

Dear Students:

Welcome to our transcribathon! This will be a challenge, but it should provide a wonderful opportunity for perseverance and conquest. It is also one of the longest-lasting activities you may undertake at college: while many of your other assignments will disappear later, the pages you transcribe today may be read and studied by scholars for years—even decades—to come.

If you join my open transcribathon session on April 10th, I will walk you through the following steps in person as often as needed, but if you are attempting this from home in order to earn extra credit, I hope that you will find these directions as easy to follow as possible.

## CONTEXT

This transcribathon is being sponsored by a group called the Early Modern Poetry Online Project (EMPOP) for short. Members of this group teach and study in universities around the world, and our transcribathon will also be an international event. (Our 2018 transcribathon included participants from the British Isles, Italy, and schools and libraries in North America). You can learn more about EMPOP at <https://empop.hypotheses.org/> or on Twitter @EMPOPstars. On the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of April, some transcribathon participants will be tweeting with the tag #EMPOPstars.

This semester, most participants will be transcribing pages from a miscellany assembled in the early 1600s. Some people think parts of it were written by a poet called Robert Herrick (you can see some of his poems online here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-herrick#tab-poems>),. The volume includes poems, letters, and transcripts of legal documents, and it seems to have been compiled by many differing contributors, as the inscriptions are in a lot of differing hands.

The Harry Ransom Center, a scholarly library located in Austin, Texas, bought this manuscript in 1964. They have a lot of manuscripts, named by era and accession, so this one is referred to as Medieval and Early Manuscripts 79.

## PROCESS

I. The first thing you should do is look at all the images of HRC Medieval and Early Manuscripts 79 on the Ransom Center webpage. <https://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/pubmnem/details.cfm?id=79> (If you click the image on the page, you will be able to see a PDF of the whole document). Alternately, you can look at my “HRC hands” handout.

Find two or three page spreads that look interesting and legible, and note their page numbers.

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II. When you have found pages that look interesting and legible, go to our transcription page: <https://transcribe.folger.edu/>

You’ll need to enter your name. (If you hope to receive class credit, please enter your real name).



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <https://transcribe.folger.edu>. The main content area has a light green background. At the top, there is a banner for the Folger Shakespeare Library with the text "Folger SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY Advancing knowledge & the arts". Below this is the EMPOP logo, which consists of the letters "emmo" in a stylized font with a compass rose in the background. Underneath the logo, it says "EARLY MODERN MANUSCRIPTS ONLINE". At the bottom of the page, there is a form with the label "Enter your full name:" followed by a text input field containing "WilliamShakespeare" and a "Submit" button. A red arrow points to the input field.

III. After entering your name, scroll down and select “EMPOP.”



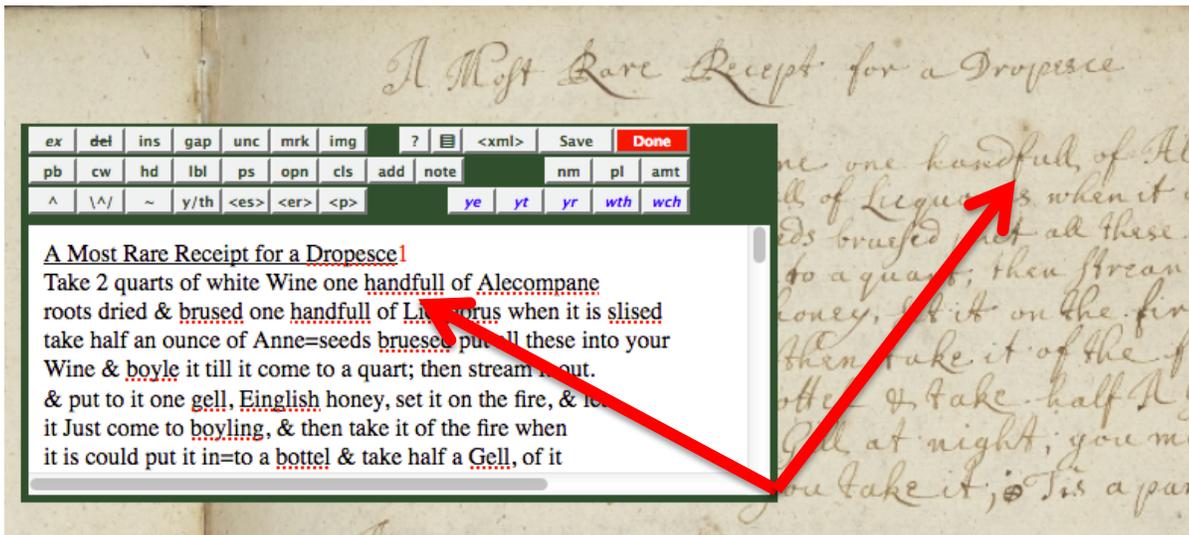
IV. Once you have found the list of pages, look to see how many people have started (and completed) pages you liked. Choose the page that the fewest people have started. (Note that once you have begun a page, it belongs to you forever!) Click on it.

