Making correspondence readable in an online edition

David Denison

29 November 2017

Research IT Club

INTRO

Mary Hamilton (1756-1816)

- John Rylands Library acquired
 - 2474 items of correspondence
 - 16 autograph diaries
 - 6 manuscript volumes
- Project title, 2013-present
 - Image to Text
 - David Denison, Nuria Yáñez-Bouza
 - based on student transcriptions + student RAs



(Anson & Anson 1925: frontispiece)

Mary Hamilton (1756-1816)

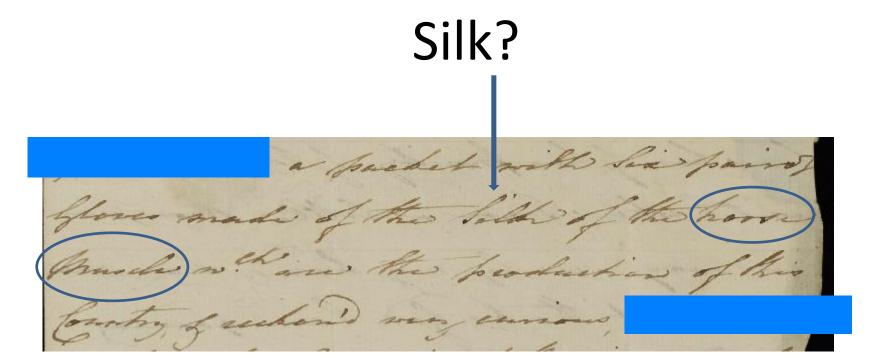
- John Rylands Library acquired
 - 2474 items of correspondence
 - 16 autograph diaries
 - 6 manuscript volumes
- Provisional title of complete edition, 2017-
 - The Mary Hamilton Papers
 - David Denison, Nuria Yáñez-Bouza,
 Sophie Coulombeau, Hannah Barker
 - and postdocs (+ student involvement)



(Anson & Anson 1925: frontispiece)

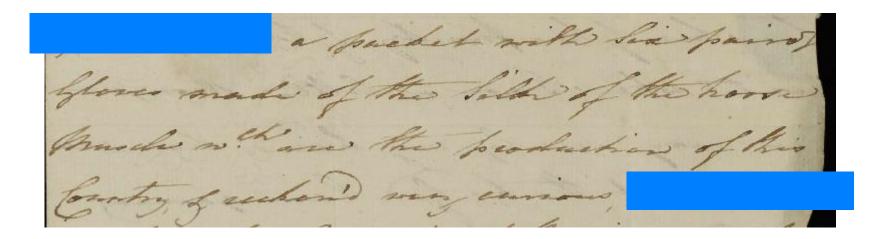
Why do it?

- Interesting, admirable, much-loved woman
- Fascinating archive
- Obsessive pleasure of deciphering text



a packet with Six pair of Gloves made of the Silk of the w^{ch}. are the production of this Country, & reckon'd very curious,

Silk?



a packet with Six pair of Gloves made of the Silk[†] of the horse mussel which are the production of this Country, & reckoned very curious,

[†] 'Sea silk' made from the secretions from Mediterranean pen shells.

Why do it?

- Interesting, admirable, much-loved woman ×
- Fascinating archive
- Obsessive pleasure of deciphering text
- Value for research linguistic, literary, historical, art-historical, ...
- More efficient and more useful as digital resource than in book form

PROJECT WEBSITE

Website 2014-

- Dept/Faculty website, maintained by DD
- Letters display programmed by George Bailey (self-taught undergrad!): XSLT, CSS, Javascript

- XSLT (+ CSS, js) tweaked by DD 2014-17 for fancier mouseover behaviour and pop-ups
- Site moved to WordPress September 2016

Website 2014-17

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton
Text | Metadata Original (image pdf)

