



the national archives

palaeography

tutorial

Document 5: Letter regarding storage of royal archives, 1686

(Catalogue reference: E 36/253 page 169)

Contents

About this document	1
Introduction to transcribing document 5	2
Glossary	3
How to use the interactive transcribing exercise	6
Alphabet	7
Image	8
Transcript	10

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About this document

This document is a letter sent to Lawrence Earl of Rochester, Lord High Treasurer of England, dated 23 October 1686. (Catalogue reference: E 36/253 page 169)

This letter raises problems with two of the locations where royal archives were being stored at Westminster. The writer expresses concern for the preservation of royal archives stored at two locations at Westminster, in a building off the cloister of Westminster Abbey and in a building in New Palace Yard, adjacent to Westminster Palace. The buildings are far from ideal for storing archives, being located next to a wash house and alehouse. The royal documents are under threat from damp and fire.

The document is written in a very cursive late secretary hand.

Introduction to transcribing Document 5

Transcription tips - READ THESE FIRST!

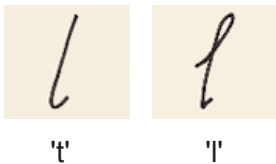
The document is written in a very cursive late secretary hand.

In this document you should watch out for:

- Capital and lower case 't'.

The capital 'T' does not really look like any modern letter, and to make matters worse, it is not written in exactly the same way each time it appears! You have to work it out from the context. See for example 'Lord High Treasurer', **line 2**. Refer to the alphabet to help you.

The difficulty with the lower case 't' arises from the fact that they are not crossed, making them look very much like 'l'. See for example 'top', **line 20**. However, a genuine 'l' will have a looped ascender, making it easy to distinguish from a 't'.



- As before, transcribe the 'thorn' (the letter that looks like a modern 'y' but was actually an Anglo-Saxon symbol for 'th') as a 'th'. Thus ye in **line 11** should be transcribed as 'the'.
- Watch out for the number 8. Often this would be written looking a bit like a modern 'S' lying on its side.
- Abbreviations
The document contains some abbreviations which should already be familiar to you. It also makes use of suspension [leaving a word 'unfinished'], and contraction [missing out some letters in the middle of the word]. See for example 'the Abbey of Westm', **line 4**, and 'honble', **line 1**. In both of these cases, it is clear what the full word should be.

Sometimes these types of abbreviation are indicated with a mark or superscript letters, but not always. So you have to watch out for them.

Expand 'Mr' as M[aste]r. The word 'Mister' was not used until the 18th century.

glossary

Copper

A large tub used for cooking or laundry, originally made of copper, but often made of iron.

Dr Sill

Probably William Sill (d. 1687) - a canon at Westminster Abbey, 1681-1687.

'his late Majesty'/ Charles II

King Charles II was born at St James' Palace in London on 29 May 1630. He was the son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria. After his father's execution on 30 January 1649, Charles II was proclaimed king in Scotland. Having fled to France, Charles returned to Scotland in June 1650 and was crowned there in January 1651. However, after his defeat at Cromwell's hands at the Battle of Worcester in September 1651, Charles was once again forced into exile, living mainly in the Netherlands. He was invited to return to England in 1660, arriving in London on 29 May 1660. He was finally crowned king of England at Westminster Abbey on 23 April 1661, but it was publicly proclaimed that he had been king since 30 January 1649, and his regnal years are counted starting on 30 January 1649. The years of the reign of Charles II included the Great Plague of 1665 and the Fire of London in 1666.

'his now Majesty'/ James II

King James II was born at St James' Palace, London on 14 October 1633. He was the younger brother and heir of Charles II. He ascended to the throne on 6 February 1685 and was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 23 April 1685. An admitted Catholic, he put down a Protestant challenge for the crown by James Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II, at the Battle of Sedgemoor in July 1685. With his first wife Anne Hyde, daughter of Edward Hyde Earl of Clarendon, he had eight children, including the future Mary II and Queen Anne. With his second wife Mary of Modena he had seven children, including James Edward 'The Old Pretender'. Already wary of James' Catholicism, Parliament reacted to the birth of James Edward, a Catholic male heir, by inviting William of Orange, the husband of James II's Protestant daughter Mary, and James' nephew by his elder sister Mary, to take the Crown. James was deposed and left the country. In 1690 his attempt to regain the throne by taking a French army to Ireland failed at the Battle of the Boyne, and he spent the rest of his life in exile in France, where he died in 1701.

