

THE FINGERPRINTER'S MANUAL

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I. DEFINITION OF THE FINGERPRINT

A fingerprint consists of four groups of two pairs of symbols taken from the last and penultimate lines of four specified pages, one pair of symbols per line, taken from each bibliographical unit.

Notes

1. Volumes should be carefully examined, as they may contain several bibliographical units.

1.a A volume may be a 'random collection' consisting of separate items bound together, in which case a fingerprint should be recorded for each item.

1.b It may also be a work composed of parts which could have been separately published, in which case the criterion to be followed in deciding whether or not to record a fingerprint should be that the part could have been separately issued. Points to look for include a title-page in a new gathering, page numeration starting again, or signatures starting again.

2. In the case of works in several volumes, the fingerprint of each volume is to be recorded (cf. II.4.c).

3. The fingerprint system also applies to broadsides and other single-sheet publications (cf. III.3.a.3).

II. GENERAL RULES

1. Choice of Symbols

These are selected reading from left to right: at the end of the line on rectos, at the beginning of the line on versos.

2. Choice of Lines

Begin with the last line, then the penultimate line.

3. Choice of Pages⁽¹⁾

The pages to be used are:-

3.a For the 1st group: the first printed recto which follows the title-page and is not itself a title-page.

3.b For the 2nd group: the fourth recto after that used for the first group.

3.c For the 3rd group: there are two

possibilities:-

3.c.1 If there is numeration in the book, use the recto of the first leaf after that used for the second group which bears the correct number 13 in Arabic numerals on that recto, whether it refers to folio, page or column numeration; if there is no recto bearing that number, use the first recto after that used for the second group which bears the correct number 17 in Arabic. If there is no such available numeration in the book, use Roman numeration if that is available.

Notes

3.c.1.a If a book is numbered up to XIII, XIV, XV or XVI in Roman numerals, and thereafter in Arabic numerals, the third group is taken from 17.

3.c.1.b If the numeration in Roman numerals goes up to or beyond XVII and there is no page numbered 13 or 17 in Arabic numerals, the fingerprint should be taken from page XIII or, failing that, XVII.

3.c.2 If there is no numeration in the book (in Arabic or Roman numerals), or no recto numbered 13 or 17 in Arabic or Roman numerals, or those rectos have already been used, take the fourth recto after that used for the second group.

3.d For the 4th group: the verso of the recto used for the third group except in the case of books of insufficient length (cf. III.3.a.3).

4. Additions to the Fingerprint

4.a Following the fingerprint, and to indicate the source of the third group, add the appropriate suffix:

4.a.1 3 if the third group comes from 13 or XIII;

4.a.2 7 if the third group comes from 17 or XVII;

4.a.3 C if the leaves have been counted, or there are not sufficient leaves, pages or columns for the third group to be completed in the normal way (cf. III.3.a.3).

4.b Record the date (cf. III.4.b).

4.c For works in several volumes or parts separately published (cf. I.1.b, I.2), record the number of the volume or part.

4.d If the fingerprint does not form part of a catalogue entry bearing the shelfmark of the volume, record the shelfmark.

4.e In the case of all notes required by this Manual (cf. II.3, III.4.b.3), they are required only if there is not already a note to the same effect in the catalogue entry associated with the fingerprint. If the fingerprint is not part of a catalogue entry, or is later detached from it, notes required by this Manual should be recorded with the fingerprint.

III. PRACTICAL GUIDE AND SPECIFIC POINTS

1. Choice of Symbols

1.a The following are to be ignored:-

1.a.1 Spaces between letters and words;

1.a.2 Displayed letters that take up more than one line;

1.a.3 Letters in spaces left for displayed letters where the spaces take up more than one line.

1.b The symbols used in fingerprinting must be part of a well-defined character set. For Western Europe, this set consists of:-

1.b.1 numerals: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
[this last should be transcribed 0 to distinguish it from the capital letter O]

1.b.2 punctuation signs: - . , ; : ' () [] " ! ?

1.b.3 the ampersand: &

1.b.4 upper- and lower-case letters of the Roman and Greek alphabets⁽²⁾. The recording of accents and of other symbols placed above or below the line is optional, but advisable.

