



**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

**THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM MACINTOSH**

**WORKFLOW GUIDE**

**June 2016**

**Introduction**

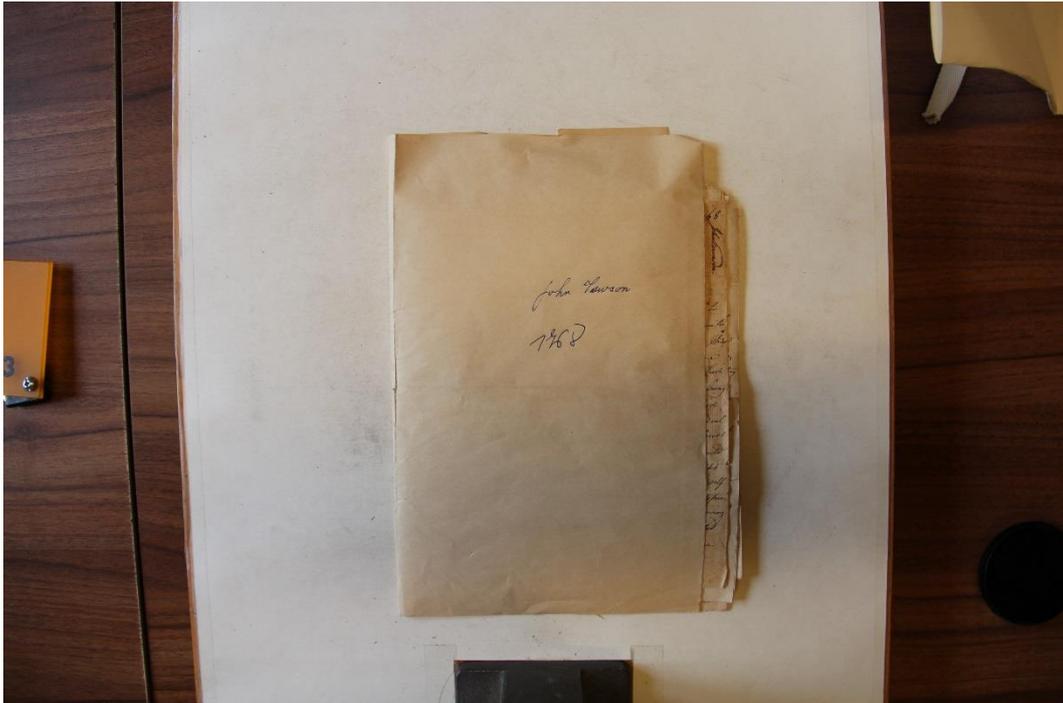
This document sets out the basic workflow process, explains where the relevant files are stored, and outlines the transcription method.

In the course of this project, we will be working with photographs of archival material that are housed in the Archives départementales de Vaucluse in Avignon. The collection is divided into parts—what are known as *titres de famille* (family titles). We will be concentrating on four parts: 83, 84, 85, and 86. An example of one of the *titres* is shown below.



