‘Swifte and Secrete Writing’ in Seventeenth-Century England, and Samuel Shelton’s *Brachygraphy*

Frances Henderson

Characterie. an arte of shorte, swifte, and secrete writing by Character. Inuented by Timothie Bright, Doctor of physicke
London, 1588[1]

In the autumn of 2006 the British Library was fortunate indeed to be able to acquire one of the less well-publicized treasures to emerge from the sale of the celebrated library from Shirburn Castle, home of the Earls of Macclesfield since 1716. A slim, much worn, leather-bound octavo volume produced in 1672 by one S. Shelton under the title of *Brachygraphy, or the Art of Short Writing*, its modest appearance belies its importance, for it is the only copy of this little work known to be extant (figs 1 and 2).[2]

Before examining the new acquisition in detail, and in order to understand its significance, we must briefly trace the history of early modern abbreviated writing systems from their invention in England at the end of the sixteenth century, enquiring as to the reasons for their immediate popularity and attempting to evaluate the extent to which they fulfilled the aspirations and claims of their inventors.[3]

The first two such systems to be published – and, it should be noted, published anywhere – appeared in London in 1588 and 1590 respectively. These were *Characterie*, invented by the chief physician of St Bartholomew’s Hospital, Dr Timothy Bright, and two years later the London writing master Peter Bales’s ‘brachygraphy’, which appeared in *The Writing Schoolemaster*.[4] While both methods satisfied their stated objectives of secrecy and conciseness well enough, in both cases their rudimentary and awkward structure ensured that their third (and for many by far their most intriguing) aspiration – the capability of capturing speech verbatim – was both unrealistic and unattainable. Like the stenographic system of ‘Tironian notes’ of ancient Rome

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1 *Characterie. An Arte of Shorte, Swifte, and Secrete Writing by Character* (London, 1588), t.p.

2 *Brachygraphy, or the Art of Short-Writing; in a More Exact, Easie, and Speedy Method than Hath Yet Been Published to the World. Which is so Accomodated to the Meanest Capacity that the Learner May in a Very Short Time Be Perfect in the Art without a Teacher* (London, printed for Peter Parker, 1672). BL C.194 a.679. The item was offered for sale on 25 October 2005, lot 1877 (Sotheby’s, *The Library of the Earls of Macclesfield Removed from Shirburn Castle, Part Six: Science P-Z plus Addenda* (London, 2005), p. 228.) ‘Brachygraphy’ was only one of the imaginative terms applied by early inventors to their shorthand systems (see below). I should like to thank Mr Giles Mandelbrote, Curator, British Collections 1501-1800, for inviting me to inspect the new acquisition and for his help in facilitating access to it in preparation for the lecture which I gave at the British Library in March 2007, and which forms the basis of this short article.

3 For a recent discussion of seventeenth-century shorthand see Frances Henderson, *Clarke Papers V. Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 375-82.

4 Timothy Bright, op.cit.; Peter Bales, *The Writing Schoolemaster: Conteining Three Bookes in One; The First, Teaching Swift Writing; The Second, True Writing; The Third, Faire Writing. The First Booke, Entituled; The Arte of Brachygraphie: That Is, to Write as Fast as a Man Speaketh Treatably, Writing but One Letter for a Word …* (London, 1590).

Fig. 2. Brachygraphy, bookplate of 1860 showing Macclesfield coat of arms and press mark. C.194 a.679.

Fig. 1. Brachygraphy, front board. C.194 a.679.

which may well have inspired them, both methods were constructed on logographic principles, with each whole word being allocated its own individual symbol. Bright's *Characterie* offered a core vocabulary of 536 separate signs, with additional provisions for inflections;[5] Bright catered for words not included in his key table by a complex system of synonyms and antonyms. All these had to be learned by heart.

Bales's *Brachygraphie* (which cautiously made the claim on its title page that the system could be written 'as fast as a man speaketh *treatably*'),[6] though substituting lower case longhand letters for Bright's arbitrary symbols, was in essence similarly constructed and was based on the same 536 key words, with an equally cumbersome arrangement of equivalents for those not covered by his basic listing.

Despite the considerable strain which they imposed on the learner's memory, and although they had little chance of keeping pace with any but the slowest of speakers, with their tantalizing claims for their ability to capture actual speech these earliest systems created widespread interest, indeed fascination. Bright's *Characterie*, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth and granted by Royal letters patent exclusive rights for the next fifteen years,[7] was particularly high-profile, presumably at least in part because of the Queen's patronage. In 1589, the year after its publication, a young lady of the Court, Jane Seager, presented the Queen with a magnificently bound and elegantly penned volume of 'The Divine Prophecies of the Ten Sibills', which she had written both in her own graceful italic hand and in the new *Characterie*.[8]

Reference to Bright's novel invention was made in several contemporary plays, including two by William Shakespeare,[9] and a few sermons were published which claimed to have been recorded in 'Charactery', though there is also contemporary comment to suggest that such claims were not warranted.[10]

It was in 1602, with the appearance of a new and considerably more practicable, mainly alphabetic (though to some extent phonetic) system that the capture of speech in 'short writing', as it soon became known, became a more realistic possibility. Based on a system of arbitrary equivalent symbols, one for each single letter of the alphabet, and invented by a clergyman, John Willis (d. 1625), *The Art of Stenographie* claimed to teach 'by plaine and certaine rules, to the capacity of the meanest, ... the way of compendious writing'.[11] It was at once simpler and more flexible and, more importantly, presented considerably fewer demands on the learner's memory.

