

**Deciphering Secrets:
Unlocking the Manuscripts of Medieval Burgos (Spain)**

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)



**Advanced Paleography Homework V.1.
15th Century Sample - ACB Registro 6, Folio 83r**

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1 July 2016



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This project has received funding from the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n° 600371, el Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (COFUND2013-51509) and Banco Santander.

Homework Overview

During this homework assignment, you will practice using SILReST – our six strategies for decoding medieval manuscripts. We will systematically guide you through these six strategies using a manuscript page from the Archivo de la Catedral de Burgos (Registro 6, Folio 83r).

This assignment does not include an answer key. This is a fresh opportunity to struggle through a new transcription. You should share notes and comments on edX.org’s discussion forum to solicit help from your classmates. Paleography often requires consultations with other persons.

SILReST Overview

The six strategies are:

S. Strategy #1 - Scan the entire document before attempting to transcribe it. It is important for you to become familiar with how the scribe writes. Repeatedly scanning a document will help your eyes to become accustomed to the “hand” of the scribe.

I. Strategy #2 - Identify those letters, abbreviations, and numbers that you can immediately recognize. This is very straightforward, but it is the beginning of finding your way into the document. Finding easy-to-recognize letters will help appreciate how much you can already see and it will spur you along to uncover other letters and words.

L. Strategy #3 - Locate common words to (a) understand how the scribe connects their letters together and (b) recognize other alphabetical letters and numbers. This strategy helps you identify letters that are hard to recognize. If you see a common word, and you are flexible in terms of how it might be spelled, then you see many curious spellings of words you know. More importantly, you can find new letters using this strategy.

R. Strategy #4 - Recognize the abbreviations used in the document and if they vary within the document. Finding and marking your abbreviations makes your task easier because it reminds you some words on the page are not complete words at all. Rather, they are almost nonsensical connections of letters. Find the abbreviations so that your eyes and mind do not attempt to create words that do not exist on the page.

S. Strategy #5 - Search for English-Spanish cognates (those words that share similar meanings and spellings in English and Spanish) to identify more letters and connections. Cognates are helpful because you can work “backwards” into reading letters on the page. For example, if you know the word might be “jurisdiction” in English and therefore is “jurisdicion” in Spanish, then you can begin to identify hard to read letters within the word on the page.

T. Strategy #6 - Type or write your transcription and leave plenty of room to add edits. Creating a transcript will help you fill in the blanks as you work through those last, hard to read letters and words.

Task 1: Use Strategy #1 - Scan the entire document before attempting to transcribe it.

Time to spend on this task: 10 to 20 minutes.

There are no shortcuts to this process. It is essential that you grant your eyes and mind sufficient time to review the document. (See the next page for a photograph of the entire page.)

Before you start to recognize letters and numerals, you need time for your unconscious mind to start its own work of picking up patterns, forms, and structures within the writing. Yes, this is an unconscious process where it will seem like you are not doing anything at all. In fact, it will seem like you are wasting your time. You are not; I assure you.

The process is very similar to watching ocean waves rolling into shore. Or watching clouds in the sky. Or movements of a honey bee as it visits individual flowers. There are natural patterns and rhythms at work in the world – and in human actions. The longer you observe, the more apparent these patterns will appear. Let your unconscious begin this process now.

How do I do this?

Task 1, Step A

- Take your time. Just let your eyes glide over each line of text (moving from left to right).
- Please try not to read the text. We just want to acclimate our eyes and mind to the markings on the page.
- After viewing 4 or 5 lines. Please stop. Look up. Rest your eyes and mind for 10 seconds.
- Then continue with another 4 or 5 lines and repeat the process until you are finished with the entire page.
- Please do not rush this activity.

Task 1, Step B

- Guess what? I would like you to do this one more time! Please.
- Review each line of text again. Use the same process.
- At some point of the first or second viewing of the document, your conscious mind will start listening to your unconscious mind's chatter. What will it say? Most likely, you will start to see shapes transform in front of your eyes. They will no longer be circles, lines, scratches, and curves – but alphabetical letters.
- When you have noticed at least two or three alphabet letters or “letter-like” symbols on the page, you are ready to move on to Task 2.

18a

Este dia el dho q̄ f̄r̄s v̄n̄r̄ andejno por su p̄s̄a a jūo n̄d
v̄o de f̄r̄s v̄n̄r̄ en p̄s̄e oūn̄s a p̄re oūn̄s
7 años q̄ d̄ma ap̄o p̄n̄s̄o r̄l̄go q̄ f̄r̄ de dho lugar p̄
p̄m̄on q̄ p̄clat̄ aya ap̄ndad̄ el dho jūo n̄d el dho p̄
f̄r̄ a q̄ta v̄n̄r̄ aya p̄n̄s̄a / mand̄le q̄ p̄n̄s̄e las d̄
d̄as p̄re oūn̄s a p̄re oūn̄s de v̄y en nueue dias d̄
p̄ p̄n̄s̄o a am̄os p̄n̄s̄o v̄o de dho lugar m̄br̄n̄s̄o
de dho p̄ p̄n̄s̄o p̄ complir su aya

to jūo n̄d de p̄n̄s̄o q̄ jūo p̄re de ar̄to v̄o de b̄gos a jūo f̄r̄s
de p̄n̄s̄o r̄l̄go de p̄n̄s̄o ḡn̄da de b̄gos

