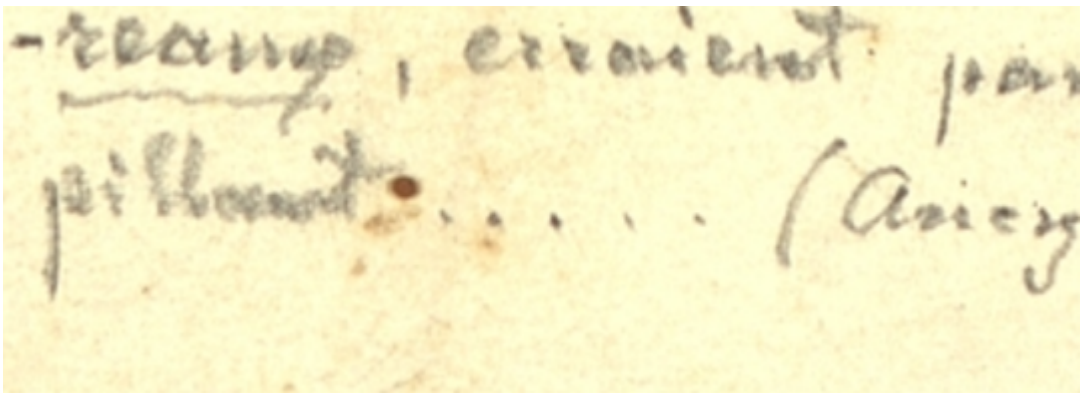
ande/vritt yea/ska

9. When the word is not readable, we put what we succeed reading and the remaining part into double square brackets ⟦ ⟧

10. When there is a changing of hands, we did not transcribe the second hand if it was not related to our corpus:

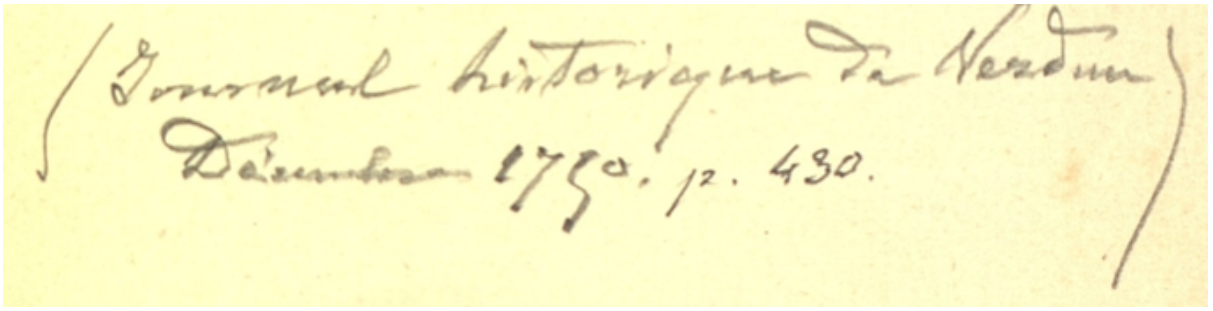


11. As my dots in the transcription as there are visible dots in the original document

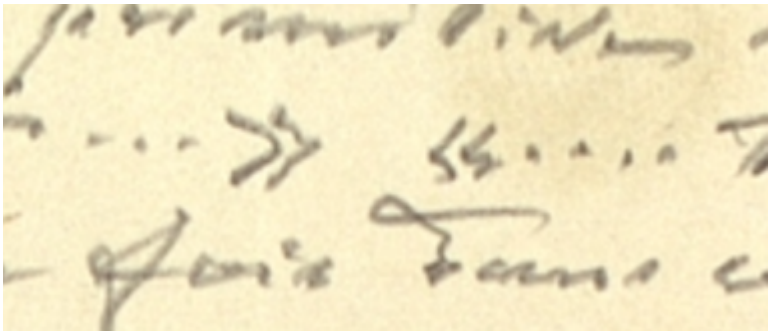


Transcription : pillaient..... (Ancy

12. Parenthesis encompassing several lines are only integrated to the first line if they are not specifically aligned with the first and last line.