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5 Some modern authors, perhaps quoting from the early writings of William J. Carlton on Bright, e.g. *Timothe Bright Doctor of Phisicke* (London, 1911), pp. 82-3, give a figure of 537 signs. It is an error which Carlton himself corrected in *Bibliotheca Pepysiana. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Library of Samuel Pepys: Part IV. Shorthand Books* (London, 1950), p. 3.

6 My emphasis.

7 London, National Archives, Bills of Privy Signet, Signet Bill 1488 July A 30 Elizabeth; ibid., Patent Roll, 30 Elizabeth, Part 12.

8 Add. MS 10037. For a full account of this charming volume, see Jessica L. Malay, 'Jane Seager's Sibylline Poems ...', *English Literary Renaissance,* xxxvi (2006), pp. 173-93.

9 *Merry Wives of Windsor* (possibly first performed in 1597), v. 5, 72; *Julius Caesar* (?1599), ii. 1, 308. Despite the spirited case put by Adele Davidson in 1996 ('"Some by Stenography"? Stationers, Shorthand, and the Early Shakespearean Quartos', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, xc (1996), pp. 417-49), the arguments against the recording of Shakespeare's, and other, plays by contemporary stenographers presented in the 1930s by William Matthews – himself a shorthand practitioner – have never been convincingly refuted. (W. Matthews, 'Shorthand and the Bad Shakespeare Quartos', *Modern Language Review,* xxvii (1932), pp. 243-62; and 'Shakespeare and the Reporters', *The Library,* 2nd ser., xv (1935), pp. 481-98, which includes a discussion of whether sermons could also have been recorded in Charactery).

10 For example, Stephen Egerton, *An Ordinary Lecture. Preached at the Blacke-Friers, by M. Egerton. And Taken as it Was Uttered by Characterie* (London, 1589). And, for the contrary view, L. S., *Resurgendum. A Notable Sermon Concerning the Resurrection* ... (London, 1593), sig. A3r.

11 *The Art of Stenographie, Teaching by Plaine and Certaine Rules, to the Capacitie of the Meanest, ... the Way of Compendious Writing. Whereunto Is Annexed a Very Easy Direction for Steganographie* (London, 1602) was published anonymously, presumably because Timothy Bright's royal patent still had some months to run.

Willis's invention paved the way for a stream of new systems; by the end of the seventeenth century some forty of these had appeared in print, almost all claiming to be the first – finally – to be able to capture successfully the spoken word, and almost all to a greater or lesser degree dependent on Willis's *Stenographie*.[12]

The new abbreviated writing systems appeared under a variety of titles, such as 'charactery' or 'short writing'; many of the earliest inventors emphasized both the novelty and the academic respectability of each particular system by coining, or (when all possible permutations were exhausted) copying from others, titles devised from sundry Greek or Latin derivations, such as 'brachygraphy', 'tachygraphy', and 'stenography'. It was not until 1638 that the term 'shorthand', now of course the generic term for all such contracted writing, first appeared in a satirical pamphlet focusing on Queen Henrietta Maria's dwarf courtier, Jeffrey Hudson. It would be another thirty-five years before it was applied to a new system of short writing.[13]

From the earliest systems of Bright and Bales, and despite continuing deficiencies, shorthand became all the rage – the new, fashionable accomplishment, particularly (if somewhat misleadingly) recommended for the purpose of recording the weekly sermon,[14] but also an invaluable means of both private and compact writing. While would-be practitioners could learn their preferred system through the countless primers which appeared with increasing frequency throughout the seventeenth century (and beyond), most sought the help of the many competing teacher/inventors who plied their trade in London (especially around the Inns of Court), in the two University cities of Oxford and Cambridge, and elsewhere in towns such as Bristol and Reading.

Shorthand remained an exclusively English phenomenon until the mid-seventeenth century,[15] and was the source of much wonderment to foreign visitors such as the Moravian educationalist Jan Amos Komenský (more usually known as Comenius) when he visited London in 1641. He wrote:

> Some thirty years since (in King James's reign) they discovered an art which has now come into vogue even among the country folk, that of rapid script (tachygraphia) which they call stenography . . . For this they employ symbols (characters) signifying whole words, and not single letters of the alphabet. Almost all of them acquire this rapid writing, as soon as they have learnt at school to read the Scriptures in the vernacular. It takes them about another year to learn the art of shorthand.[16]

One of the most popular and enduring systems was that invented by Thomas Shelton, first appearing in 1626 as *Short-writing*, and then in many editions from 1636 onwards as *Tachygraphy*.[17] Shelton was something of a trail blazer in the world of early modern

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12 We know of several other systems which were not published in print; see, for example, William J. Carlton, 'A Shorthand "Inventor" of 300 Years Ago', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, xi (1920), pp. 77-83; also Sloane MS. 1950, f. 75r.

13 *A New Yeere's Gift* (London, 1638), now thought to be by Thomas Heywood; Robert Stileman, *Shorthand Shortned, or, the Art of Short-Writing Very Much Abreviated and Facilitated* (London, 1673). For Jeffrey Hudson, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

14 See above. Even the more advanced systems of the mid-seventeenth century fell short of their claims in this respect ([John Philips], *A Satyr Against Hypocrites* (London, 1655), pp. 5, 9).

15 Although as might be expected, it was practised by English colonists in New England from the 1620s onwards (Carlton, 'A Shorthand "Inventor"', passim).