Venero xx de mayo año 11 un 1000

Este dia firmad̄ p̄d̄ȳs r̄l̄go v̄o de b̄gos f̄r̄s al h̄n̄a
ad̄ firmad̄ l̄p̄s̄ de p̄n̄s̄o v̄n̄r̄ f̄r̄s a d̄ aya f̄r̄s
af̄ aya f̄r̄s a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o de jūo p̄re de ḡn̄da p̄n̄s̄o el dho l̄p̄s̄
r̄l̄go aya f̄r̄s p̄n̄s̄o de p̄n̄s̄o d̄ p̄n̄s̄o f̄r̄s a lo r̄
ya p̄re p̄ f̄r̄s de dho jūo p̄re de l̄p̄s̄ de dho l̄p̄s̄
de dho p̄n̄s̄o a p̄n̄s̄o l̄p̄s̄ de dho firmad̄ el dho firmad̄ p̄n̄s̄o
de l̄p̄s̄ p̄n̄s̄o culla aya p̄n̄s̄o de lo d̄ma p̄re de l̄p̄s̄
q̄o d̄ma

to a f̄r̄s de p̄n̄s̄o a jūo n̄d de aya b̄n̄f̄icad̄ culla r̄ḡn̄a
de b̄gos a q̄ de v̄n̄r̄ ylla v̄o de b̄gos

Venero xx de mayo año 11 un 1000

18a

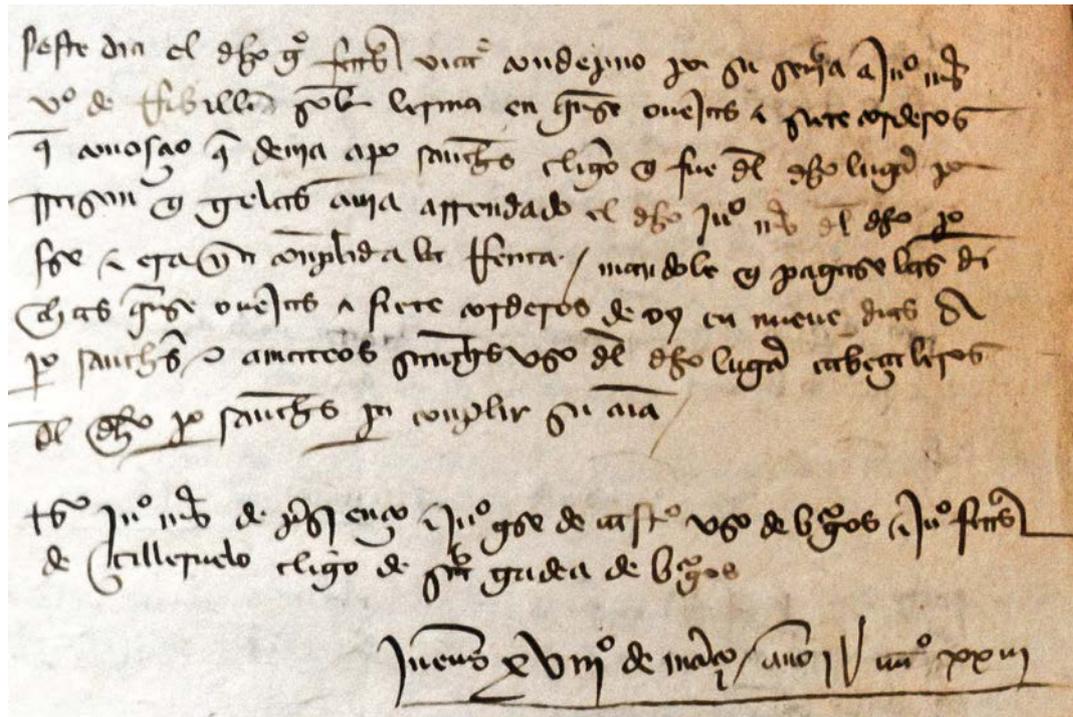
Este dia p̄ n̄d r̄l̄go de p̄n̄s̄o f̄r̄s p̄ p̄n̄s̄o a jūo de aya
culla v̄o de b̄gos p̄re p̄n̄s̄o p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄
p̄n̄s̄o de d̄ p̄n̄s̄o en b̄gos a p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄
a f̄r̄s p̄n̄s̄o a p̄n̄s̄o aya p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄
obligo p̄n̄s̄o aya p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄ p̄n̄s̄o a d̄

to d̄go p̄n̄s̄o de aya a jūo p̄re de magna a jūo de n̄d̄re en
m̄br̄n̄s̄o de b̄gos

Task 2: Use Strategy #2 - Identify those letters, abbreviations, and numbers that you can immediately recognize.

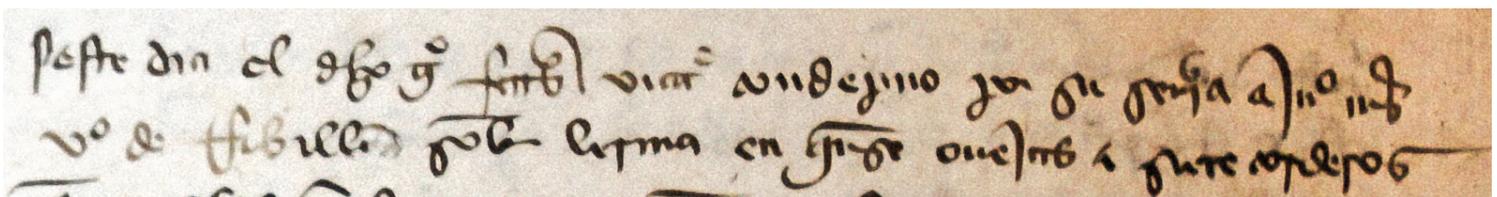
Time to spend on this task: 20 to 40 minutes.