From J Dickenson Sent to Mrs Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines wrote by your fair hand & nothing coud have pleafed me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection I ever had for him I will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chuses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he Idloes he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In cafe I shoud take it into my Head to disinherit Mr JD you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. Thif Day you have been marryed a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of runing away with the Flitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary HD affectionate for their money -- It was only yesterday I came to the knowledge of his these matters when I lost no time in sounding the Alarm. Tell M'. D that M'. Wild the agent is in advance 570£ M' Cooper of London acts for the annuiat[ants] & is sending down Executions to secure the Rents, but we shall soon let them now approve of what I wd. have had done last Year, only Mr. Wild will be It is not unlikely but General Birch may be sending your Father other world, & all I delire is that your friend may not think of revenging my

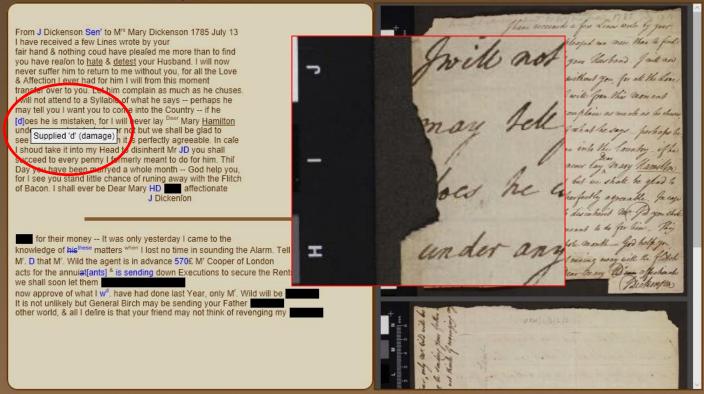
(hover over blue text for clarification)

Mouseover

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton
Text | Metadata Original (image pdf)



(hover over blue text for clarification)

Website 2017-

- Sept 2017 redesign by Jim McGrath (Research Software Engineer, IT Services)
- Letters display more readable and responsive
- 1-3 panels, depending on screen width

Website Sept 2017

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton

Text | Metadata

Diplomatic Transcription

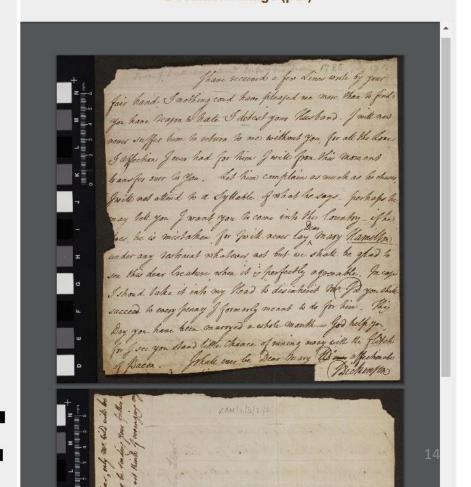
NB From J Dickenson Senf to Mrs Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines wrote by your fair hand & nothing coud have pleafed me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection I ever had for him I will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chuses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he [d]oes he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In cafe I shoud take it into my Head to disinherit Mr JD you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. Thif Day you have been marryed a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of runing away with the MBFlitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary HD J Dickenson

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NB now approve of what I w^d. have had done last Year, only M^r. Wild will be

It is not unlikely but General Birch may be sending your Father other world, & all I defire is that your friend may not think of revenging my NB

Document Image (pdf)

