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Transcription (and Tea!) at the Folger

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Keywords

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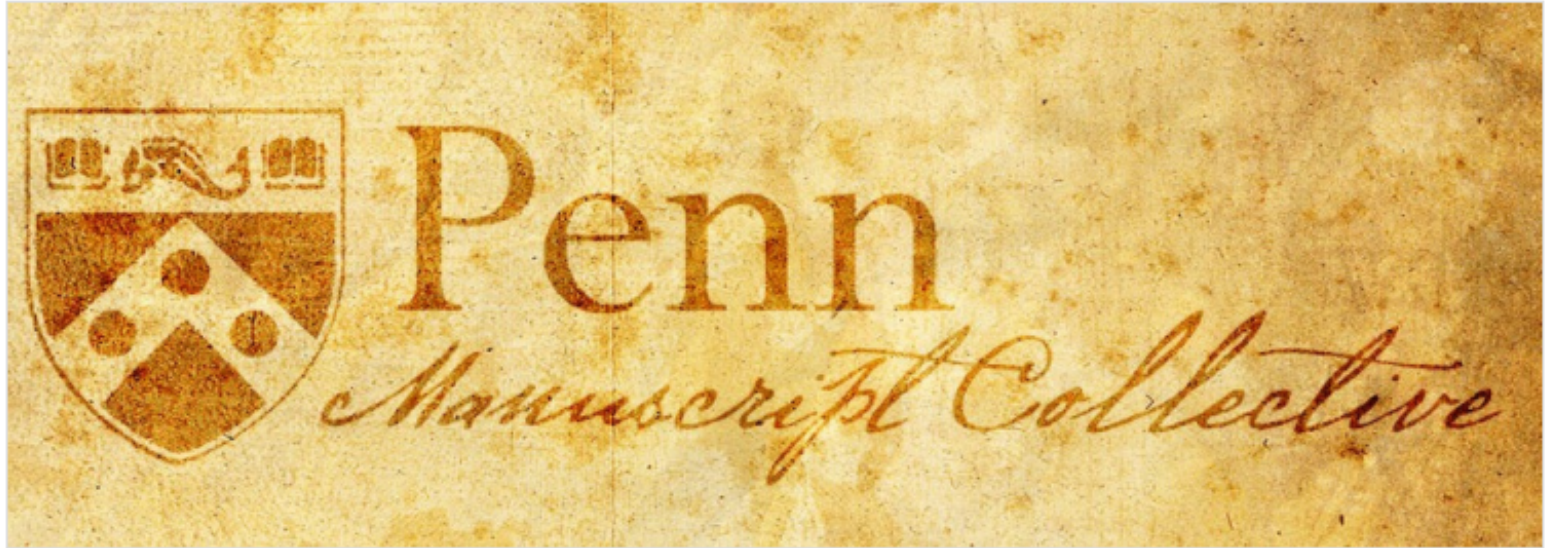
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13 Sunday Sep
2015

Transcription (and Tea!) at the Folger



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I am so excited to be back at Penn for another year of manuscript shenanigans! We are back and better than ever—our first meeting will take place Wednesday September 16 at 4 (Van Pelt 623). I am returning from an incredible summer experience interning at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. I was an intern for the EMMO project, a transcription software developed at the Folger.



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This software truly revolutionizes the field of transcription, allowing for a much

more nuanced portrayal of a text. On a Word document, we have to make all kinds of clunky approximations for structures not used in English any more, everything from thorns to "e-s graphs." EMMO gets rid of all of these distractions.

EMMO also provides a base for images of manuscripts to be stored in, allowing easy access to anyone who would want to find them, and potentially opening up scholarly research and data collection.

I was working mainly with sixteenth and seventeenth-century manuscripts (letters and other documents), often in secretary hand, which was tough but a really fun puzzle. Without close examination, secretary hand can look nothing like English at all, with all of its peculiar letter forms and nonsensical abbreviations. This year, I hope to create a lesson for the PMC to share everything I've learned about tackling this enigmatic hand. (Thankfully, reading secretary hand 7 to 8 hours a day for five weeks improved my skill set just a bit. Toward the end of the internship, my fellow interns and I were writing and dreaming in secretary hand. Still, there is so much I need to learn!)

I certainly found EMMO easy to use and would recommend it to any organization. Although EMMO is still under development at the Folger, the plan is for it to eventually be offered to universities and other academic institutions.

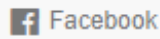
Beyond all this, the Folger is a wonderful and welcoming place, further confirming my observation that book people are the best people. We had tea every day (a Folger tradition) and went out for gelato or milkshakes quite a few times. A huge thanks to all of my bosses, Paul Dingman, Heather Wolfe and Sarah Powell, for an amazing experience.

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