This is very straightforward, but it is the beginning of finding your way into the document. Finding easy-to-recognize letters will help appreciate how much you can already see and it will spur you along to uncover other letters and words. We will work with this small portion of the document. (Please follow the instructions on the following pages.)



Task 2, Step A

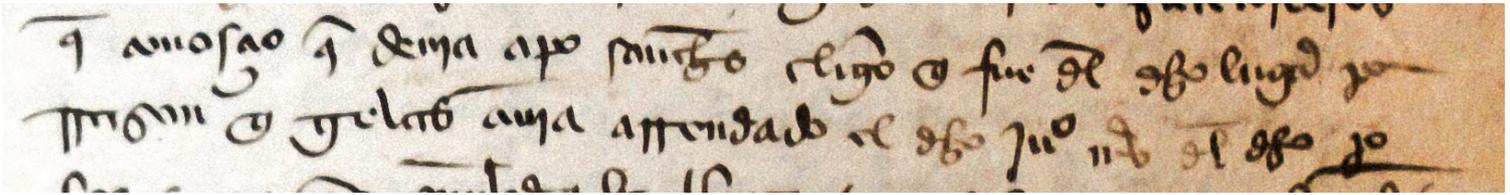
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize letters.
- Circle several examples of each letter.
- Record the letters you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter with your handwritten letter.
- Hint: Some of the letters you might see are: e, t, d, i, l, o, g, f, r, v, i, a, c, o, s, u, J
- Spend very little time on abbreviations. We will return to these in Strategy #4.



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Task 2, Step B

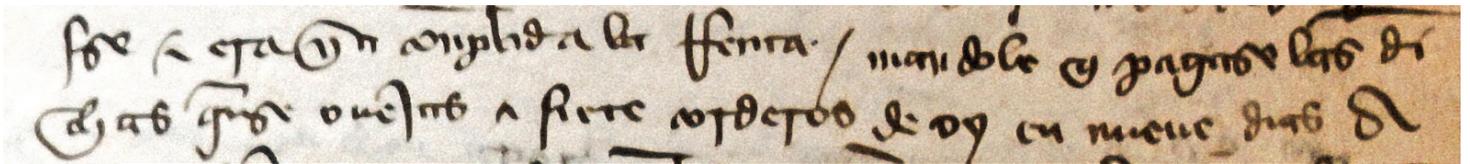
- Below you will find another selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize letters.
- Circle several examples of each letter.
- Record the letters you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter with your handwritten letter.
- Hint: Some of the letters you might see are: q, o, s, a, d, e, p, s, n, g, l, r
- Spend very little time on abbreviations. We will return to these in Strategy #4.



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Task 2, Step C

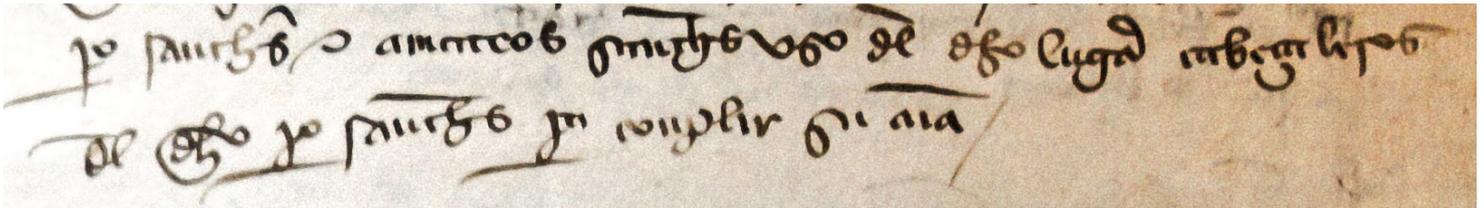
- Below you will find one last selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize letters.
- Circle several examples of each letter.
- Record the letters you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter with your handwritten letter.
- Hint: Some of the letters you might see are: e, r, a, c, o, p, R, g, s, i



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Task 2, Step D

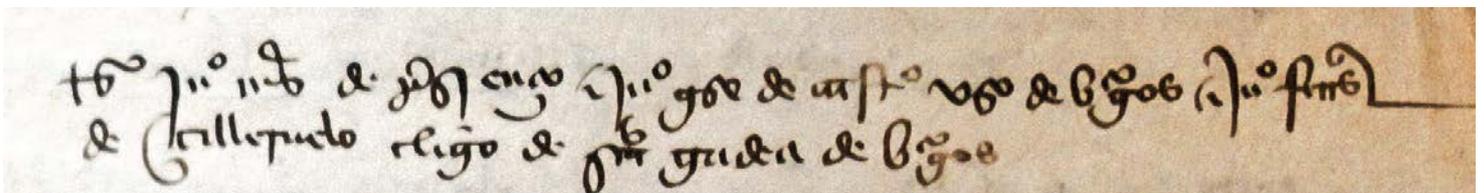
- Below you will find one last selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize letters.
- Circle several examples of each letter.
- Record the letters you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter with your handwritten letter.
- Spend very little time on abbreviations. We will return to these in Strategy #4.



