

# Transcription of Characters

Another major challenge involved in reading old Portuguese writing is correctly transcribing the letters and numbers in the original text to a more familiar style.

Since every scribe developed his own style of handwriting, you will have to acquaint yourself with the style of the scribe each time you study a new document. This becomes easier with experience.

The following three practice texts will give you some experience with this skill. After each text and before the transcription is a blank section that you should use for your transcription of the text. As you work through this section, follow these steps:

1. Read through the entire document.

2. Transcribe those letters and words that are easy for you, leaving blanks where you have difficulty.
3. Compare the letters or words that are easy for you with the rest of the text to find other letters or words that are the same.
4. Read the analysis included after the transcription.
5. After reading the analysis, try one more time to complete the transcription on your own.
6. Finally, compare your transcription to the transcription that is provided and make certain that you understand any differences between the two.

## Practice Text 7

Practice text 7 was taken from the last page (un-numbered) of the first book of the parish register of baptisms of the Se Parish, Macao (the Portuguese

possession on the coast of China). This book is on microfilm at the Genealogical Department Library, film number 1,110,191, item 1.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Nos dezasseis dias do mes de Setembro  
do mil e oitocentos e noventa e seis annos  
em Macau, em cumprimento da V. Ordem  
do Excmo. Sr. D. N. Vigario Geral, Encarregado  
do governo da Diocese, mandamos e subscrivimos  
este livro-livro sobre o lançamento e termo de  
baptismo da freguesia de St. Paul, qual contém  
quarenta e duas folhas, todas subscritas e com o meu  
nome = P. Luis de Almeida em fe. do qual fiz  
este termo e me assignei.

P. Luis de Almeida  
Priei

WRITE YOUR TRANSCRIPTION HERE:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSCRIPTION OF PRACTICE TEXT 7

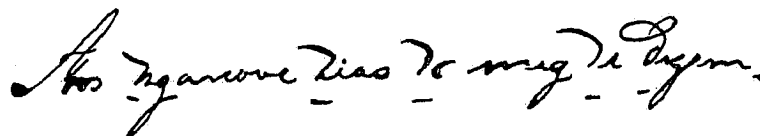
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Aos dezanove dias do mez de dezem-                | 7. baptismo da freguezia da Se, o qual contem      |
| 2. bro de mil oito centos noventa e seis annos       | 8. quarenta folhas, todas rubricadas com o meu     |
| 3. em Macau, em cumprimento da V. Ordem              | 9. nome=P <sup>o</sup> Guilherme: em fé do que fiz |
| 4. do Exmo. e Rmo: Sr. Vigario Geral,<br>Encarregado | 10. este termo e me assignei                       |
| 5. do governo da Diocese, numerei e rubrique es-     | 11. P <sup>o</sup> Guilherme F. da Silva           |
| 6. te livro para nelle se lançarem os termos de      | 12. Secr:  |

## ANALYSIS OF PRACTICE TEXT 7

### The Letters

The biggest problem in transcribing text 7, as with most older documents, is becoming familiar with the scribe's style of writing. The letters are generally well formed, but there are several that could cause

problems, especially for the beginner. For instance, the letter *d* appears often in the text and could cause difficulty if not properly identified. Line 1 from text 7 contains five *d*'s:



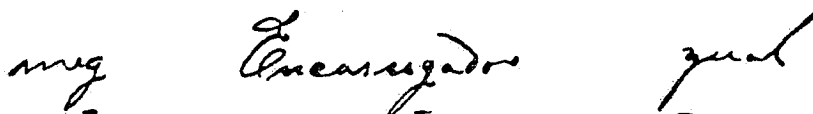
All but the last *d* are made in the same manner. The last is similar to the capital *D* as it appears in line 5:



Months of the year are not capitalized in Portuguese, so *dezembro* should be spelled with a small *d*. However, capital letters were used randomly in most old Portuguese documents, and you will encounter this problem often.

difference in the scribe's style of writing to tell them apart if you study them closely. Study the following words: (1) *mez* from line 1, (2) *Encarregado* from line 4, and (3) *qual* from line 7. Note the difference between the letters *z*, *g*, and *q*:

The letters *z*, *g*, and *q* are all similar enough to cause problems; nevertheless, there is enough



The scribe's manner of making the letter *c*, as seen in the word *cumprimento*, line 3, is interesting and

might cause you difficulty. But once you become familiar with it, it offers no problems.



The double *s* as seen in the word *assignei*, line 10, is very common to older records. Study the method used in writing this combination:

The scribe's *f* as in the word *fé*, line 9, might also cause problems, but is very simple once you become familiar with it.



One of the most difficult aspects of this scribe's style is that his *u*'s, *o*'s, *e*'s, and *i*'s are so close and small that it is often difficult to tell them apart. This

is also true of the *m*'s, *n*'s, *u*'s and *v*'s. Familiarity with the words is often the only way to solve this type of problem.

### Terms

There are two terms in this text that might be difficult. The word *termo* in lines 6 and 10 means "text" or "entry." The verb *rubricar*, which is used in lines

5 and 8, means "to mark with one's initials, signature, or seal."