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Leads	The sheets or strips of lead used to cover a roof.
League	An agreement or covenant, and the document in which the terms of the agreement are set down.
Light	A window, or one of the panes of glass within a window.
New Palace Yard	Now the garden in the grounds of the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament) on the corner of St Margaret Street and Bridge Street, London. It has been known as New Palace Yard since the time of William Rufus (William II, 1087 - 1100), who built a hall on the site 1097-1099. He called it 'New Hall' to distinguish it from the great hall of King Edward the Confessor's palace, which lay slightly to the south.
Piked stave	A pole with a sharp point at the end.
Prebendary	A beneficiary of a prebend, a stipend or wage drawn from the endowment or revenues of cathedral or collegiate church, and granted to a canon or member of a cathedral chapter.
Rochester, Lawrence Earl of, Lord High Treasurer	Lawrence Hyde 1641-1711, second son of Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon and Chancellor of Charles II, by his second wife Frances. Upon the Hyde family's return to England at the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, Lawrence became the Member of Parliament for Newport in Cornwall. From May 1662-1675 he was Master of the Robes and in November 1679 he was made First Lord of the Treasury and a Privy Councillor. He was raised to the peerage in 1681, becoming first Viscount Hyde of Kenilworth and then Earl of Rochester. On 16 February 1685, 10 days after the death of Charles II, he was made Lord Treasurer by the new king, James II. His sister Anne Hyde married James Duke of York, the future James II, but died before James succeeded to the throne. Rochester was therefore the brother-in-law of James II and the uncle of Mary II and Queen Anne. His daughter Henrietta married Sir James Scott, grandson of Charles II through his illegitimate son James Duke of Monmouth.
Westminster Abbey	Westminster Abbey, or to give it its formal name, The Collegiate Church of St Peter, Westminster, is situated on the northern side of the River Thames in London adjacent to the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament), which was a royal residence until the reign of Henry VIII. It was named Westminster

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by the Anglo-Saxons since it was the minster west of St Paul's or the city of London. The date of its original foundation is unknown, but a church and community of Benedictine monks were already in existence when King Edward the Confessor began his abbey building in 1055. This building was finished and consecrated in 1065, a few days before Edward's death. He was buried behind the high altar and his tomb became a shrine visited by pilgrims. Additions and further building work continued under many monarchs, in particular Henry III. In 1502 Henry VII began his new Lady Chapel. Under Henry VIII however, the abbey was suppressed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The monks were replaced with a dean, 12 prebendaries, minor canons and lay staff. The abbey is a royal peculiar: its officials are appointed by the crown and it is not subject to the rule of the bishop of London, in whose diocese it stands. It has been the place of coronation of nearly all English monarchs, and the burial place of many of them.

Wort

An infusion of malt (or other grain) which after fermentation becomes beer.

how to use the interactive transcribing exercise

Help - using the interactive transcribing exercise

Step 1: Study the line of text from the document image

Step 2: On the document image, use the interactive magnifying glass to zoom in/out of image by clicking on a particular word

Step 3: Using the textbox below the document image, type in your transcription

Step 4: When you have finished the current line of text, click on the Submit button