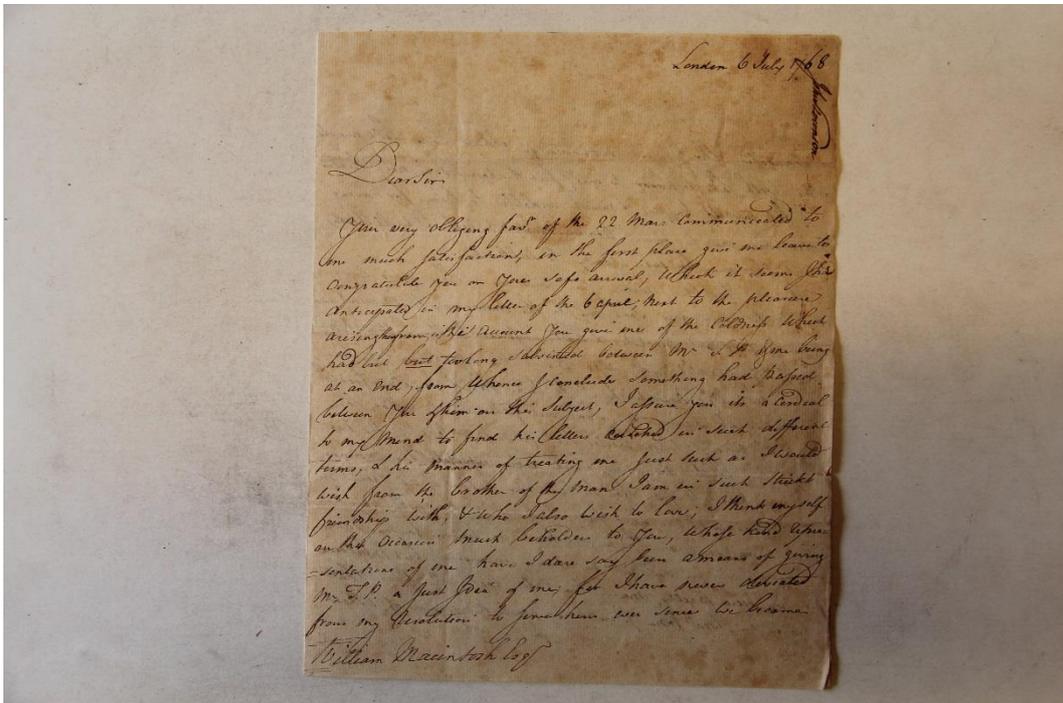
2 E Titres de famille 83

Generally speaking, each of the *titres* consists of a number of folders that bundle together related correspondence. These folders are not numbered in the archive, but for our purposes I have assigned them a sequential number. For example, the first folder in Titres de famille 83 (on which the archivist has written “John Townson / 1768”) is shown below.



1st folder in 2 E Titres de famille 83

For each folder, I have photographed, in sequence, relevant material. In this instance, the first relevant item in the 1st folder of Titres de famille 83 is a letter from John Townson to William Macintosh, dated 6 July 1768 (see below):



1st item in 1st folder in 2 E Titres de famille 83

Whilst in the archive, I began the process of transcribing these items, so you will find that there is already a preliminary transcription of some material. Before you begin the task of transcribing anything, do check my original notes from 2012 to see whether there is already a transcription.

My initial transcription of this page reads as follows:

London 6 July 1768

Dear Sir

Your very obliging fav<sup>r</sup> of the 22 Mar. communicated to me much satisfaction, in the first place give me leave to congratulate you on your safe arrival, which it seems I had anticipated in my letter of the 6 April; next to the pleasure arising therefrom, is the account you give me of the coldness which had but but too long subsisted between Mr {T. P.} & me being at an end, from whence I conclude something had passed between you & him on this subject, I assure you its [*sic*] a cordial to my mind to find his letters couched in such different terms, & his manner of treating me just such as I would wish from the brother of the man I am in such strickt [*sic*] friendship with, & who I also wish to love; I think myself on this occasion much beholden to you, whose kind representations of me have I dare say been a means of giving Mr {T. P.} a just idea of me; for I have never deviated from my resolution to serve him ever since we became

William Macintosh Esq

You will notice above that I have enclosed a couple of sections in curly brackets { }. This is to indicate that I am not completely certain of the transcription. You should use curly brackets to surround any word you are not certain about. If you are not in a position to make a guess, simply write {indecipherable} and move on. Sometimes coming back to it later will help. I have also written [*sic*] after two words: *its* and *strickt* to indicate that, despite the strange spelling, this is how those words actually appear on the page. We would, of course, expect to see *it's* and *strict*. *Sic* is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *sic erat scriptum*, which simply means “thus was it written”. We use [*sic*] to show that we have not made an error in our transcription.

### File Locations and Workflow Process

All the necessary files will be available via Dropbox. I will share the files and folders with you both, so that you can access anything you need at any time.

The basic folder structure is as follows:

Letters of William Macintosh	[the top-level project folder]
> 2 E Titres de famille 85	[the <i>trites</i> level]
> 1st Folder	[the <i>trites</i> sub-folder level]
> IMG_0001.JPG	[the individual item level]

In addition to the folders containing the photographs of archival material, you will find relevant items in a folder called “Project documents”. Here you will find, in particular, a file called **Blank Transcription Record.docx**. You will need this document every time you create a new transcription.

The top section of the document (see below) has a number of boxes to be filled in. For each transcription you create, you should record the number of the *titre* and the sub-folder you are working with. You should also enter the number of the image you are working with.

<b>THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM MACINTOSH: TRANSCRIPTION RECORD</b>					
2 E Titres de famille		Folder		IMG_	
Transcribed by			Date		
Verified by			Date		
Approved by	Innes M. Keighren		Date		

The primary transcriber should enter their name in the “Transcribed by” field and add the date on which the transcription was completed. To ensure the accuracy of the transcription, it should be verified by the other research assistant. That person should enter their name, and the date of the verification, beside the “Verified by” box. I will act as a final level of checking and will date the form in order to sign off on it.

The transcription record should be saved under a unique name, based upon the image number. So, if you were transcribing IMG\_0058.JPG in the 12th folder of Titres de famille 85, you should save the file as **Transcription of IMG\_0058.docx**. The file should be saved in the same folder as the image itself. Take care not to accidentally save the file over the blank template version. Once you have completed a transcription, you should let the other research assistant know that it is ready to be verified. Once the transcription has been verified, let me know and I will do a final check.