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Task 2, Step E

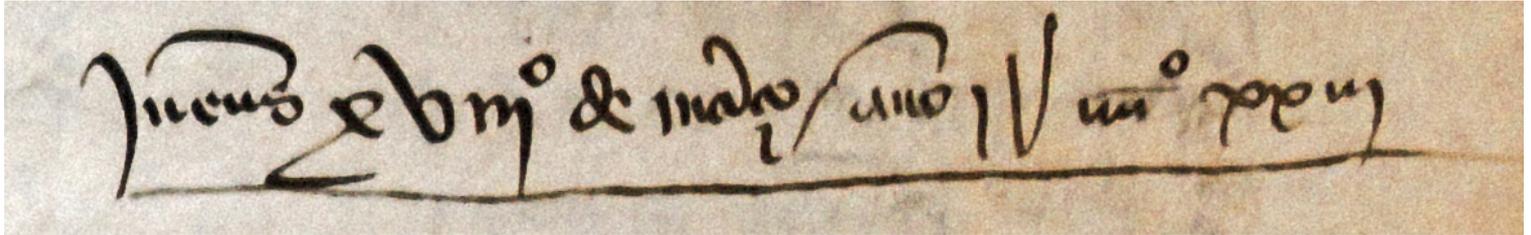
- Below you will find one last selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize letters.
- Circle several examples of each letter.
- Record the letters you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter with your handwritten letter.
- Spend very little time on abbreviations. We will return to these in Strategy #4.



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Task 2, Step F

- Below you will find one last selection from our sample manuscript.
- Identify 2 to 5 easy-to-recognize **letters and numbers**.
- Circle examples of each letter and number.
- Record the letters and numbers you see in the boxes below the sample.
- You also might want to draw a line connecting each circled letter/number with your handwritten letter/number.



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Task 3: Use Strategy 3: Locate common words to (a) understand how the scribe connects their letters together and (b) recognize other alphabetical letters and numbers.

Time to spend on this task: 15 to 30 minutes.

This strategy helps you identify letters that are hard to recognize. If you see a common word, and you are flexible in terms of how it might be spelled, then you see many curious spellings of words you know. More importantly, you can find new letters using this strategy.

This is also a good time to consult: Muñoz y Rivero, Jesus. *Manual de Paleografía Diplomática Española de los Siglos XII al XVII*. Madrid: Tipolit L. Faure, 1917. (This text is in the public domain.) Specifically, you can use the following three paleographic selections for most transcription efforts.

- Uppercase alphabet
- Lowercase alphabet
- Numerals

Continue with this task after reviewing the paleographic selections.

ALFABETOS DE LETRAS MAYÚSCULAS

| SIGLO XII | SIGLOS XIII, XIV Y XV | SIGLOS XVI Y XVII |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A Δ | A A A A A | A A A A A |
| B | B | B B |
| C | C C C | C C |
| D Δ Δ | D D D | D D D |
| E E E | E E E E E A | E E E E |
| F F F | F F F | F F F |
| G G | G G G | G G G |
| H H h | H H h h | H H H H |
| I I | I I | I I I I I I |
| K | K | |
| L L | L L | L L L |
| M M | M M | M M |
| N N | N N N N | N |
| O | O O | O O |
| P P | P P P | P P |
| Q Q | Q Q Q Q Q | Q |
| R R | R R R R R R R | R R R R R R |
| S S | S S S S S | S S S |
| T T | T T | T T |
| U | U | U U |
| V | V | V V |
| X X | X X | X X X |
| Y | Y | Y Y |
| Z | Z | Z Z |

ALFABETOS DE LETRAS MINÚSCULAS

| SIGLO XII | SIGLO XIII | SIGLO XIV |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| a a | a a a a | a a a a a |
| b | b | b G B |
| c | c c | c c t |
| d d | d d d d | d d d d d |
| e e | e e e | e e e |
| f f | f f f f | f f f f |
| g g | g g g | g g g g g |
| h h | h h h | h h h h |
| i i | i i | i i i |
| k | k | k |
| l | l l l | l e e |
| m m | m m | m m |
| n n | n n n | n n |
| o | o | o o |
| p | p p | p p p p |
| q | q q q | q q q |
| r r | r r r | r r r r |
| s s | s s s s s s | s s s s s |
| t | t | t t t |
| u | u u | u |
| v | v | v v v |
| x x | x x | x x |
| y | y y | y y y |
| z z | z z | z z |

ALFABETOS DE LETRAS MINÚSCULAS

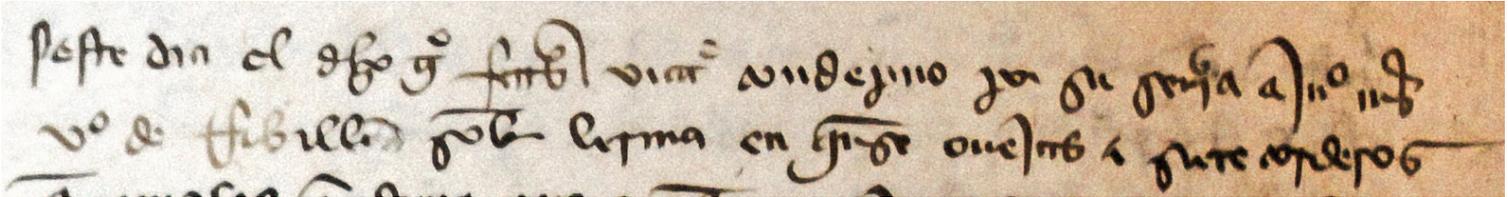
| SIGLO XV | SIGLO XVI | SIGLO XVII |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| a a a a a | a a a a a a | a a |
| b b b b | b b b | b b |
| c c c | c c c r c | c c c c c |
| d d d d d | d d d d | d d d d d |
| e e e e | e e e e e | e e e e e |
| f f f f | f f f | f f f |
| g g g | g g g | g g g |
| h h h h | h h h h h | h h h h |
| i i i | i i i | i i i i i |
| k | | k |
| l l l l l | l l l l l e | l l l l l |
| m | m m | m m |
| n | n n | n n n |
| o o | o o o e | o o o o |
| p p p | p p p p p | p p p |
| q q q | q q q q q | q q q |
| r r r r r | r r r r r z | r r r r |
| s s s s e | s s s s e s | s s s s s |
| t t t t | t t t t t | t t t t t |
| u u | u u u | u u |
| v v v | v v | v v v |
| x x x x | x x x | x x x x |
| y y y y | y y y y y | y y |
| z z | z z z | z z z z |