16 Quoted in Robert Fitzgibbon Young, *Comenius in England* (Oxford and London, 1932), p. 65.

17 R. C. Alston, *A Bibliography of the English Language ..., 8, Treatises on Short-hand* (Leeds, 1966), pp. 8-14. *Tachygraphy* was still being used by Thomas Jefferson in the 1790s (personal information). Shelton apparently invented his second system, *Zeiglographia*, because the success of *Tachygraphy* led to it being pirated by unscrupulous printers (Thomas Shelton, *Zeiglographia* (London, 1650), sig. A3v).

shorthand; *Tachygraphy* was the first shorthand primer to be printed outside London, and he was the first inventor to produce two entirely distinct methods, the first to advertise his system in one of the newsbooks of the day and, in the edition of 1647 printed at Cambridge, the first to include his portrait.[18] Among his pupils was that S. Shelton,[19] whose little book of 1672 we here celebrate (fig. 3), and who tells us in his address 'To the Reader' that he has been a shorthand practitioner for more than thirty years 'receiving my first instructions from my old Friend and Namesake Mr [Thomas] Shelton'.[20]

The title of S[amuel]'s system would have been carefully chosen: 'brachygraphy' (Greek for 'short writing'), so close to his master's 'tachygraphy' (Greek: 'swift writing') and yet discernibly different, deliberately emphasizing its simplicity rather than its speed (though this would be taken for granted). He was by no means the first to use the term, which had been coined by Peter Bales in 1590 and used by three other inventors subsequently.[21]

The basic signs, or alphabetic equivalents, provided in *Brachygraphy* are precisely the same as those which S[amuel] would have learned as part of Thomas Shelton's *Tachygraphy* (fig. 4). The originality of *Brachygraphy* comes from the author's desire to simplify his old tutor's scheme. Thomas had introduced numerous additional symbols to his basic alphabetic equivalents to represent, for example, prefixes and suffixes, and commonly used words. S[amuel], however, believed that these unnecessarily complicated *Tachygraphy*, and based his equivalents for them on the straightforward alphabetic characters already provided for, in precisely the way that conventional longhand words are formed from letters of the alphabet (fig. 5).

The value of *Brachygraphy* does not, then, lie in a revolutionary new set of characters but in what, especially in his address 'To the Reader', S[amuel] tells us about the condition of shorthand teaching in the mid-seventeenth century. He believes that shorthand teachers purposely designed their books

> not so much to teach the Art by their Books, as to tell the people where they might be taught, reserving still their (Arcana's) to themselves ... [By their] insignificant crochets and whimsies ... the learner hath either been disheartned or sadly puz'led with the learning by heart of a tedious Table of insignificant marks. [From the] Alphabetical Rule through the whole Book ... any person of an ordinary Capacity may in few dayes learn to write Shorthand ..., so as to write any Discourse indifferently, pronounced word for word.[22]

In other words, he tells us, commercial motives led the shorthand inventors to complicate their schemes unnecessarily, so that the would-be learner had no alternative but to pay for lessons in addition to buying the primer.[23]

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18 Thomas Shelton's *Tachygraphy*, [1635], was printed by the university press at Cambridge; his portrait made its appearance in the edition of the same work produced there in 1647. *Zeiglographia* was advertised in the newsbook *Mercurius Politicus*, xviii (3-10 Oct. 1650), p. 308.

19 William J. Carlton, *Bibliotheca Pepysiana*, iv, p. xiv, firmly calls him 'Samuel', but I have discovered no contemporary evidence that this was in fact his forename. As there is a 'Samson' Shelton on the shorthand scene earlier in the century, I treat the identification with caution.

20 *Brachygraphy*, sig. A3r.

21 In addition to Bales (n. 4 above) these were William Folkingham in [1620], Henry Petre in 1621 and Henry Dix in 1633 (Alston, *Bibliography*, pp. 6, 8)

22 Shelton, *Brachygraphy*, sig. A3r.

23 We do not have a great deal of information about the cost of lessons, but it is recorded that in Oxford in 1634 Thomas Shelton was charging 10s. for lessons and 2s. 6d. for copies of his book: *The Diary of Thomas Crosfield*, ed. Frederick S. Boas (London, 1935), p. 74.