Note: there are two manuscripts on the page; **HRC Medieval and Early Manuscripts 79 is at the top.** You can try the other manuscript if you would like, but it is harder!

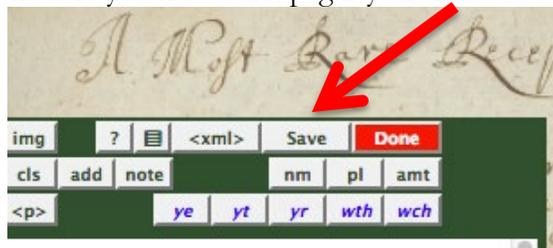
V. When you have chosen your page, start to type the letters and words from your chosen page(s) into the floating box. **Click the “Save” button every line or every few minutes.**

It is important to type exactly the letters that you see. If a word is misspelled, don’t correct it.

(Here’s part of a page I transcribed for a transcribathon last month. See how I have typed “handfull” the way Jane Dawson did, even though it’s no longer the recommended spelling for that word.)



If you need to stop mid-transcription, you can click “Save” and then come back to your transcription, even if it is on another computer. Make sure you note what pages you chose!



Your login is case sensitive, so if you can’t find your transcription when you log back in, try capitalizing (or uncapitalizing) your name.

**VI.** If you have trouble figuring out a word, you can look for the same page on Luna, which lets you zoom in much more closely. You can also look at the alphabet of letters that the main V.a.339 scribe used. I find it useful to look for other instances of the same shape on a page. If you can find a matching shape in another word and figure out that word from context and the other letters, you may be able to make a much better guess about the puzzling shape.

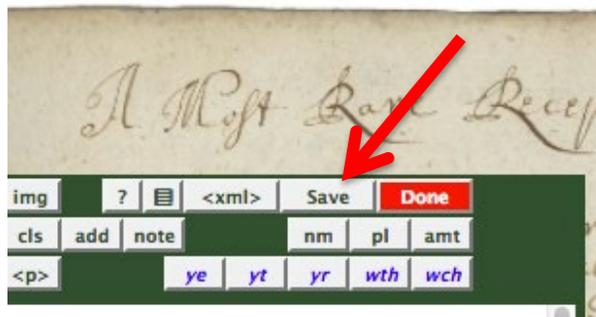
If you are working at a site with an instructor, don't be afraid to ask for help! We will often be able to put difficult images on a projector so you can see more closely, and also to answer questions or give suggestions.

Many people around the world will be working on this transcribathon, so please also feel free to share your discoveries and hard work on social media. The Early Modern Poetry Online Project (EMPOP), which is organizing the transcribathon, has designated the hashtag #EMPOPstars for this event, so please do feel free to share, ask for help, or make suggestions for other students along the way!

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**VII.** When you are finished, you can use some of the other buttons to indicate titles, labels, abbreviations, and the author (if noted). Don't worry if these are hard: getting the transcription right is the most important part. If you are struggling with labels, you can ask me, but you may skip this step if it is too daunting.

When you are happy with what you have done, click "Done" to save it.



(If you realize you have made a mistake, you can re-enter the document and correct it, then click "Save" and "Done" again).

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**IX.** If you are transcribing for Dr. Acker and want credit for this activity, please copy and paste your whole transcription into a Word document when you are finished for the day.

Label each block of text with the appropriate page number.

**Save the file and upload it to the indicated spot on our course website.**

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If my directions are confusing in any part, you can look at the streamlined directions on the EMPOP website: <https://empop.hypotheses.org/transcribathon>