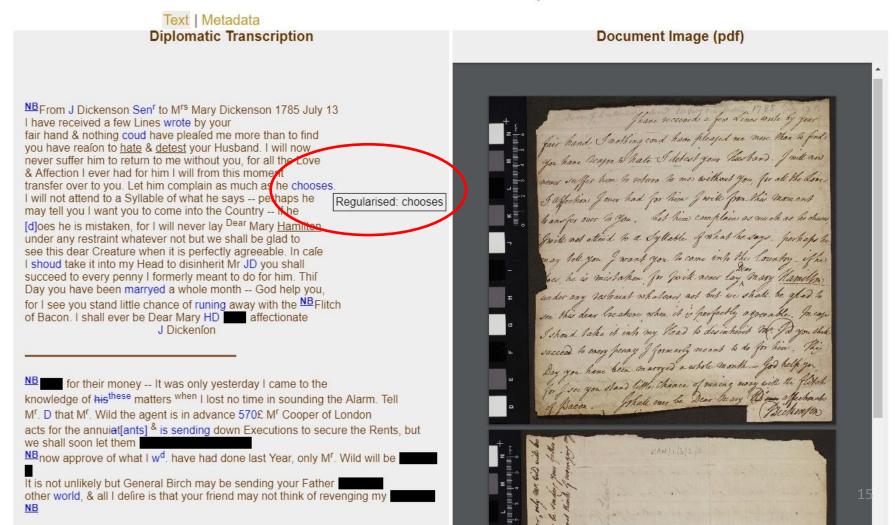


Mouseover as before

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton



Text clearer

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton

Text | Metadata

Diplomatic Transcription

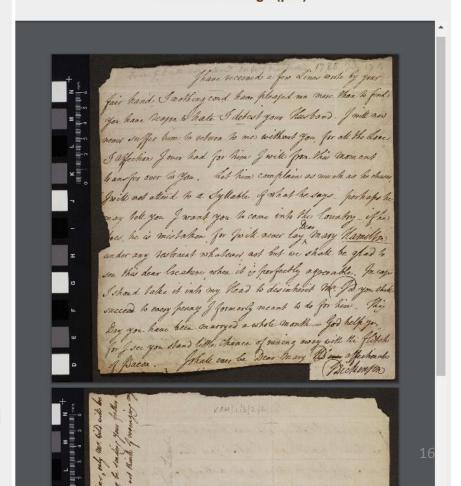
NB From J Dickenson Senf to Mrs Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines wrote by your fair hand & nothing coud have pleafed me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection Lever had for him I will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chuses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he [d]oes he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In case I shoud take it into my Head to disinherit Mr JD you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. Thif Day you have been marryed a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of runing away with the MBFlitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary HD J Dickenson

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Document Image (pdf)



Metadata

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HAM/1/3/2/2

Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton

Text | Metadata

Series title: Correspondence from John Dickenson Sr, Sarah Dickenson and

Countess Palombi (1785-1807)

Item title: Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton

Reference number: HAM/1/3/2/2

Correspondence Details

Author: John Dickenson Sr.

Addressee: Mary Hamilton

Date of the letter: 13 July 1785

Letter Content

Subject(s) covered: Letters. Great Britain--Social life and customs

Time period covered: 18th Century CE

Place(s) covered:

People covered: Hamilton, Mary (1756-1816).

Description: From John Dickenson (Hamilton's father-in-law, 1726-1810). In this light-hearted letter Dickenson writes that it is a month to the day since her marriage 'God help you', and that he now 'detests' her husband and has transferred to her all the affection he once had for him, and 'will not suffer him to return to me without you'. Dickenson continues to note that if he ever considers disinheriting his son, she will be named in his place. The text on the back of the sheet is part of a different letter and relates to rents and mentions a Mr Wild who is an agent.

Length: 1 sheet(s), 305 words

Physical description: The sheet has been cut and part of the heading of the letter

Document Image (pdf) Thave received a few Lines write by your fair hand I nothing coud have pleased no more than to find never suffer hom to return to me without you for all the Love I affection fover had for him f will from this moment for over la you. Let him complain as much as he chases under any restraint whatever not but we shall be ghed to see this dear breakers when it is perfectly agreeable, In cope

Website 2017-

- Sept 2017 redesign by Jim McGrath (Research Software Engineer, IT Services)
- Letters display more readable and responsive
- 1-3 panels, depending on screen width