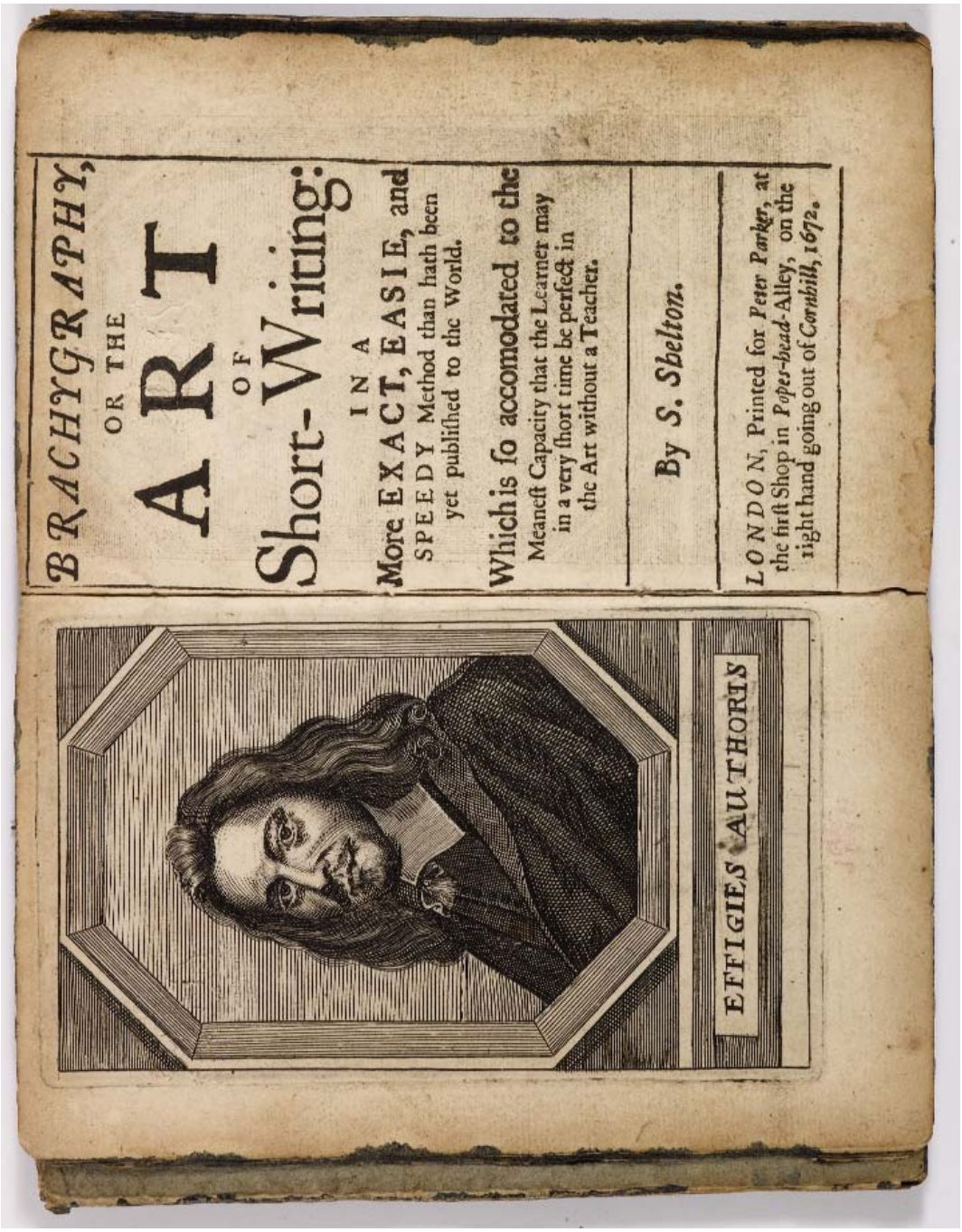


Fig. 3. Brachygraphy, title page and portrait of the author. C.194 a.679.