1.c The asterisk * is used to represent any symbol having a function in the text that does not form part of the above character set.

1.d However:-

1.d.1 Early forms of the punctuation signs for the comma and hyphen should be transcribed as a modern comma and hyphen. The long dash should also be transcribed as a hyphen (cf. Appendix).

1.d.2 All forms of ampersand are transcribed: & (cf. Appendix).

1.d.3 Printers' ligatures in the Roman alphabet should be treated as if they were composed of separate characters. However, æ, œ, Æ, Œ should be recorded as single symbols⁽²⁾.

1.d.4 Contractions are treated in two different ways:-

1.d.4.a those that look like a letter modified by an accent or by another letter or diacritical sign, are recorded as the letter alone: ð is transcribed q (cf. Appendix).

1.d.4.b all others are replaced by an asterisk.

1.d.5 The asterisk also replaces all forms of the paragraph mark and pointing hand; it should also be used to replace any symbol which is present but not legible.

1.d.6 The plus sign + is used to replace any missing symbol, whether the line consists of only one symbol (in which case it is completed with a +), or there is text missing at the end of the line, due for example to mutilation of the paper or frisket bite. No attempt should be made to guess the missing characters, and the whole of the damaged pair should be replaced by ++. For example, lines ending with 'sib' and 'viatoren' instead of the words 'sibi' and 'viatorem' would give the fingerprint ++++.

2. Choice of Lines

2.a The following are to be ignored:-

2.a.1 Lines consisting of rules or printers' ornaments;

2.a.2 Lines containing material such as short titles, signatures, catchwords, press figures and pagination;

Note

2.a.2.a If lines contain both text and signatures, etc., only the text should be used.

2.a.3 Engraved captions accompanying an illustration: only a printed caption should be used. This also applies to music.

2.a.4 All marginalia: characters' names in a play or dialogue, pointing hands, and marginal notes even if they continue beneath the text and spread right across the foot of the page.

Note

2.a.4.a However, footnotes and interlinear notes are treated as text. In the same way, if the page consists of a commentary surrounding the text commented on on at least three sides, the fingerprint is taken from the commentary. If a commentary is on only one or two sides of the text and falls within the main type area, the rule on columns should be applied (cf. III.2.c.1).

2.a.5 All line numeration, whether of verse, Biblical verses or prose.

2.b Do not ignore:-

2.b.1 Lines of text which do not spread right across the page;

2.b.2 The portion of lines on a page of verse or of a play which is over-run: the fingerprint should consist of the last two symbols to appear in the lines of print used (usually the last two lines, but see also III.3.a.3);

2.b.3 Inverted commas and other punctuation marks which are part of the text even if they appear in the margin.

2.c *Specific points*

2.c.1 Columns: when the text is arranged in columns, it is from the first column on the page, on the left, that the fingerprint is taken, whether from a recto or a verso. 'Column' in this context is to be interpreted as meaning anything that is printed in the form of a column, whether text or commentary, even if one column spreads across the whole width of the page at top or bottom or if the columns on a given page are unequal in width or height.

2.c.2 Tables: if a table is intended to be read as columns, the fingerprint is taken from the left-hand column, as described above. If a table is laid out in columns, but is read across the whole width of the line, the fingerprint is taken as in the case of an ordinary line of printing.

2.c.3 If the text is laid sideways on the page, the fingerprint is taken from the last lines of the text, with the book

turned so that it can be read.

3. *Choice of Pages*

3.a *General points*

3.a.1 Where leaves are to be counted, they must contain printed text on either the recto or the verso.

3.a.2 In recording fingerprints, pages which are blank or which contain only signatures, etc. (cf. III.2.a.2) are to be ignored: in such a case the instructions appropriate to the particular group should be followed.

Note

3.a.2.a Pages containing a full-page illustration with an engraved caption are treated as blank. This also applies to music.

3.a.3 If the book is of insufficient length for all the groups to be taken in the usual way, the fingerprint is completed by returning to the last page (or column) from which symbols were taken, and using the lines immediately above those already used until 16 symbols have been recorded.