- Nov 2017 Added normalised transliteration
- Fewer pop-ups, no text change on mouseover
- 1-4 panels, depending on screen width

Website Nov 2017

[x] Back to Table of Texts

HAM/1/3/2/2

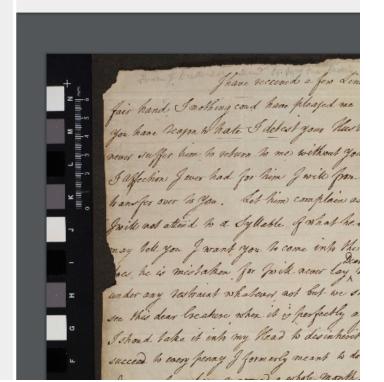
Letter from John Dickenson Senior to Mary Hamilton

diplomatic | normalised | metadata

Diplomatic Text

NB From J Dickenson Senr to Mrs Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines wrote by your fair hand & nothing coud have pleafed me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection I ever had for him I will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chuses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he [d]oes he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In cafe I shoud take it into my Head to disinherit Mr JD you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. Thif Day you have been marryed a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of runing away with the NB Flitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary HD J Dickenson

Document Image (pdf)



Desiderata

Server-side, not client-side, processing

√soon

Search engine



Better image viewer for image PDFs

× prob. not

- not, as now, dependent on browser
- contrast adjustment as well as zoom
- TIFFs direct from Preservica (Library archival software), with fancy controls

Cambridge Digital Library software?

- ?Cursor position on image selects text
 - need more mark-up, coordinates, etc.

× not worth the coding investment

CODING OF TEI/XML FILES

Text Encoding Initiative in 2013

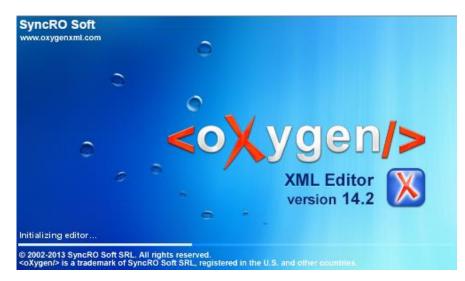
```
<fileDesc>
 <titleStmt> ...
   <title>Letter from John Dickenson to Mary Hamilton</title>
   <author>
    <name>Dickenson, John</name> ...
   </author>
 </titleStmt> ...
</fileDesc>
                [over 130 lines of header separate author and recipient]
<particDesc> ...
   <name>Hamilton, Mary</name> ...
 </particDesc>
</profileDesc>
```

TEI P5 now

```
<correspDesc>
 <correspAction type="sent">
  <persName ref="JD">Dickenson, John</persName>
  <placeName>Wellington</placeName>
  <date when="1813-08-31">31 August 1813</date>
 </correspAction>
 <correspAction type="received">
  <persName ref="MH">Hamilton, Mary</persName>
  <placeName>London</placeName>
 </correspAction>
</correspDesc> ...
```

oXygen

- Purchased 2012 for another project.
- vsn 14.2 can't validate our namespace.



Site licence essential!

INTERCHANGEABILITY OF DATA

Persons database ("personography")

- Move biographical info into master Excel file.
 - Names, title(s), life dates, place(s) of residence, relation to Mary Hamilton, ?other network relations.
 - Convert periodically to TEI file online
- Use TEI file for searches, notes, pop-ups.
- Enable search engine to distinguish
 - (i) authors, (ii) recipients,(iii) mentions in body of letter or PS,(iv) mentions in <closer>

Standard IDs for persons

- Cross-reference for external searches
- CMIF = Correspondence Metadata
 Interchange Format

http://correspsearch.net/

- prefers 'authority[-]controlled IDs'
- VIAF = Virtual International Authority File
 https://viaf.org/
 - UK national libraries go under Library of Congress