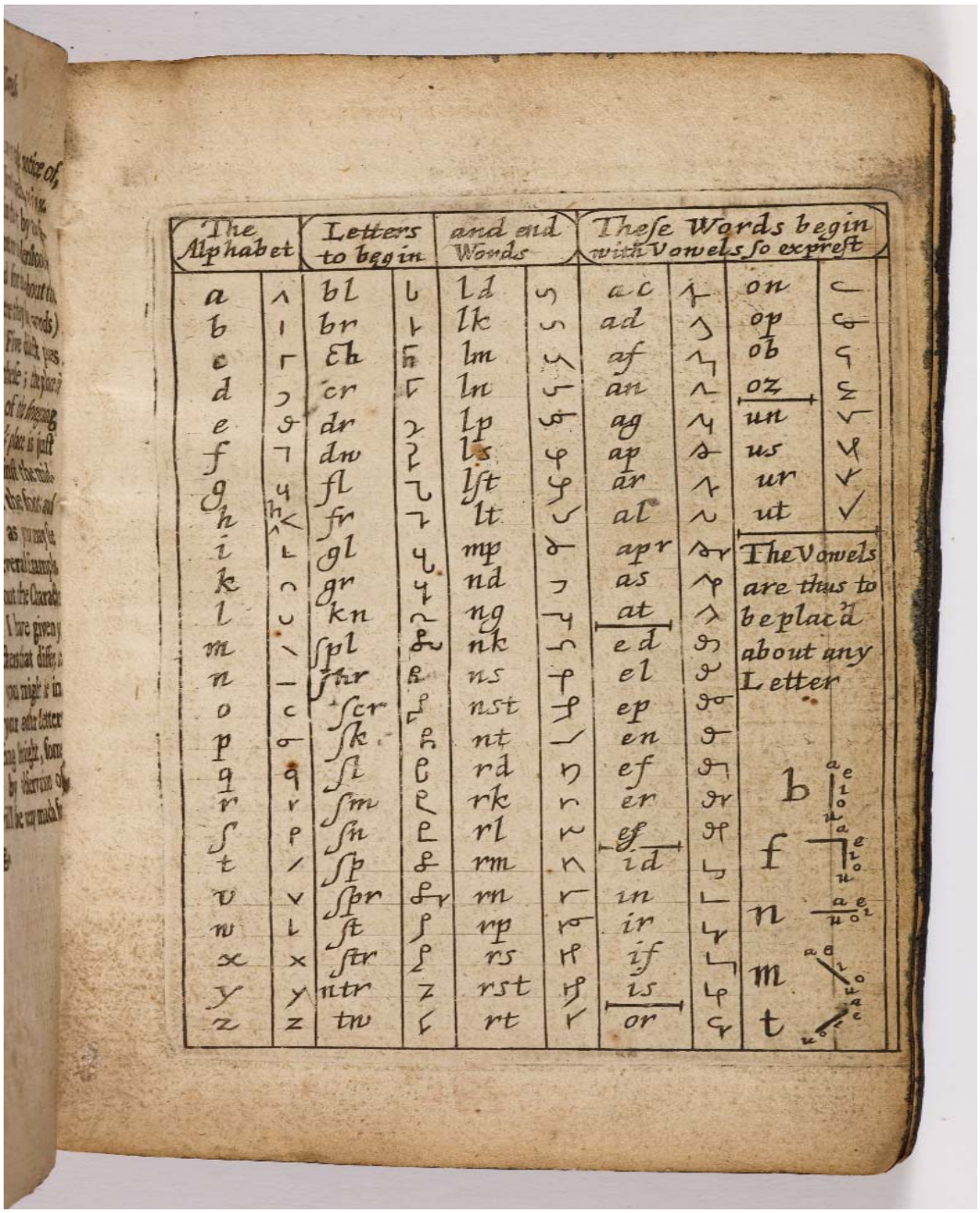
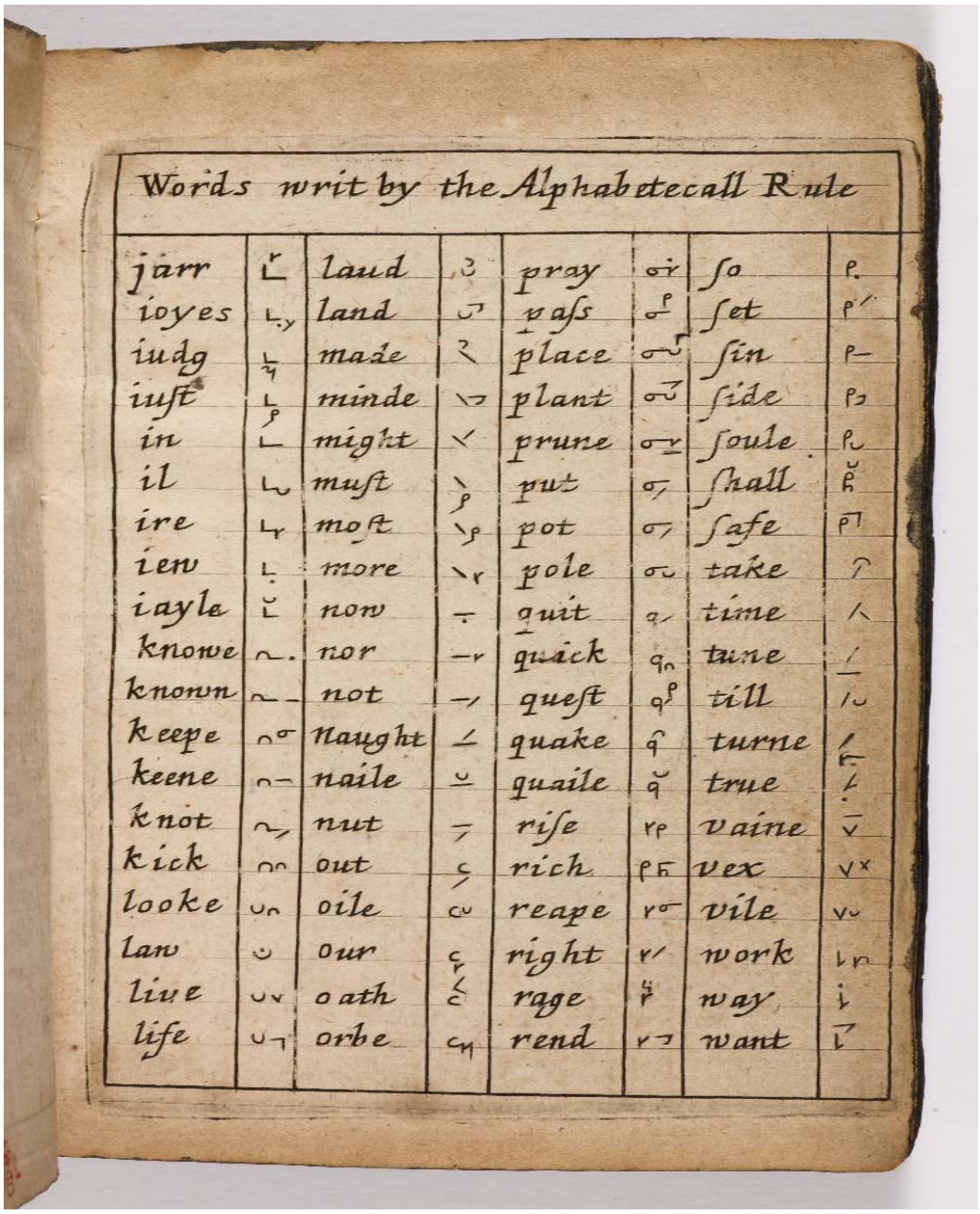


Fig. 4. Brachygraphy, showing S[amuel] Shelton's alphabetic symbols, with examples of how they could be combined with other vowels or consonants. Bottom right, in common with most other 17th-century schemes vowels were ordinarily omitted, being indicated by the position of one consonant in relation to another. C.194 a.679.



Words writ by the Alphabetecall Rule

jarr		laud		pray		so	
ioyes		land		pass		set	
iudg		made		place		sin	
iuſt		minde		plant		ſide	
in		might		prune		ſoule	
il		muſt		put		ſhall	
ire		moſt		pot		ſafe	
iew		more		pole		take	
iayle		now		quit		time	
knowe		nor		quack		taine	
knonvn		not		queſt		till	
keepe		Naught		quake		turne	
keene		naile		quaile		true	
knot		nut		riſe		vaine	
kick		out		rich		vex	
looke		oile		reape		vile	
law		our		right		work	
liue		oath		rage		way	
life		orbe		rend		want	

Fig. 5. Brachygraphy, a list of words demonstrating how Shelton's basic symbols were combined to form whole words, C.194 a.679.