TABLA DE NUMERALES

| | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. | i |) | ʒ |
| 2. | ii | y | ʒy |
| 3. | iii | iiy | ʒyy |
| 4. | iiii | iiiy | ʒyyy |
| 5. | ↷ | ↷ | ↷ |
| 6. | ↷L | ↷y | ↷y |
| 7. | ↷ii | ↷yy | ↷yy |
| 8. | ↷iii | ↷yyy | ↷yyy |
| 9. | ↷iiii | ↷iiiy | ʒʒ |
| 10. | x | ʒ | ʒ |
| 11. | xi | ʒi | ʒy |
| 12. | xii | ʒii | ʒyy |
| 20. | xx | ʒʒ | ʒʒ |
| 30. | xxx | ʒʒʒ | ʒʒʒ |
| 40. | xʒ | ʒʒʒʒ | ʒL |
| 50. | L | L | L |
| 60. | Lx | Lʒ | Lʒ |
| 70. | Lxx | Lʒʒ | Lʒʒ |
| 90. | Lxʒ | Lʒʒʒʒ | Lʒʒʒʒ |
| 100. | c | c | c |
| 200. | cc | cc | c |
| 300. | ccc | ccc | cc |
| 400. | cccc | cccc | ccc |
| 500. | D | δ | δ |
| 1.000. | M | ʒ | ʒ |
| 2.000. | ʒʒ | MM | ʒʒ |
| 40.000. | ʒ̄ | ʒʒʒ | ʒʒʒ |

Task 3, Step A

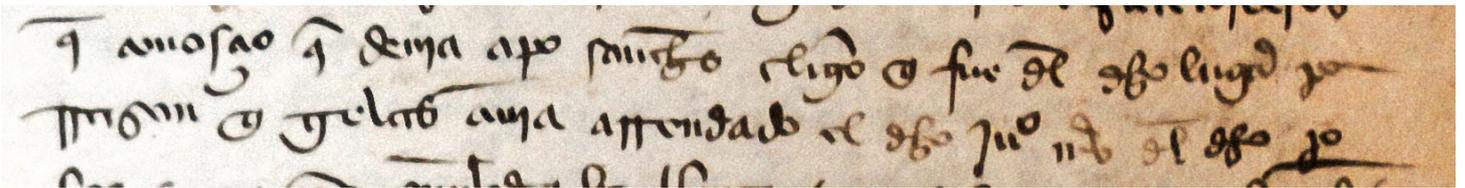
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: dia, por, su, de



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Task 3, Step B

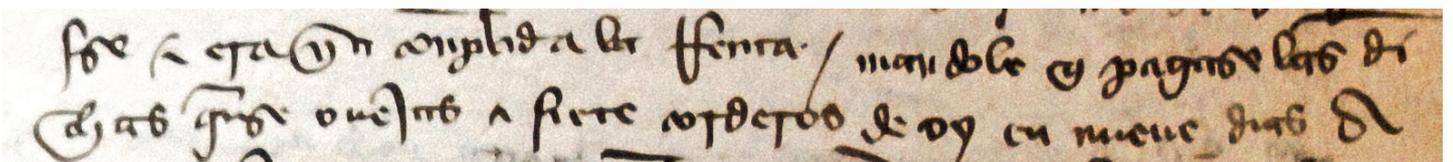
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: que, fue, el



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Task 3, Step C

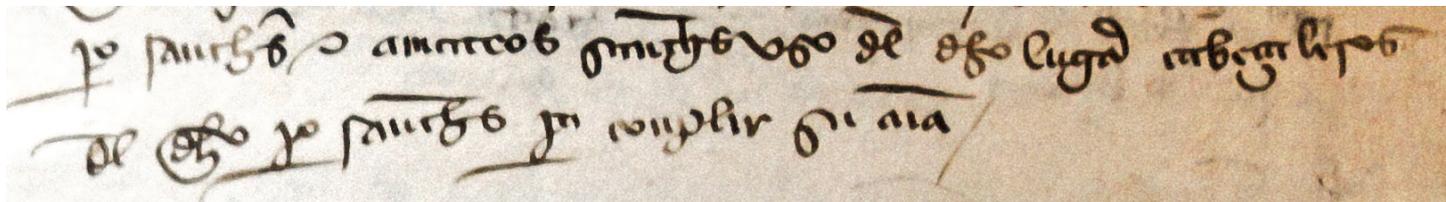
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: de, dias