### Spelling

Several words found in the sample text are spelled differently today. In line 1, the word *dezanove* is spelled with an *a* after the *z* instead of an *e*, and *mez* is spelled with a *z* (this is common). The word *annos*, line 2, is spelled with a double *nn*. The word *nelle*,

line 6, is spelled with a double *ll*. In line 7, *freguezia* is spelled with a *z* instead of an *s*; and *baptismo* is spelled with a *p*, which would be correct even today in Portugal, but not in Brazil. The word *assignei*, line 10, is spelled with a *g* after the first *i*.

Handwritten examples of words from the text: *dez-an-ove*, *mez*, *annos*, *nelle*, *freguezia*, *baptismo*, *assignei*.

### Joining Words

The scribe generally separated and joined words in the proper places. In the following instances, however, the words are close enough to cause problems:

2. *baptismo da*, line 7
3. *o qual*, line 7

1. *governo da*, line 5

Handwritten examples of joined words: *governo da*, *baptismo da*, *o qual*.

### Abbreviations

The few abbreviations in this text are simple ones. They are as follows:

1. *V.* in line 3 could be an abbreviation for either *Vossa* or *Veneravel*. In this case *Veneravel* seems to fit better.

Handwritten abbreviation *V.*

2. *Exmo.* in line 4 is an abbreviation for *Excelentissimo*.

Handwritten abbreviation *Exmo.*

3. *Rmo.* in line 4 is an abbreviation for *Reverendissimo*.

Handwritten abbreviation *Rmo.*

4. *Sr.*, also in line 4, is an abbreviation for *senhor*.

Handwritten abbreviation *Sr.*

5. *P<sup>e</sup>*, used in the scribe's signature in line 11, is an abbreviation for *padre*.

Handwritten abbreviation *P.*

6. *F.*, also in the scribe's signature in line 11, might be an abbreviation for almost any personal name beginning with *F*.

Handwritten abbreviation *F.*

7. *Secr.*, line 12, is an abbreviation for *secretário*.

Handwritten abbreviation *Secr.*

Practice Text 8

Practice text 8 was taken from page 39, item 3, film number 574,891. This film contains the parish records from the Immaculada Conceição parish, New

Bedford, Massachusetts, U.S.A. The film is available at the Genealogical Department Library.

1. A 27 de Novembro de 1897 baptizei Alberta  
 2. que nasceu a 15 de Novembro de 1897, filha de  
 3. Manoel Jacintho Carvalho, natural de S. Vicente  
 4. S. Miguel, e de Maria Mathias, de Santo Christino  
 5. Patate Quebec, Canada. Foi padrinho Manoel Lu-  
 6. isa Sarette e, madrinha Maria Maria dos Reis  
 7. A. C. Vieira

8. A 27 de Novembro de 1897 baptizei Helena, que  
 9. nasceu a 2 de Novembro de 1897, filha de  
 10. Jose Miguel, natural de S. Miguel, e de Fran-  
 11. cisca Miguel Jackson, natural d'esta cidade  
 12. de New Bedford, Mass. Foi padrinho Antonio Sim-  
 13. on e, madrinha Helena Parker.  
 14. A. C. Vieira

WRITE YOUR TRANSCRIPTION HERE:

1. _____	8. _____
2. _____	9. _____
3. _____	10. _____
4. _____	11. _____
5. _____	12. _____
6. _____	13. _____
7. _____	14. _____

TRANSCRIPTION OF PRACTICE TEXT 8

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. A 27 de Novembro de 1897 baptizei Albertina         | 8. A 27 de Novembro de 1897 baptizei Helena, que    |
| 2. que nasceu a 15 de Novembro de 1897, filha de       | 9. nasceu a 2 de Novembro de 1897, filha de         |
| 3. Manuel Jacintho Carvalho, natural de S. Vicente     | 10. Jose Miguel, natural de S. Miguel, e de Fran-   |
| 4. S. Miguel, e de Maria Williams, de Santa Christine, | 11. cisca Miguel Jackson, natural d'esta cidade     |
| 5. Petite Quebec, Canada. Foi padrinho Manuel Mu-      | 12. de New Bedford, Mass. Foi padrinho Antonio Tim- |
| 6. niz Nazareth e madrinha Maria Muniz dos Anjos       | 13. on e madrinha Helena Parker.                    |
| 7. A.C. Vieira   | 14. A.C. Vieira                                     |

ANALYSIS OF PRACTICE TEXT 8

The Letters

As with text 7, the biggest difficulty in understanding text 8 is becoming familiar with the scribe's style of writing.

*baptizei Nazareth Muniz baptizei*

In each of these examples the letter z is formed basically the same way, but it could be confused with an r or even an s.

*A Albertina Ajiz A Antonio*

The small a is also difficult where it is used alone in lines 2 and 9:

*a a*

The capital T in line 12 can be difficult until you compare it with the capital F in the words Foi, lines 5 and 12, and Francisca, lines 10 and 11. Study these

*Fion on Foi Fran-cisca*

The letter z offers some difficulty, as can be seen in the following examples from lines 1, 6, and 8:

The capital A could also cause some problems, as seen in the following examples from lines 1, 6, 7, and 12:

examples and note the similarity of the two letters. They are identical except that the F is crossed and the T is not.