Authority record for MH

The Library of Congress >> Go to Library of Congress Online Catalog



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AUTHORITIES





LC control no.: no2008175718

LCCN Permalink: https://lccn.loc.gov/no2008175718 HEADING: Hamilton, Mary, 1756-1816

000 00809nz a2200181n 450

001 7727229

005 20081127071030.0

008 081126n acannaabn a aaa c

010 |a no2008175718

035 __ |a (OCoLC)oca07949164

040 _ |a DFo |b eng |c DFo

100 1 |a Hamilton, Mary, |d 1756-1816

400 1 |a Dickenson, Mary, |d 1756-1816

400 1 | a Dickenson, |c Mrs. |q (Mary), |d 1756-1816

400 1 |a Dickenson, John |c Mrs., |d 1756-1816

670 __ |a Autograph letter signed from Hannah More, Barley Wood, to Mrs. Garrick, Adelphi Terrace, [1816] July 29 |b (Mrs. Dickenson)

670 __ |a Oxford DNB, [via www, 2008 October 7] |b (Hamilton [married name Dickenson], Mary (1756-1816), courtier and diarist)

670 _ |a OCLC, [2008 November 25] |b (hdg: Dickenson, Mary Hamilton, 1756-1816; usage: Mary Hamilton, Mrs. John Dickenson)





Other databases?

- ELGAR, Preservica
 - coordinate with Rylands
- EMLO/Cultures of Knowledge
 - but ends at 1750
- CCEd database of clergy
 - relevant to a few personages
- other dbs/indexes/registers?
 - future Linked Data project so individual projects can share biographical data, references, searches

COVERAGE AND EDITING PRACTICE

Not just John Rylands holdings?

- Incorporate other Hamilton material in edition
 - tracking down holdings
 - getting permissions
 - costs
 - technical issues, e.g. whether we can display images stored in other repositories
- British Library, Royal Archives, Harvard, Yale, Lancashire Archives
 - NY Public Library, Vassar, Shakespeare Folger,
 Stanford, Pierpont Morgan (≤2 each)

Nature of edition

• Faithful rendition (spelling, abbreviation, etc.)

Faithful rendition of original

I supose in my next I may give you joy of a new cousin as her Graces apearance would make me supose its arrival not far off -- I have settled it to be a son there is daughters plenty and Dukes should have but few as it is so hard to provide for them. My Sister & good husband joyn with me in best wishes to yourself beging best compts to Mr. Dickenson & remain Dear Mrs. Dickensons sincere and affectionate Friend Wilhelmina Murray

at least 12 (Kisses to yr. Louisa

long-s used almost invariably in doubled letter: Kises, Business, less, passed

Nature of edition

- Faithful rendition (spelling, abbreviation, etc.)
- Where missing text beyond doubt, use <supplied> tag – but sometimes disagree on appropriateness.

Supply missing text?

who wrote to Sir J. the next day that he should not visit him any more (HAM/1/2/48) \times (note instead)

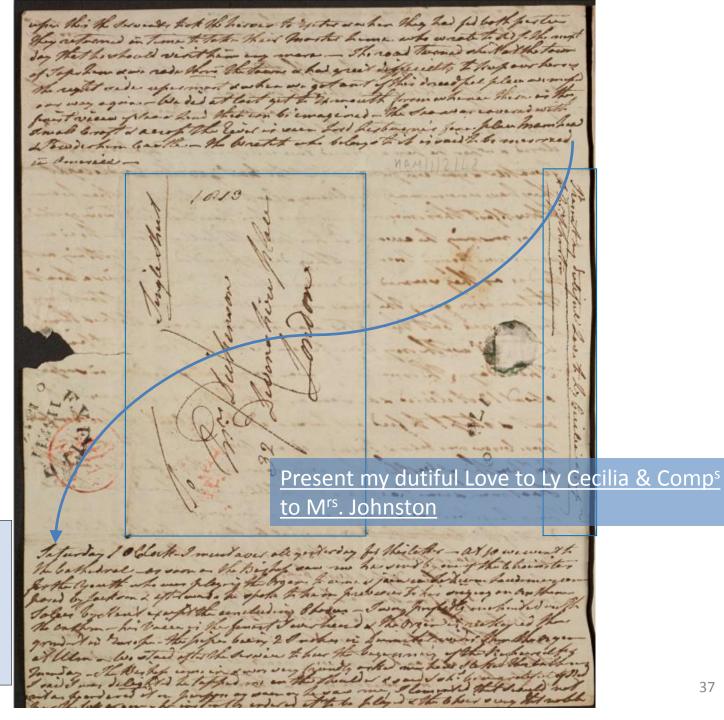
Tell my how are my dear Fat<gap> spirits \(\square \) (+note)

