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## **Policy versus Practice. Language variation and change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch**

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### **Citation**

Krogull, A. (2018, December 12). *Policy versus Practice. Language variation and change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/67132>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

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**Issue Date:** 2018-12-12

## APPENDIX

# Transcription conventions for handwritten ego-documents

### Header information

```
<header>
DOCUMENT:           Rotterdam_Ledeboer_1237_207_let02 (without
                    a/b/c and .jpg)
ARCHIVE:            Stadsarchief Rotterdam (full name of archives)
GENRE:              letter / diary
DATE:               1829-07-25 (i.e. YYYY-MM-DD)
PLACE:              Leuvenum (place as indicated on the source document)
TRANSCRIPTION:     AK / CB / HV / GW (insert initials)
NOTES:              (Optional notes or comments)
WORD COUNT:         1048 (transcription word count without header)
</header>
```

### Text file names

Save all transcriptions as Text files, e.g. *Rotterdam\_Ledeboer\_1237\_207\_let02.txt*. Transcriptions which are based on various digital images from the same source document (e.g. various pages of the same letter) are saved as one text file.

### Diplomatic transcription

The aim of a diplomatic transcription is to present the source document as it actually appears. In other words, do not correct or normalise the spelling and punctuation as used in the original document.

### Use of tags

#### *Ambiguous and illegible words:*

The following three tags represent three different levels between ambiguity and total illegibility:

<code>&lt;illeg/&gt;</code>	An entirely illegible word (note: for sequences of more than one illegible word, please use this tag for each word)
<code>&lt;illeg com="word... "/&gt;</code>	An illegible word, but a suggested or partial reading
<code>&lt;ambig&gt;word&lt;/ambig&gt;</code>	A probable reading, but possibly ambiguous

### ***Insertions and deletions***

<code>&lt;ins&gt;word&lt;/ins&gt;</code>	An inserted word or (part of a) sentence, which is added outside of the normal line of text (note: use this tag for the entire insertion)
<code>&lt;del&gt;word&lt;/del&gt;</code>	A crossed out or deleted word which is still readable
<code>&lt;cancel/&gt;</code>	A crossed out or deleted word which is no longer readable
<code>&lt;gap/&gt;</code>	Parts of the source document which are not transcribed (e.g. long list of names, accounts of expenses)

### ***Character layout***

Given the fact that all ego-documents are handwritten (i.e. not printed), it is unlikely to find instances of bold or italicised words. Emphasis through underlining does occur regularly, though:

<code>&lt;u&gt;word&lt;/u&gt;</code>	An underlined word
--------------------------------------	--------------------

### ***Hyphenation***

Always transcribe hyphens and alternative line break characters with – (which may be realised differently in handwriting). Hyphenated words at the end of a line are restored before the line break, but the following tag is used to indicate the original form (reg = regularisation; orig = original form):

<code>&lt;reg orig="wo rd"&gt;word&lt;/reg&gt;</code>
---

**Capitalisation**

Although it might not always be clear whether a letter is capitalised or not, capitalisation in ego-documents should be transcribed as diplomatically as possible. Even when (unusual) capital letters occur in the middle of a word, please also transcribe them as capitals accordingly.

**Spacing**

“Spacing between words is often problematic. The general rule of thumb is that *when a white space* (not long enough to be a blank) *is clearly distinguishable, it is transcribed thus*, using the space bar once. If, however, *no space is observed between two separate and unrelated words (not compounds!)*, as is often the case, *modern spacing conventions are used*, and the words are transcribed separately. In these cases, we assume the lack of spacing to be purely typographical. *In the case of compounds or otherwise related words, a lack of spacing is interpreted as a linguistic feature, and thus transcribed diplomatically.*” (Vosters 2009)<sup>89</sup>

**Editorial comments**

<ed com="comment" /> Additional comments in the transcription  
(moderately used!)

**Special case: ij/y**

The orthographic representation of *ij/y* is particularly variable in handwritten ego-documents (cf. Chapter 9). Even within the same document, you might come across different spelling variants. The following four variants should be distinguished in the transcriptions:

<ij>	<i>Lange ij</i> with <i>i</i> and <i>j</i> as neatly separated characters
<ÿ>	<i>Griekse y</i> with two dots (i.e. <i>ÿ</i> )
<y>	<i>Griekse y</i> (no dots)
<°y>	All alternative representations, e.g. single-dotted <i>ẏ</i> , <i>ŷ</i> with accent marks or other diacritics (note: the exact position of dots, accents or other diacritics is not relevant)

<sup>89</sup> Vosters, Rik. 2009. *Linguistic aspects of law and justice in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815–1830). Transcription guidelines and editorial practices*. Third edition.

