

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

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

I.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.

I.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.

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

I.3. [Single sheets printed on one side of the leaf are a special case. (cf. III.5).]

II. GENERAL RULES

II.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.

II.2. Choice of Lines

Begin with the last line, then the penultimate line.

II.3. Choice of Pages ⁽¹⁾

The pages to be used are:

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

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

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

II.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 Arabic numeration in the book, use Roman numeration if that is available.

Notes

II.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.

II.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.

II.3.c.2. If there is no numeration in the book, 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.

II.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).

II.4. Additions to the Fingerprint

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

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

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

II.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).

(1) See p.11

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

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

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

II.4.e. In the case of all notes required by this Manual (cf. II.3, III.2.b.5, 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 accompany the fingerprint.

III. PRACTICAL GUIDE AND SPECIFIC POINTS

III.1. Choice of symbols (2)

III.1.a. The following are to be ignored:

III.1.a.1. Spaces between letters and words;

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

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

III.1.a.4. A word or phrase placed opposite two or more lines in such a way that it is clear that it is intended to apply to the contents of all the lines concerned.

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

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

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

III.1.b.2.a. All forms of single inverted commas are transcribed: ' ; all forms of double inverted commas

are transcribed: " .

III.1.b.3. the ampersand: &

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

III.1.c. The asterisk is used to represent any symbol, including the paragraph mark and pointing hand, that does not form part of the above character set.

III.1.d. However:

III.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).

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

III.1.d.2.b. Inverted forms of the question and exclamation marks are transcribed: ? ! (cf. Appendix).

III.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.

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

III.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: q̄ is transcribed q (cf. Appendix).

III.1.d.4.b. All others are replaced by an asterisk.

III.1.d.5. The asterisk also replaces any symbol which is present but not legible.

III.1.e. 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

(2) See p.11

number of 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 ++++.

III.2. Choice of Lines

III.2.a. The following are to be ignored:

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

Note

III.2.a.1.a. If lines contain both text and ornaments, or characters used for ornamental purposes, the ornament or ornaments preceding or following the text should be replaced by a single asterisk.

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

Note

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

III.2.a.3.a. Engraved captions accompanying an illustration : only a printed caption should be used.

III.2.a.3.b. Lines consisting only of musical notation.

III.2.a.4. All marginalia, including 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

III.2.a.4.a. However, footnotes and interlinear notes are treated as text. In the same way, if the page contains commentary as well as text, the commentary is taken into consideration in recording fingerprints, and the rule on columns is followed where applicable.

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

III.2.b. Do not ignore:

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

III.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);

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

III.2.b.4. Characters raised above or dropped below the line of which they form part;

III.2.b.5. Cancels of any kind, including text which has been glued onto the page. The fact that the text concerned is on a cancel should, however, be recorded in a note.

III.2.c. Specific points

III.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.

III.2.c.2. Tables: if a table is arranged in columns which are intended to be read down the page, the rule on columns applies (cf. III.2.c.1). If the table is arranged in such a way that it is intended to be read across the page, whether it is printed in columns or not, the page is treated as a normal page. In cases of ambiguity, treat the page as a normal page.

III.2.c.3. If the whole of 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. If the page contains both text printed normally and text laid sideways on the page, the fingerprint should be taken only from the text printed normally.

III.3. Choice of pages

III.3.a. General points

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

III.3.a.2. In recording fingerprints, only pages which contain letterpress can be used. Pages which are blank, including those which contain only signatures, etc., and also pages which contain illustrations only (cf. III.2.a.2) are to be ignored: in such a case the instructions appropriate to the particular group should be followed (cf. III.3.b.1-4).

Notes

III.3.a.2.a. Pages containing only engraved text are treated as blank. If a page contains text forming part of an illustration, this text should be ignored, and if the page contains no other text it should be treated as blank.

III.3.a.2.b. Musical notation is to be ignored, but not the accompanying words, unless they are engraved

III.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.

III.3.b. Specific points

III.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.

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

III.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.

III.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: ++++ ++++

III.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.

III.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). For columns, cf. III.3.b.3.d.

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.

III.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.

III.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.

III.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.

III.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.

III.4. Additions to the Fingerprint

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

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

III.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. Where a year printed in Arabic or Roman numerals includes spaces, these should be ignored; however, normal spacing between words should be respected. In the case of Roman numerals, the distinction between upper- and lower-case letters should be retained.

III.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.

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

III.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

III.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).

III.4.c. The volume or part number when the work is in more than one volume or in parts which could have been separately published.

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

[III.5. Single sheets

This section appears in draft form in the 2nd issue of the Fingerprint Newsletter, and will be included here as soon as possible.]

Notes

(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 when input by special characters which are not included in the character set. They should, however, be noted for future reference, and the alphabet to which they belong should be specified.