**Symbols used by the transcriber**

Please notice that some of these symbols may also occur in the original manuscript in a different position from that described by the transcriber below. A comment about this has been added to the descriptions.

\\                 a backward slash indicates line-break

\\\\             two backward slashes indicate that a new paragraph follows

-                  at the end of a line either to mark an empty space or to signal text structure, i.e. the end of a chunk of discourse and the beginning of the next Note: a hyphen in the manuscripts may also be used the same functions as in modern English, in compounds and to divide words not only at line-ends but, often repeatedly, at the beginning of lines (e.g., pay-\-ment)

~                 at the end of a line either to mark an empty space or to signal text structure, i.e. the end of a chunk of discourse and the beginning of the next

~                 at the end of a word indicates that the word contains a contraction but what has been contracted remains ambiguous

"                 at the end of a word indicates that there is a loop or flourish attached to the final character of a word which may be interpreted either as a stylistic feature of the script type or as suggesting a variant word-form

…_ _...        separate two words written together in the manuscript (e.g., salbe sal_ _be)

#                 in word fragments which do not allow their reading as words; the symbol indicates where the missing part is (e.g., al#, where the two initial characters could be the beginning of any number of different words)

*…%           indicate that the characters between them are contracted in the original manuscript, the contraction being usually marked by a flourish of some kind, a particular character shape (in *per% and *con%, for example), or a line above or at the end of the contracted word; in the case of s*s% to represent the character ß in the manuscript, there is only a single character between this pair of symbols

=…=           indicates that the character or characters between the symbols is in superscript in the original manuscript (e.g., kny$^t$ 'knight' is digitized as kny=t=)

=                  occurs in the manuscripts, varying with a hyphen, in the function of dividing a word between two lines, not only at line-ends but, often repeatedly, at the beginning of lines (e.g., pay=\=ment)

/                  the virgule, with varying shapes resembling a forward slash, used as a punctuation mark especially in the pre-1650 letters

| ? | indicates that the immediately preceding character is unclear, irregular, or ambiguous; there is usually a comment with an arrow following the word which suggests why the character does not allow straightforward interpretation |
|---|---|
| ?? | indicates that in the position in which the two question-marks occur a character remains illegible |
| ??? | indicates that in the position in which the three question-marks occur two or more characters remain illegible |

## Commentary

The entries comprise both word-related (with symbols such as < and =) and independent comments (with > or no symbol). These have been ordered alphabetically by the initial of the content word of a comment (e.g., by <t> in the comment {<torn}), those with freely varying content words being positioned at the beginning of the list.

| {=…} | = and a modern English equivalent follow a word which has been abbreviated by only using its initial character (e.g., L {=lordship}, M {=majesty}) WORD-RELATED |
|---|---|
| {address>} | precedes the address written on the front side of the folded letter INDEPENDENT |
| {blurred} | a word or words which are blurred because of damage by damp, for example, or pale ink, and therefore illegible INDEPENDENT |
| {<blurred} | a word or words which, because of damage by damp, for example, or pale ink are partly blurred but still legible; a character which remains ambiguous is followed by a question-mark; a character which remains illegible is replaced by two question-marks, whereas a sequence of presumably more than one character (judged by space available) is replaced by three question-marks WORD-RELATED |
| {cancellation} | indicates that part of a word, a word or words have been cancelled, so that because of being incomplete or because of thick strikethroughs or unclear correction for instance they can no longer be read. This is the case with false starts consisting of a character or two, or in cases where a character or characters have been crossed out as a correction, for instance INDEPENDENT |

{centred>}   the text is positioned in the middle of a line or indented from the left and right, or, as is often the case with letter-closing formulae and the signature particularly in post-1600 letters, aligned to fit the right margin INDEPENDENT

| {<compressed} | refers to a sequence of characters which, assessed by both shape and size, are smaller than the realisations of the same characters in the letter or elsewhere in the same writer's hand WORD-RELATED |
|---|---|

{<corrected}

the comment provides a reason for the question-mark or question-marks in the preceding word, which signal ambiguity WORD-RELATED

{damaged} a word or words which are damaged, so that they remain illegible INDEPENDENT

{<damaged}

 a word or words which are damaged but still partly legible; a character which remains ambiguous is followed by a question-mark; a character which remains illegible is replaced by two question-marks, whereas a sequence of presumably more than one character (judged by space available) is replaced by three question-marks WORD-RELATED

{del} … {del}

 a deleted word or words; when a correction follows a deleted item or items, this is usually provided by inserting an item; this results in the sequence: {del} I {del} {ins} we {ins} WORD-RELATED

{direction changes>}

 the direction of writing changes as compared with the preceding text INDEPENDENT

{f1r} folio 1 the right side or the first page INDEPENDENT
{f1v} folio 1 the left side or the reverse side INDEPENDENT

{hand1>} … {<hand 1} indicate the beginning and the end of autograph text in a letter written in two differcent hands WORD-RELATED

{hand2>} … {<hand 2} indicate the beginning and the end of non-autograph text in a letter written in two differcent hands WORD-RELATED

{in margin>} the text continues in margin INDEPENDENT

{ins} … {ins} an inserted word or words; ; when a correction follows a deleted item or items, this is usually provided by inserting an item; this results in the sequence: {del} I {del} {ins} we {ins} WORD-RELATED

{ins}…(ins} {<in margin} there is an insertion (e.g., a word or words) in margin WORD-RELATED

{left indenture>} the text is indented from the left margin INDEPENDENT

{<or <…>} suggests an alternative reading where a particular character is ambiguous (e.g., sa?me {<or <o>}) WORD-RELATED

{outdented to the left>} the beginning of the line has been positioned in the left margin, i.e., outside the position of the body of the letter INDEPENDENT

{<reduced} refers to a sequence of characters whose shape is reduced to a curve or even a straight line; these reduced shapes are especially frequent in

inflectional morphemes, such as *-ing* in the progressive, at line-ends and lexical morphemes, such as variants of *-tion*/*-sion* WORD-RELATED

{space}          there is a (horizontal) space in the text which is clearly wider than that between words INDEPENDENT

{a space vertically}      there is a vertical space between lines which is clearly one line wider than that between lines INDEPENDENT

{torn}          a word or words which are damaged, so that they remain illegible INDEPENDENT

{<torn}         a word or words which are partly torn but still, at least partly, legible; a character which remains ambiguous is followed by a question-mark; a character which remains illegible is replaced by two question-marks, whereas a sequence of presumably more than one character (judged by space available) is replaced by three question-marks WORD-RELATED

{<an unclear correction}

the comment provides a reason for the word preceding the comment remaining ambiguous, this ambiguity being marked by a question-mark or question-marks WORD-RELATED

{a wide space vertically}   there is a vertical space between lines which is clearly wider than two lines INDEPENDENT

{<with …}        a particular character has a feature which is otherwise absent in contemporary script (e.g., a dot above <I> in the first-person subject pronoun is pointed out by adding the comment {<with a dot} WORD-RELATED

{<without a horizontal stroke}

<t> is written without a horizontal stroke, the comment pointing out that, in the case of that particular word, this practice may make the reading ambiguous WORD-RELATED