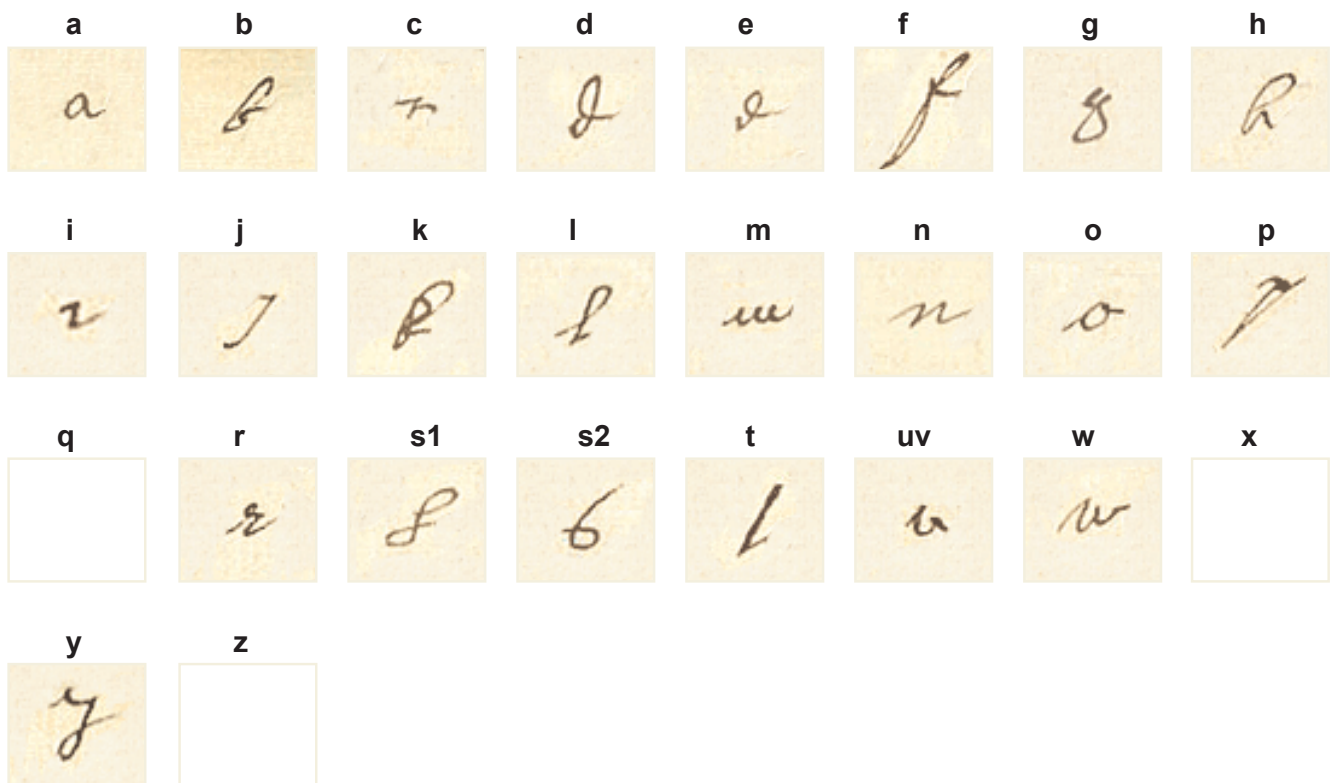
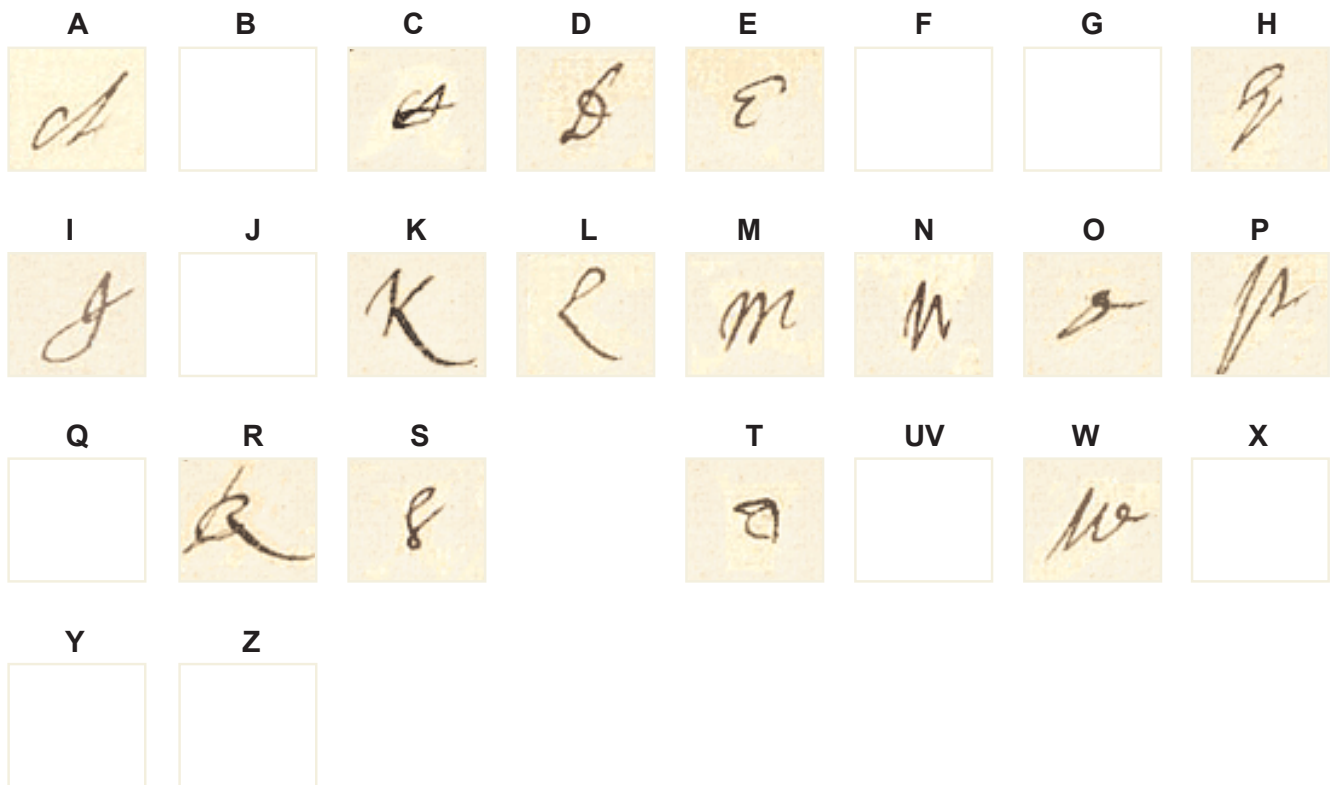
Step 5: The results will be shown and will give you the option to either retry or move onto the next line of the current document.