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Task 3, Step D

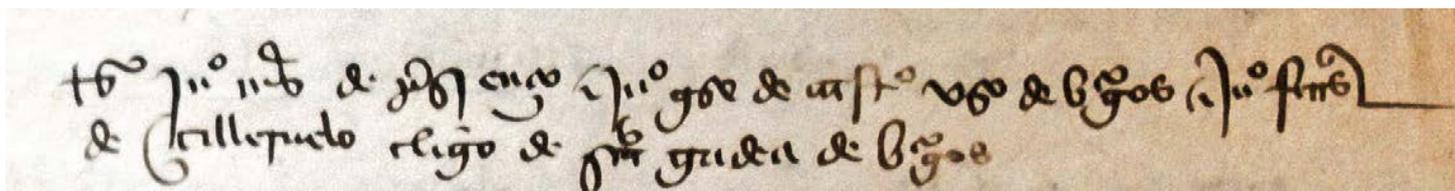
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: su, p*o



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Task 3, Step E

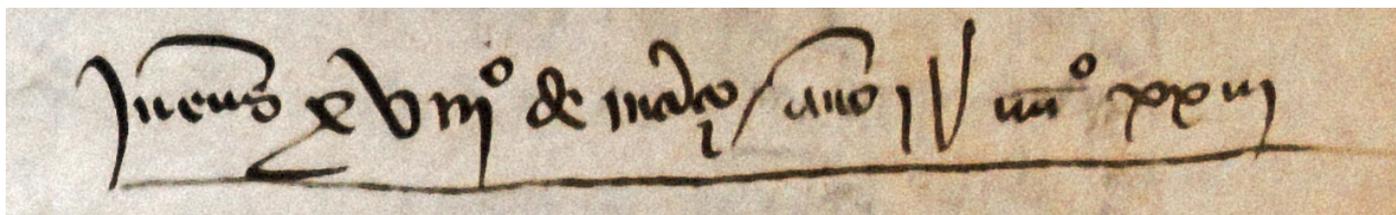
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: de, Ju*, Ferrs, de



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Task 3, Step F

- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate common words. Circle them.
- Record your common words below. Record new letters below.
- Hints: ano



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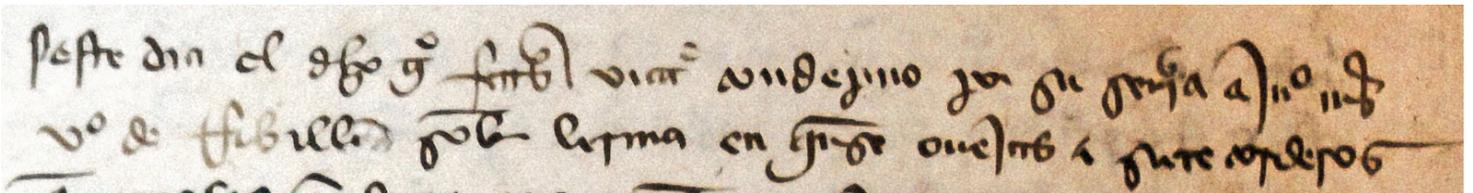
Task 4: Use Strategy #4 - Recognize the abbreviations used in the document and if they vary within the document.

Time to spend on this task: 10 to 20 minutes.

Finding and marking your abbreviations makes your task easier because it reminds you some words on the page are not complete words at all. Rather, they are almost nonsensical connections of letters. Find the abbreviations so that your eyes and mind do not attempt to create words that do not exist on the page.

Task 4, Step A

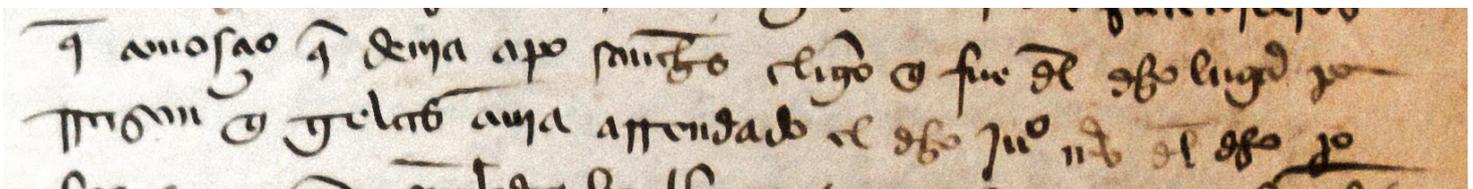
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: dho (This is a new abbreviation. It is: dicho), vicar*, v* (This is a new abbreviation. It is: vecino)



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Task 4, Step B

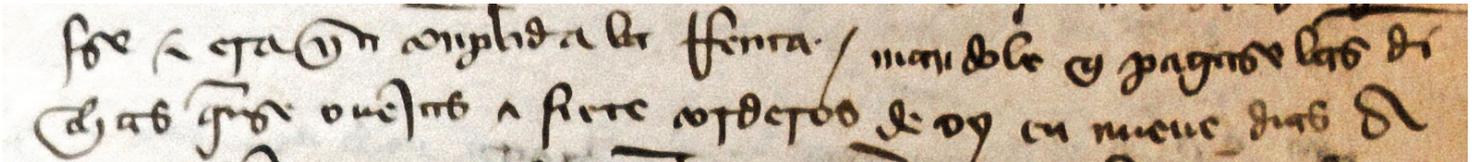
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: q*, d*1