The existence of Shelton's *Brachygraphy* was already known to us from more than one source, including two contemporary authorities, Elisha Coles and Samuel Pepys. Coles, who may lay claim to being the first historian of shorthand, combined his own system – *The Newest, Plainest, and the Shortest Short-hand* ... (1674), printed, as Shelton's *Brachygraphy* was two years earlier, for the London bookseller Peter Parker – with a list of previous inventors and their systems. Beginning with eight of the most popular, he adds a further twenty-one (including 'Mr S. Shelton') some of whom, he explains, 'I have not been able to meet with'.[24] In a comparative table of those systems he has been able to trace and examine he includes both Thomas's *Tachygraphy* and his *Zeiglographia*, but not S[amuel]'s *Brachygraphy*; evidently, writing just two years after its publication, Coles had not managed to acquire a copy. Likewise, Samuel Pepys, an enthusiastic collector of shorthand manuals, closed his collection in March 1695 with an account of those inventors whose systems he had not been able to acquire 'after 2 Years Search'; among these he lists 'S. Shelton'.[25]

When W. J. Carlton compiled the shorthand component of his *Descriptive Catalogue of the Library of Samuel Pepys* which appeared in 1950, he recorded that two copies of *Brachygraphy* were then extant, one in the library of the British Museum and one in the Library of Congress, Washington DC.[26] Sadly, as we now know, the British Museum copy was one of 428 volumes destroyed when the King's Library suffered a direct hit during the bombing raid of 23 September 1940.[27] Volumes lost on that occasion included a further twenty-four early shorthand treatises, of which six were, like *Brachygraphy*, the only known copies in existence.[28] In Washington, the Library of Congress copy of *Brachygraphy* cannot now be traced.[29] That copy was noticed by neither Carlton nor R. C. Alston in their authoritative bibliographies of 1950 and 1966 respectively, nor is it listed in the first edition of Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue*. The assumption is, therefore, that the Washington copy has been lost for some considerable time.[30] Thus, the copy newly acquired by the British Library is the only one now known to be in existence.

The volume bears several annotations which reveal that its original owners were the male members of a family called Lane (figs 6 and 7) one of whom, Daniel, records that he bought the book for one shilling on 18 February 1672, the year of its publication.[31] There is nothing, however, to indicate how it then came to Shirburn, although it seems likely that it arrived during the first half of the eighteenth century, after which the library probably remained, until its recent sale, virtually unchanged.[32] The most likely explanation is that the little primer had formed part of the collection of the eminent mathematician William Jones (c.1675-1749),[33] who from around 1709 to 1715 acted as tutor to George Parker, the future

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24 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

25 Carlton, *Bibliotheca Pepysiana*, iv, pp. xiii-xiv.

26 Ibid., p. xiv.

27 P. R. Harris, *A History of the British Museum Library 1753-1973* (London, 1998), pp. 554-5.

28 Information compiled from Alston, *Bibliography* (Leeds, 1966; revised edition Ilkley, 1974).

29 Information kindly supplied to Giles Mandelbrote from the Library of Congress.

30 Alston records the Washington copy in handwritten revisions to the revised edition of his *Bibliography* (Ilkley, 1974), p. viii: 25, noting that it had by that time been lost. (Handwritten annotations taken from Oxford, Bodleian Library, A.3.1302.)

31 Final endpaper.

32 Sotheby's, *The Library of the Earl of Macclesfield Removed from Sherborn Castle* ([2004]), an introductory booklet advertising the first four proposed sales, unpaginated; Paul Quarrie, 'The Scientific Library of the Earls of Macclesfield', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society,* lx (2006), p. 5.