Terms

All of the terms used in this entry are very basic and should offer no problems. The place-names are

also quite simple even though they identify cities in two different countries.

### Spelling

*Baptizei*, lines 1 and 8, is spelled with a *p*, and the letter *z* is used instead of *s*. Neither of these changes makes the word difficult to identify. The *h* in *Jacinto*, line 3, does not occur in the word today.

The names *Williams*, line 4, and *Jackson*, line 11, are foreign and use the letters *W* and *k*, which are not part of the Portuguese alphabet.

*baptizei*      *Jacinto*      *Williams*      *Jackson*

### Separating Words

The scribe generally separated and joined his words properly.

### Abbreviations

The only abbreviations in text 8 are: *S.*, line 10, an abbreviation for *São*; *Mass.*, line 12, an abbreviation

for Massachusetts; and *A.C.*, line 14, an abbreviation of the scribe's name.

*S.*      *Mass.*      *A.C.*

TRANSCRIPTION OF PRACTICE TEXT 9

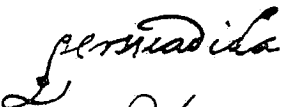





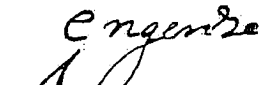
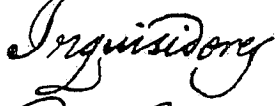

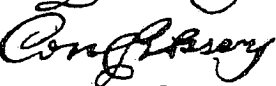




- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Acordão os Inquisidores, Ordinario, e Deputados da | 10. ta Madre Igreja de Roma, ella o fez               |
| 2. Santa Inquisição, que vistos estes autos, Culpas,  | 11. pello Contrario, e de Certo tempo a esta          |
| 3. e Confissoens de Izabel de Mesquita, chris-        | 12. parte persuadida Com o ensino, e falsa dou-       |
| 4. tan nova, Cazada Com Joseph Ramires, que           | 13. trina de Certa pessoa de sua nascão Se apartou    |
| 5. tem parte em hum engenho, natural, e mo-           | 14. de nossa Santa Fe Catholica, e passou á Crenca da |
| 6. radora no Rio de Janeiro, Re preza que             | 15. Lei de Moyzes, tendo a ainda agora por boa,       |
| 7. presente está. Porque se mostra, que Sen-          | 16. e verdadeira, esperando Salvarce nella.           |
| 8. do christan baptizada, obrigada a ter, e           | 17. E não Cria no Misterio da San-                    |
| 9. Crer tudo o que tem, Cre, e ensina a San-          | 18. tissima Trindade, nem em Christo Senhor nosso,    |

ANALYSIS OF PRACTICE TEXT 9

The Letters

Many of the letters in practice text 9 would be difficult for even an experienced researcher. Following is a list of some of those letters or combinations of letters, an example of a word they appear in, and

the line that the example is taken from. Check your transcription to see if you were able to correctly decipher these letters.




d		persuadida	line 12	q		que	line 4
f		falsa	line 12	R		Rio	line 6
h		hum	line 5	s		sua	line 13
h		engenho	line 5	s		Inquisidores	line 1
j		Igreja	line 10	ss		confissoens	line 3
o		obrigada	line 8	st		estes	line 2
p		preza	line 6	t		parte	line 5



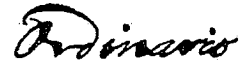



Terms

Since this text is a court record and an inquisition record, it contains some words that are unique to

these two types of records. These terms and their definitions follow:




	Acordão, line 1	sentence or judgment
	christan nova, lines 3 and 4	a name given to all non-Catholics, particularly Jews, who were baptized into the Catholic church
	engenho, line 5	mill, as in sawmill or sugarmill

	Inquisidores, line 1	inquisitor—the judge
	Lei de Moyzes, line 15	Law of Moses—a reference to the religion of the Jews
	ordinário, line 1	a high church official
	Re, line 6	female defendant or criminal

Spelling

Many of the words in text 9 that are spelled differently than they are today are similar to words that have already been discussed. The following are samples of differences not yet discussed: (1) *Confissoens* in line 3 is spelled with an n after the e. This is common in the plural forms of words ending with

*sao*. Today such words are spelled without the n. (2) *Christan nova* in lines 3 and 4 is also spelled with a final n, which is dropped in current Portuguese. (3) *Salvarce* in line 16 is spelled with a final ce. In current Portuguese it would be spelled with an se following a hyphen: *salvar-se*.

### Separating and Joining Words

Several words in text 9 are incorrectly separated or joined. Each of these is shown below with the

number of the line it appears in and the correct transcription.

	lines 5 and 6	e moradora
	line 8	a ter
	line 9	o que
	lines 9 and 10	ensina a Santa
	line 11	a esta
	line 12	o ensino
	line 13	Certa pessoa
	line 13	de sua
	line 13	Se apartou
	line 14	e passou á Crencia
	line 15	tendo a ainda agora por boa

### Abbreviations

There are no abbreviations in text 9.