3.b *Specific points*

3.b.1 *For the 1st and 2nd groups:* where the page which would normally be used for these groups is ignored (cf. III.3.a.2), the fingerprint is to be taken from the next recto which carries printed text.

3.b.2 *For the 1st group*

3.b.2.a If the first recto which follows a title-page is itself a title-page, take the fingerprint from the next recto. If there is no title-page, and never has been, take the fingerprint from the first recto (even if it has a caption title). However, if there is no normal title-page but there is a half-title, treat the half-title as a title-page and take the fingerprint from the next recto.

3.b.2.b If in an imperfect copy the title-leaf is missing, and apparently only the title-leaf, the fingerprint is taken as usual from the first recto. However, if it appears that several leaves are missing, the first two groups of the fingerprint should be recorded as:

**** ****

3.b.3 For the 3rd group: the recto used for the third group must contain printed text, and must follow the recto used for the second group.

3.b.3.a If there is numeration in the book, whether of folio, page or column, take the recto which bears the correct number 13 or 17 in Arabic or Roman numerals (cf. II.3.c.1).

Example 1: if the numeration is 10, 11, 13, 13, with the 10 and 11 correct, only the second 13 is to be considered correct.

Example 2: if 13 is erroneously numbered 31 (or 14, etc.), the fingerprint is to be taken from 17. Equally, one would not use a 31 which had been erroneously numbered 13.

3.b.3.b If the recto numbered 13 in Arabic or Roman numeration is blank, 17 should be used; if 17 is blank, the fingerprint is taken from the recto of the fourth leaf after the one used for the second group.

3.b.3.c If the second group has been taken from 13, the third group is to be taken from 17; if the second group has been taken from 17, the third group is taken from the fourth recto following it.

3.b.3.d When a text is arranged in columns, the fingerprint is always taken from the left-hand column, even if that column is not the one numbered 13 or 17.

3.b.4 For the 4th group: if the verso of the page used for the third group is blank, the rule on books of insufficient length should be applied (III.3.a.3), and the lines on the recto immediately above those used for the third group should be used.

4. Additions to the Fingerprint

4.a The appropriate suffix (see II.4.a).

4.b The date. There are two possible methods of recording the date:-

4.b.1 the more precise is to transcribe exactly the date printed on the title-page, including month and day where present, or failing that in the colophon. The transcription should reproduce all punctuation but ignore spaces. In the case of Roman numerals, the distinction between upper- and lower-case letters should be retained.

4.b.1.a However, if a date is printed in

both large and small capitals, the small capitals should be transcribed in lower case.

4.b.1.b The reversed C used with an I (IC) or with a C and an I (CIC) to represent 500 or 1000 is transcribed S: CIO.IC.XIII is transcribed CIS.IS.XII.

4.b.2 the faster, but less discriminating, is to note the date in Arabic numerals followed by a suffix indicating its form in the book:-

A: Arabic numerals
C: Chronogram
E: First date shown in an almanac giving the date of Easter
F: French revolutionary date
G: Greek letters
H: Hebrew letters
M: Arabic letters
R: Roman numerals
T: Textual, e.g. L'an mil cinq cens
X: Arabic calendar
Y: Regnal year
Z: Hebrew calendar

4.b.3 Whichever method is used to record the date, if there is no date on the title-page or in the colophon, a date may be taken from elsewhere in the book or supplied from another source. In this case, the date should be entered in Arabic numerals followed by the letter Q, and the source of the supplied date indicated (if this seems possible and desirable) in a note (cf. II.4.e).

4.c The volume or part number when the work is in more than one volume or part separately published.

4.d The shelfmark if appropriate (cf. II.4.d).

(1) When a work is incorrectly bound, every attempt should be made to reconstitute the correct order, e.g. by examining a perfect copy or by collating by signatures. A note should be made of the anomalies of any incorrect or incomplete copy (cf. II.4.e).

(2) Where computer treatment of characters which form part of the character set is not yet possible, they should be replaced by asterisks; but it is advisable to keep records for future reference.