33 q.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.*

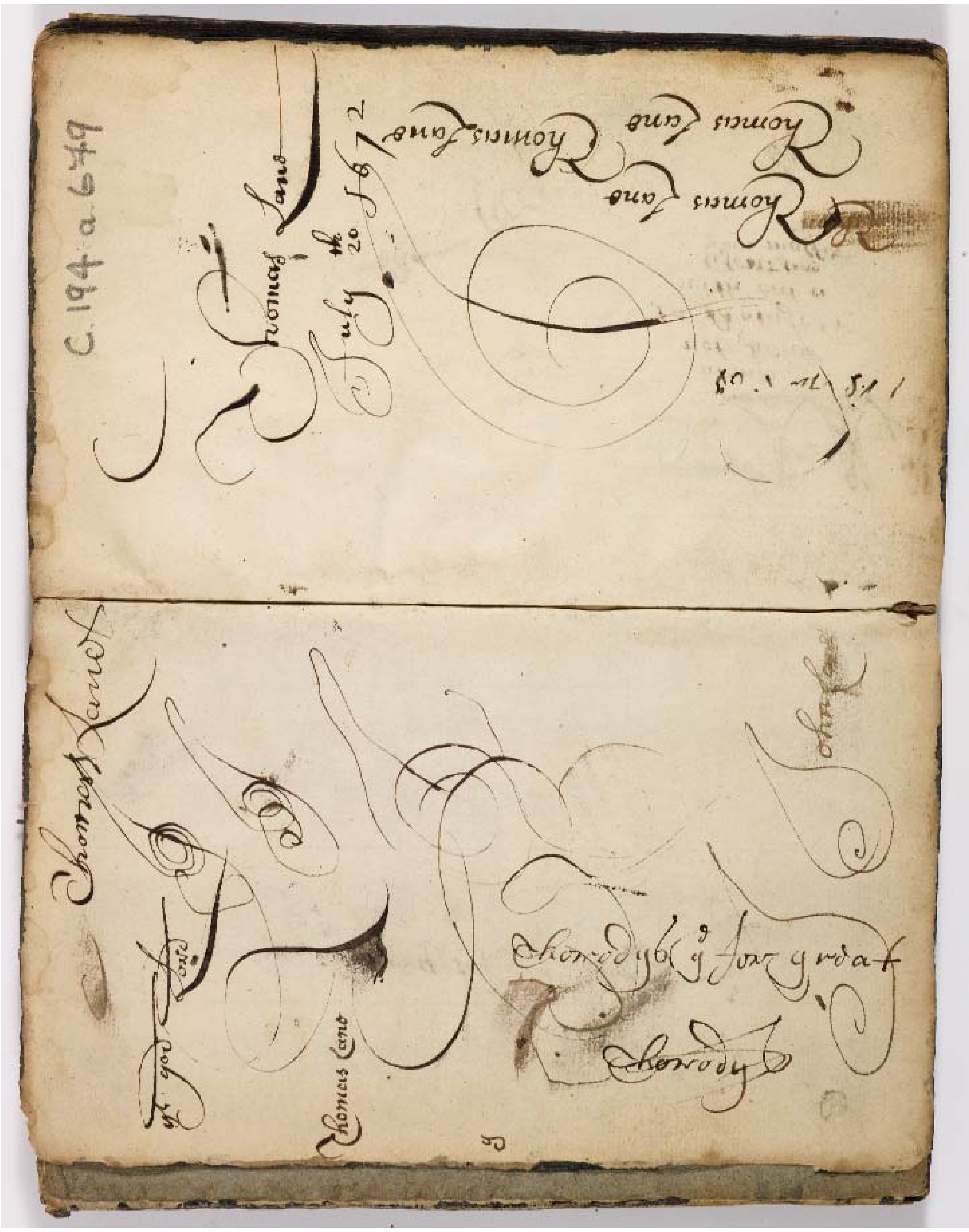

Fig. 6. Brachygraphy, signatures of John and Thomas Lane, two of the book's original owners. C.194 a.679.

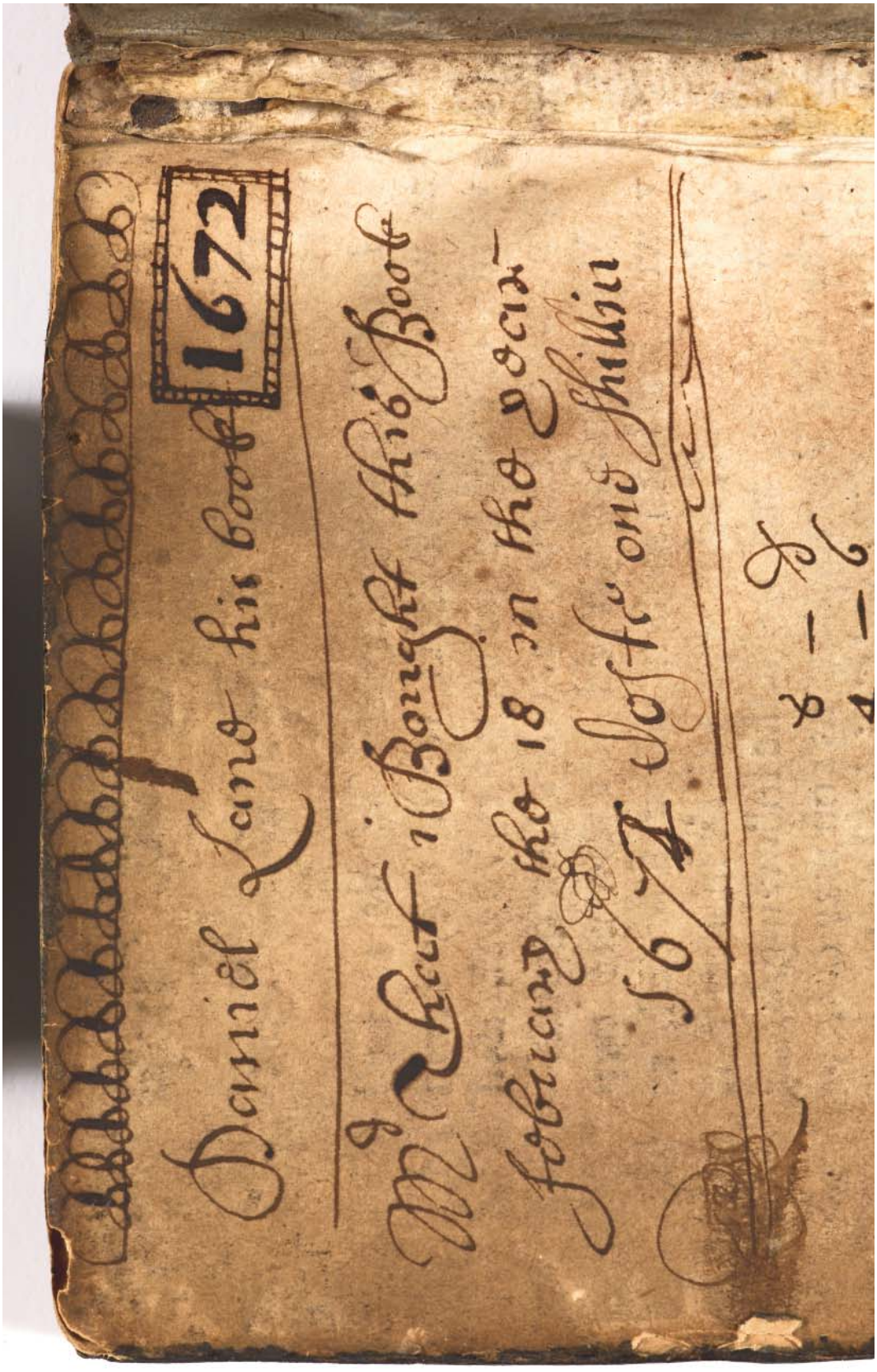

Fig. 7. Daniel Lane helpful recorded the date on which he bought *Brachygraphy*, and the price which he paid for it. C.194 a.679.

second Earl of Macclesfield (c.1697-1764). Jones, whose close connection with the Macclesfield family was to last for the rest of his life, spent much time at Shirburn after its acquisition by the first Earl in 1716. Here he found a fitting home for the magnificent collection of scientific, mathematical and other books which he had begun to amass sometime around 1705. In its day it came to be considered the most valuable collection of such works in England – a collection which Jones bequeathed to his old pupil, the second Earl, on his death in 1749.[34]