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Task 4, Step C

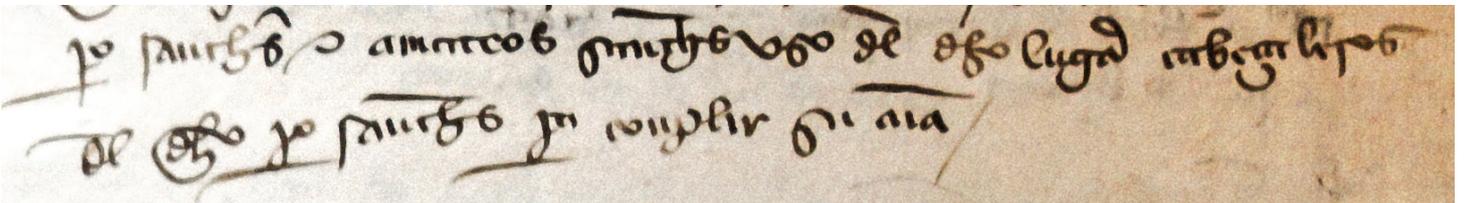
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: These are all extremely difficult abbreviations. Just note that they are on the page.



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Task 4, Step D

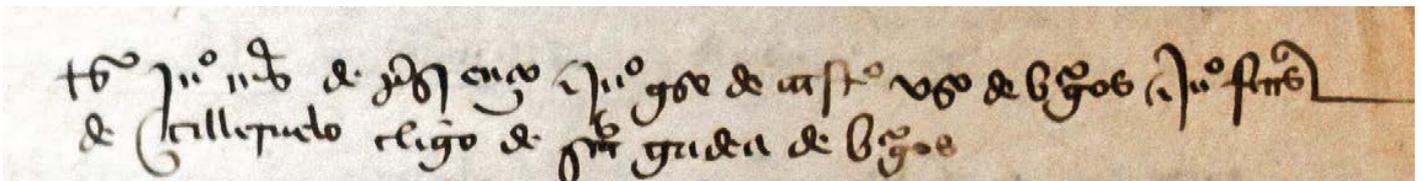
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: dho, p*o, pa



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Task 4, Step E

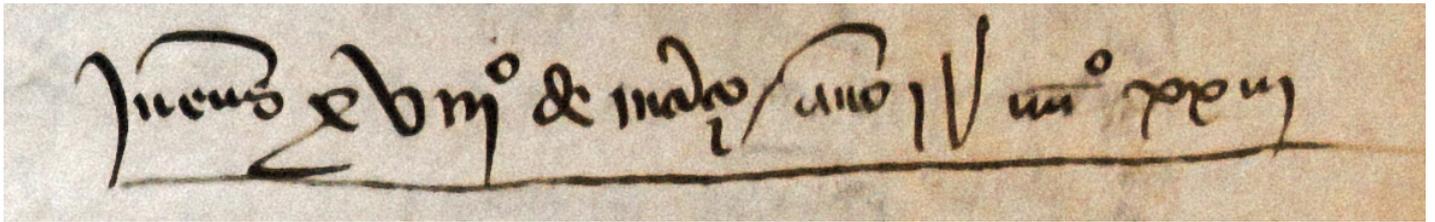
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: ts* (This is a new abbreviation. It is: testigo.), b*gos, gr*a



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Task 4, Step F

- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate abbreviations. Even if you do not know what they spell, please record them.
- Record your abbreviations below. Use an asterisk "*" to symbolize the location of the abbreviation marking. When possible, guess at their full spellings.
- Hints: juev*s, mar*o



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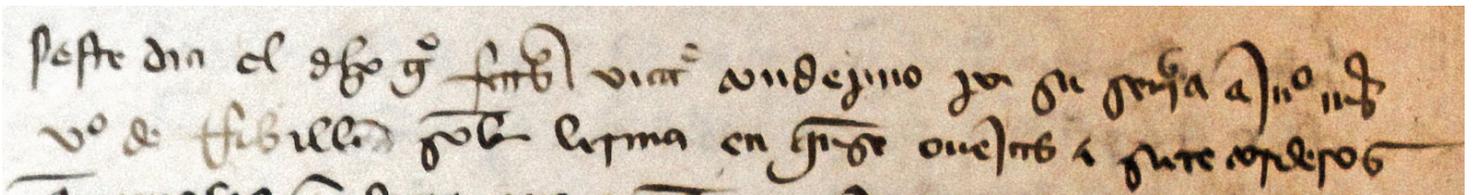
Task 5: Use Strategy #5 - Search for English-Spanish cognates (those words that share similar meanings and spellings in English and Spanish) to identify more letters and connections.

Time to spend on this task: 20 to 40 minutes.

Cognates are helpful because you can work “backwards” into reading letters on the page. For example, if you know the word might be “jurisdiction” in English and therefore is “jurisdicion” in Spanish, then you can begin to identify hard to read letters within the word on the page.