### **Transcription Method**

There are various different approaches to transcribing historical sources depending upon their intended purpose. Some transcriptions seek to retain as much of the layout and structure of the source as possible, and to replicate precisely capitalisation and other features. In this instance, the textual content is the most important thing. Do not worry too much, therefore, about replicating the precise layout of the source in your transcription; focus most on the words themselves.

Although none of Macintosh’s correspondents had terrible handwriting, it will take you some time to “get your eye in”. Partly this is a question of getting used to the letterforms used by particular correspondents; partly it is getting used to eighteenth-century idiom and terminology. For much of the first week, you will simply be finding your feet. You will get into the swing of things, however, in weeks two and three. You may find it easier to work together for the first few days as you get used to puzzling things out.

Almost certainly you will encounter certain words that you just cannot decipher. One solution to this is to look at the preceding and following words and try to guess what might fit logically between them. Sometimes taking a break and coming back later to the word in

question will help. If all else fails, use the curly brackets as described on page 3. With a bit of luck, the verifier or the final checker will be able to decipher the word in question.

During the process of transcription, you may get stuck over certain names (of places and people). It can often be useful at this stage to do a little bit of background research to see if you can find out who or where is being mentioned.



To research key historical figures, I would suggest looking at the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. You can access this through the Library homepage. From <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/home.aspx>, click on “E-resources A-Z”, and then on “O”. Finally click on “Oxford Dictionary of National Biography”.



The best place to look for place names that Macintosh would have known or referred to is in his book, *Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa* (1782). You can access (and search) both volumes via Google Books and/or Hathi Trust.

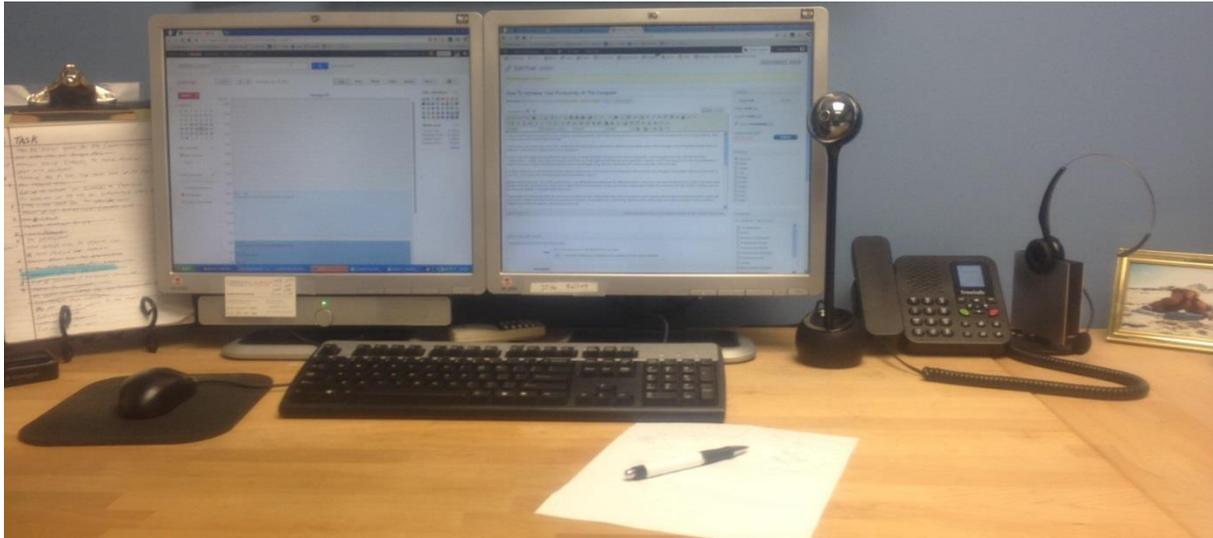
Volume 1 is available here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hw1ync>

Volume 2 is available here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hw1yo0>

Given the fact that the Google Books collection is strongest for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts, it is actually the most useful destination to research anything you might encounter in Macintosh’s letters.

### **Office Space and Technical Support**

I have requested that you both be given a desk and computer access in the department for the duration of your employment. To that end, you will be based in room Q172 (which is more or less opposite my office). The room is largely used by emeritus professors, so you will most likely have it to yourselves during much of your employment. If others are working in the space, however, do exercise courtesy and keep conversations at a reasonable volume and frequency. You will be given keys to the office. Please keep them safe and remember to lock the door when you leave the room unoccupied.



In order to make the transcription process easier, I have requested that you are each provided with two monitors. This will allow you to have the photographs open on one screen and Microsoft Word open in the other.

I hope you will find this experience interesting, notwithstanding its challenges.

IK  
16 June 2016