(HAM/1/15/1/18)

Nature of edition

- Faithful rendition (spelling, abbreviation, etc.)
- Where missing text beyond doubt, use <supplied>
 tag but sometimes disagree on appropriateness.
- Move insertions and interruptions to make text logically continuous. Consistent approach but not strictly diplomatic edition.

HAM/1/2/48 sheet 4



Single Sheet

To M^{rs}. Dickenson 32 Devonshire Place London

Nature of edition

- Faithful rendition (spelling, abbreviation, etc.)
- Where missing text beyond doubt, use <supplied>
 tag but sometimes disagree on appropriateness.
- Move insertions and interruptions to make text logically continuous. Consistent approach but not strictly diplomatic edition.
- Part-of-speech (POS) tagging works better with normalised spelling and morphology and expanded abbreviations
 - so can offer normalised text as well.

Diplomatic

From J Dickenson Sen^r to M^{rs} Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines wrote by your fair hand & nothing coud have pleafed me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection Lever had for him L will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chuses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he does he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In case I shoud take it into my Head to disinherit Mr JD you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. This Day you have been marryed a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of runing away with the Flitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary HD affectionate J Dickenson

Normalised

From John Dickenson Senior to Mrs Mary Dickenson 1785 July 13 I have received a few Lines written by your fair hand & nothing could have pleased me more than to find you have reason to hate & detest your Husband. I will now never suffer him to return to me without you, for all the Love & Affection Lever had for him L will from this moment transfer over to you. Let him complain as much as he chooses. I will not attend to a Syllable of what he says -- perhaps he may tell you I want you to come into the Country -- if he does he is mistaken, for I will never lay Dear Mary Hamilton under any restraint whatever not but we shall be glad to see this dear Creature when it is perfectly agreeable. In case I should take it into my Head to disinherit Mr John Dickenson you shall succeed to every penny I formerly meant to do for him. This Day you have been married a whole month -- God help you, for I see you stand little chance of running away with the Flitch of Bacon. I shall ever be Dear Mary Hamilton Dickenson affectionate John Dickenson

Normalisation

- Use of possessive apostrophes?
- Verb forms like attach'd?
 - so far No
- Personal names and placenames?
 - Cholmondely, Elisabeth, Octavious, Vesy, etc.
 - Surry, Harrowgate, Teingmouth, etc.
 - Brighthelmstone (= Brighton)
 - so far Yes

Just an edition?

- Would facilitate research in various fields.
 - Articles on Bluestockings, etc.
 - Postdoc project (Zurich) on self-corrections by MH
 - PhD 2018 (York, history of art), 2 chapters on MH
 - PhD planned (Vigo, English) on social network analysis and historical sociopragmatics
- Project investigators have own research concerns – linguistic, literary, historical.
- Current funding regime probably not sympathetic to "mere" resource creation.

Last slide

- Thanks as usual to Nuria Yáñez-Bouza
- Thanks to Jim McGrath (& Louise Lever) for website help
- Comments, suggestions very welcome
 - now
 - in future!

www.projects.alc.manchester.ac.uk/image-to-text/

[website address may change]