Task 5, Step A

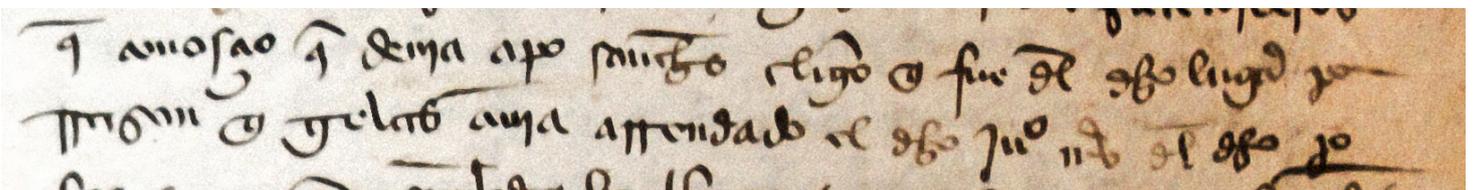
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: vicar



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Task 5, Step C

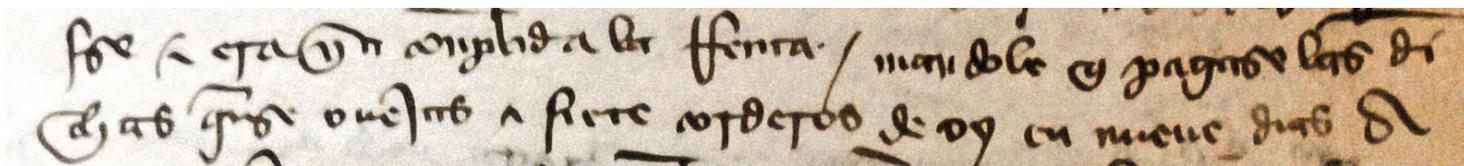
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: There do not appear to be any cognates here.



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Task 5, Step C

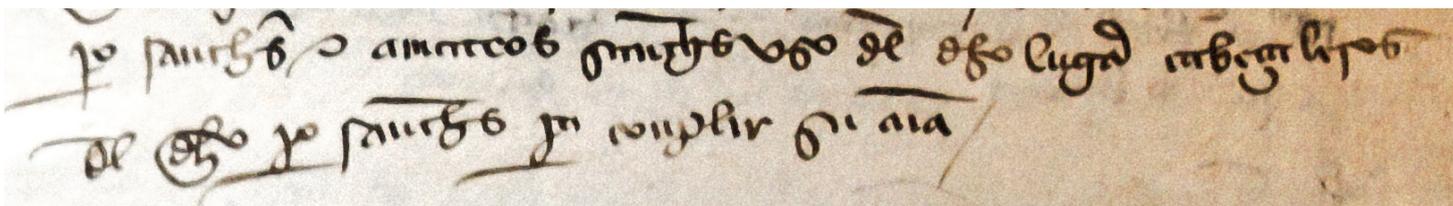
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: era, rent, mandate



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Task 5, Step D

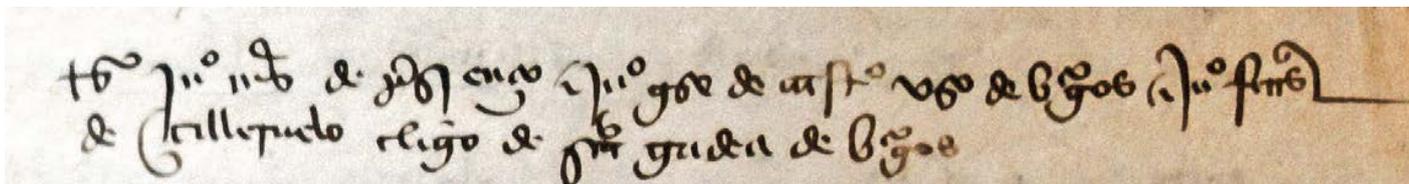
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: There do not appear to be any cognates here.



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Task 5, Step E

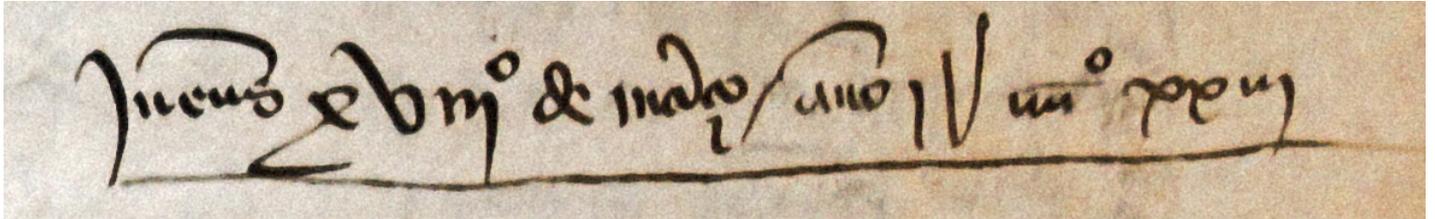
- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: There do not appear to be any cognates here.



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Task 5, Step F

- Below you will find one selection from our sample manuscript.
- Locate words that may be cognates.
- Record the English cognate. Record those letters you see in the Spanish cognate.
- Hints: March



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Task 6: Use Strategy #6 - Type or write your transcription and leave plenty of room to add edits.

Time to spend on this task: 20 to 40 minutes.

Creating a transcript will help you fill in the blanks as you work through those last, hard to read letters and words. Use the space below to record your incomplete transcription of selection of manuscript presented in Task #2. (Approximately 1/3 of the full page.)

General recommendations:

- Either type your transcription in a separate document or write in pencil on this page. Use extra pages if you need additional room. Also, you should expect to make changes.
- Leave space for missing words that you cannot decipher. Use periods “.” to indicate a missing letter or several periods “...” to indicate several missing letters.
- (1) Record abbreviations as abbreviations with an asterisk “*” and/or (2) Attempt to spell out more common abbreviations.
- Please do not aim for perfection. Do your best. You may only see 25 to 50% of the letters, numerals, or abbreviations on the page. This is outstanding for someone who has only been studying paleography for less than a two weeks!

Note: If you wish to extend this homework assignment, and get more practice, finish transcribing the remainder of the entire document.