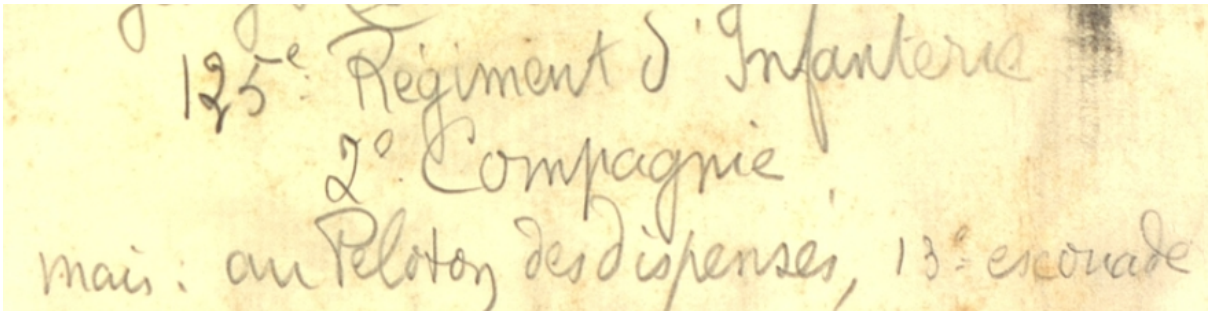


Transcription:
(Journal historique de Verdun)
Décembre 1750. p.430.



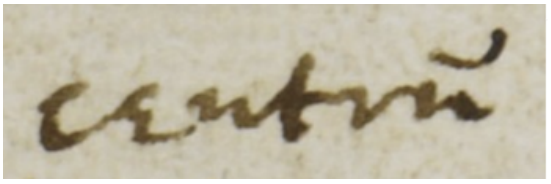
13. Pas d’espace après un guillemet ouvrant ni après un guillemet fermant

14. Textual superscripts for textual abbreviations (ordinals, Saint in St, etc.) are preceded by a ^ sign

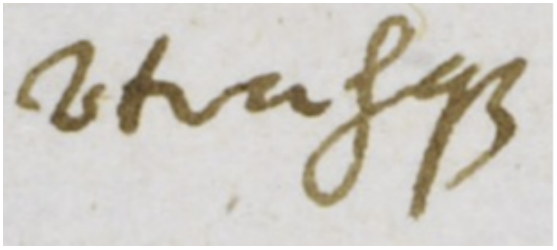


Transcription: 125^e Régiment d'Infanterie
2^e Compagnie
mais : au Peloton des dispensés, 13^e escouade

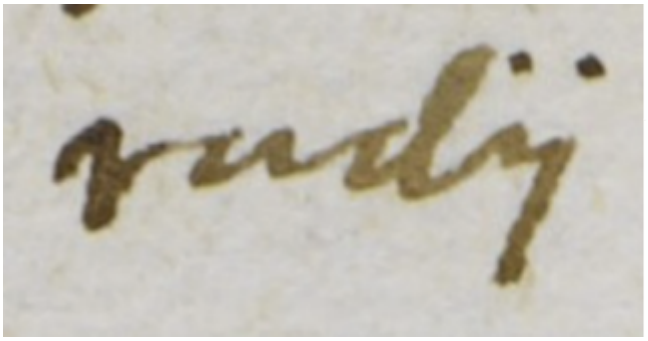
15. We decided to transcribe the ligature when it was available :


centrũ

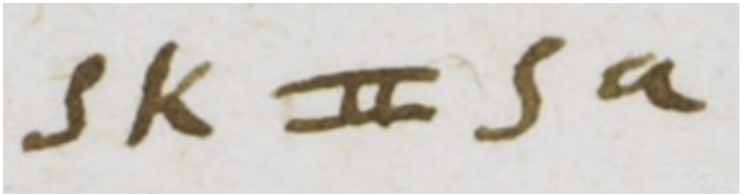
But we developed it when it was not :


utrasque

16. We did not make distinction between « i » and « long i » :

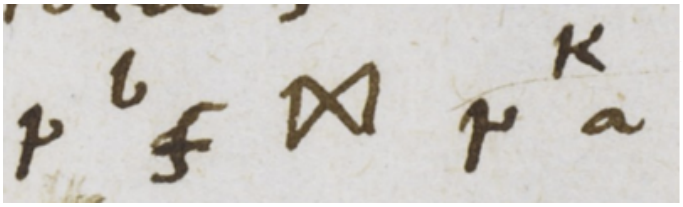

radii

17. For specific symbols, we decided to transcribe it by the actual equivalent when it was available. For example : the equal sign



sk = sa.

18. For mathematical exponent, we used Unicode exponent characters :



$p^bf \infty p^ka$

Appendix

Here are presented the manuscripts and the corresponding folios that were used for the transcription process.

Flaubert Manuscripts :

- **page 1 :** Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris (BHVP). Rés. Ms 98 f°1r = https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105370062/f17.item
- **page 2 :** BHVP. Rés. Ms 99 f°1r (copie qui n'est pas de la main de Flaubert) = https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10537007h/f11.item
- **page 9** : Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises (NAF) 17599 f°7r = https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60000866/f20.item
- **page 10** : NAF 17599 f°8r = https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b60000866/f22.item

Leibniz Manuscripts :

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