In 1708 Jones had himself been able to acquire many of the books and papers of another prominent mathematician, John Collins (1626-1683)[35] and there seems every possibility that Shelton's primer would have been among these. Collins, an avid book collector, had at one time been a London writing-master, and during the 1670s (when *Brachygraphy* appeared) held aspirations to become a stationer and printer – perhaps a good profile for an early collector of shorthand manuals. He is known to have played a central role in facilitating the acquisition of books by other men of science,[36] and it is likely that, in the absence of contradictory evidence, any items in the library at Shirburn dating to before the year of Collins's death (1683) would have belonged originally to him.[37] It is at least possible that Collins, with his habit of scouring booksellers' catalogues and haunting bookshops both on his own behalf and on behalf of his many scholarly acquaintances, would have picked up the little book, rare even in its own day, at second or third hand.

It seems to be no more than coincidence that the second Earl's first wife bore the same surname as the original owners, Daniel, John and Thomas Lane, and any remote possibility that somehow the volume arrived at Shirburn in the pocket of a member of the Lane family can probably be discounted.[38]

Whatever its early provenance, the reappearance of this rarity in the British Library is unquestionably a cause for celebration, particularly in the light of a current revival of interest in early shorthand systems.

The intense scholarly scrutiny of the nineteenth century, when there were many, many competing societies and journals devoted solely to shorthand not only in England but in Europe and America,[39] declined sharply at the end of the century. This may have been because it was considered that everything that could be said on the subject had been said, but it coincided noticeably with the changing image – a sort of social demotion – of shorthand itself. This was inextricably linked to the invention of the typewriter[40] – considered particularly suitable for the nimble fingers of young women 'typewritists' who

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34 For a full description of the library and its owners, see Quarrie, op. cit., pp. 5-24.

35 q.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

36 Unofficial secretary of the Royal Society for some ten years, Collins was referred to by Isaac Barrow as 'Mersennus Anglus' (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'John Collins'). There are many examples of Collins's energetic efforts in finding and supplying books to the leading men of science of his day in S. J. Rigaud (ed.), *Correspondence of Scientific Men of the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1841), *passim*.

37 Paul Quarrie, Introduction to Sotheby's, *The Library of the Earls of Macclesfield Removed from Shirburn Castle, Part Two: Science A-C* (London, 2004), p. 12.

38 Mary Lane, daughter of a wealthy Cambridge merchant, married George Parker, the future second Earl, on 22 September 1722 on his return from the Grand Tour (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'George Parker'). I have been unable to discover any connection between her and the original owners of *Brachygraphy*.

39 The titles of twenty-three journals alone began with 'Shorthand' and there were many more, as well as several serious societies and conferences, for which see John Westby-Gibson, *The Bibliography of Shorthand* (London and Bath, 1887), esp. pp. 204-5.

40 The Remington Company started production in 1873. 'Visible typewriters', i.e. where one could actually see the type-head striking the platen, were introduced in 1895.

could usefully combine this new skill with a knowledge of shorthand.[41] While sounding somewhat politically incorrect to twenty-first century ears, this clearly opened up considerably the career prospects of many young women who would previously have found employment only as cook, maid, governess or companion. At the same time, it marked a dramatic decline in the academic focus on all aspects of shorthand of the previous century.

With one or two exceptions, in the 1980s when I began my own involvement with them, little work was being done on early shorthand systems. Now things are changing. They are again the subject of scholarly examination in the context of studies on memory, literacy, universal character, reading habits, cryptology, and Shakespearean criticism as well as the general social and intellectual history of early modern England.[42]

On a practical level, with the growing realization that shorthand was very often used to conceal secret or private material, some are even taking the courageous step of learning these early shorthand systems for themselves in order to unlock the secrets of the countless deposits of shorthand notes which lie, still unread, both in public archives and in private hands. A new understanding of the limitations of these primitive systems in accurately recording the spoken word is leading to the re-evaluation of oral material known – or believed – to have been transmitted in this fashion.[43]

The rediscovery of Shelton's *Brachygraphy*, and its availability once again to researchers in the British Library, has restored to us much that would otherwise have been lost. Now we are able to examine for ourselves the 'lost' work of whose existence we knew only from Elisha Coles and Samuel Pepys (and, incidentally, to visualize its inventor).[44] However its major contribution is in conveying to us so vividly the cut-throat world of the seventeenth-century shorthand inventor, and as importantly in demonstrating how one of the most popular and enduring systems of its day, Thomas Shelton's *Tachygraphy*, was in some important respects found seriously wanting by at least one of its practitioners.

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41 Shorthand for girls was particularly enthuastically promoted by the *Girl's Own Paper*; see for example, vol. i, no. 20 (1880), pp. 309-10; vol. xiii (1892), *passim*, 'The "Girl's Own" shorthand class'.

42 In 2007 an exhibition and seminar at the Folger Library in Washington, DC, on 'Technologies of Writing in the Age of Print' included a substantial component on seventeenth-century shorthand.

43 See, for example, Frances Henderson, 'Reading, and Writing, the Text of the Putney Debates', in Michael Mendle (ed.), *The Putney Debates of 1647* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 36-50; Davidson, '"Some by Stenography?"', pp. 417-49.

44 See fig. 3. William J. Carlton (*Bibliotheca Pepysiana*, iv, p. xiv) recorded that the Library of Congress copy contained S[amuel]'s portrait, but that the copy formerly in the British Museum did not. See also Westby-Gibson, *Bibliography of Shorthand*, p. 200.