Help - instructions on typing your transcription

- 1) For every word you cannot transcribe, put in a dash character ' - '
- 2) Every word you transcribe should be separated with a single space
- 3) The transcribing text must match, whether it is in capital or lower case
- 4) Expand abbreviations in square brackets where necessary.

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Alphabet



1 To the English from the
2 some copies of England 2
3 of England 1
169

3 May 17th 1690
 4 That the said one of the most honorable of the Clergy of the said Bishopric of London
 5 do bid the said Bishopric within the City of London
 6 for a great number of great monuments
 7 which were of the said Bishopric
 8 which were of the said Bishopric
 9 for the said Bishopric
 10 the said Bishopric
 11 the said Bishopric
 12 of the said Bishopric
 13 from the said Bishopric
 14 which were of the said Bishopric
 15 the said Bishopric
 16 the said Bishopric

17 May 17th 1690
 18 That the said one of the most honorable of the Clergy of the said Bishopric of London
 19 do bid the said Bishopric within the City of London
 20 for a great number of great monuments
 21 which were of the said Bishopric
 22 which were of the said Bishopric
 23 for the said Bishopric
 24 the said Bishopric
 25 the said Bishopric

transcript

1. To the Right hon[our]able Lawrence Earle of Rochester
2. Lord High Treasurer of England
3. May it please y[ou]r Lords[hip]
4. that Dr Sill one of the prebendaries of the Abbey of Westm[inste]r hath his house adjoyning
5. to his Ma[jes]ties Treasury within the Cloyster of the said Abbey, wherein divers
6. foraigne Leagues & Records of great moment are kept, which had no other
7. lights into it but two out of the yard belonging to that prebendary, but
8. within some few yeares this prebendary or his predecessor did erect a Rome
9. for his family to wash & brew in, close to the Wall of the said Treasury, takeing
10. both the said Windowes into the said Rome, and his Coppers are placed under
11. the said Windowes, having made wooden Shutters to them (by the building
12. of w[hi]ch Rome the Treasury is much darkened) stopping all light & aire
13. from coming into the same when they are shut up, and when the
14. shutters are open all the steame & smoake of the water & wort comes into
15. the Treasury leaveing a great damp therein rotting & spoyling many
16. Records.
17. May it further please y[ou]r Lords[hip]
18. That over the gate going out of the New palace yard into St Margrets lane
19. is another Treasury of his Ma[jes]ties wherein lye Records of great moment
20. w[hi]ch is leaded on the top, adjoyning to w[hi]ch treasury stood an old house
21. belonging to his late Ma[jes]ty & in Lease to the late Lady Williams, now
22. lately pulled downe and severall new tenem[en]ts erected by M[aste]r Doughty on the
23. same ground and on the yard, w[hi]ch was before the old house, w[hi]ch new
24. buildings on the yard obstruct the light in to the said treasury, besides
25. under one end of the said treasury is an alehouse lately kept w[hi]ch is a
26. dangerous thing so neer a Record Roome in case of fier & other
27. inconveniencies, Part of w[hi]ch alehouse towards St Margrets lane is
28. lately built & leaded over with the window of the treasury, whereby p[er]sons
29. may looke in, at least, or through, the broken windowes, or throw filth
30. if not forceing the Iron barrs and breake into it, likewise out of one of
31. which new houses is a doore made to goe upon the Leads over the said
32. treasury, upon w[hi]ch his tenants are used to dry their Clothes, and by sticking
33. piked staves into the Leads, for that purpose, & pulling the Leads from
34. the walls, the water from the spouts & eves of the house adjoyning
35. hath run through into the treasury severall times & spoyled many
36. Records, which M[aste]r Doughty when lately told by M[aste]r Parker & Deputy
37. Chamberlaine of it, was angry & answered them that if they
38. insisted much upon it hee would sue & recover the treasury from the
39. King saying it was granted to him in his patent Although his late
40. Ma[jest]y his now Ma[jes]ty & their predecessors allwaies have been at their
41. Charge of keeping & repaying the said Leads, but now have no
42. use of them, but M[aste]r Doughtys tenants having the sole use of them,
43. It is humbly submitted to y[ou]r Lords[hip] that M[aste]r Doughtys doore
44. may be stopped up, and that a doore may be made out of the
45. augmentation office or otherways for his Ma[jest]ies Officers
46. to go upon the Leads to view & repaire them etc.
47. 23 Oct[ober] 1686.