

## COMMONEST ABBREVIATIONS, SIGNS, ETC. USED IN THE APPARATUS TO A CLASSICAL TEXT

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When I was in graduate school and first starting to use an apparatus criticus, I could nowhere find any list explaining common abbreviations and could often only guess at what they meant, and this was often maddening. So for students I here offer a small list; it is certainly very incomplete, but includes all the abbreviations that occur to me. I include also some whole words, which in textual criticism have a special pregnant meaning (see e.g. "ex"). I am much indebted to Scott Scullion of Worcester College, Oxford for additions and several corrections.

*When a Latin adjective is neuter -- e.g. 'alia' or 'alterum' -- it normally agrees with neuter 'verba' or 'verbum' that we supply in thought. A Latin plural noun or adj. is represented by a double consonant; so e.g. 'vet. cod.' = vetus codex, 'vett. codd.' = veteres codices.*

**A B C** (etc.) = the signs (*sigla*) of the "capital MSS", i.e. the most important MSS, usually described in the preface, & identified in a list that precedes the text. E.g. "δέ A B: τε C" = "the capital MSS A and B have δέ and C has τε. (" : " separates the readings). But often a MS (in older editions, any; in recent editions, a rarely used MS, too unimportant to have a *siglum*) is represented not by a *siglum* but by an abbreviation of its name, e.g. *Laur.* = (*codex Laur(entianus)*), or *Vat. 226* = *codex Vaticanus 226*.

**a b c** (etc.) = either (a) less important MSS, or else (b) families of MSS. (In a "family", all its MSS tend to have the same or similar errors; so they seem descended from a common exemplar.)

**α β γ** (etc.) = (usually) lost "hyparchetypes" (alias "proarchetypes", alias "proexemplars"), i.e. conjectured lost MSS, from which the best of ours seem to derive. So e.g. perhaps A B D descend from α, F M from β -- etc. (But sometimes--esp. in older editions--these Greek letters are also used for manuscript "families"; or sometimes even for extant MSS. You have to read the editor's preface.)

**A<sup>1</sup> A<sup>2</sup> A<sup>3</sup>** (etc.) = the main copyist's hand in A, a 2nd hand in A, a 3rd hand in A. Such a 2nd or 3rd hand is usually that of a corrector; so A<sup>2</sup> or A<sup>3</sup> is sometimes called A<sup>corr.</sup>.

**A<sub>1</sub> A<sub>2</sub> A<sub>3</sub>** (etc.) Subscript numbers usually mean not mere correctors but actual copyists when there were more than one. I.e. one can discern that A<sub>1</sub> copied everything till a certain page; then A<sub>2</sub> took over; etc.

**A<sup>f</sup> B<sup>fm</sup>** (etc.) Superscript letters often refer to scholia (i.e. ancient notes on the passage: see below, "Σ"), and often they are named after the MSS in which they appear in their fullest form. So e.g. "δέ codd.: τε A<sup>f</sup>" might mean that in

this place all the MSS (including A) read δέ, but in A, the f scholia (i.e. the ancient notes which F has in their fullest form) quote our passage and have τε. (But superscript letters often have quite other meanings -- you have to read the editor's list of *sigla* carefully.)

**abiud.** = *abiudicavit* = "has reassigned". E.g. "haec Euripidi abiud. Page" = "Page reassigned these (words) from Euripides" to someone else; i.e. in Page's judgement Euripides did not write them.

**a.c.** = *ante corr.* = *ante correctionem* = before correction; e.g. "δέ] τε A a.c." means: "all copies (including A) have δέ, but A has τε before correction".

**ad** = "at" or "on". Usually used in citing ancient or modern commentary; so e.g. "Porfyrio ad Hor. c.4.29" = "see Porfyrio's commentary on Horace, Ode 4.29; there Porfyrio quotes our passage".

**add.** = *addidit* = added (tends to mean the same as "suppl.", on which see below)

**addub.** = *addubitavit* = "has doubted"

**al.** = **alii** or = **alibi** = elsewhere

**alii** = others, i.e. (usually) other editors, or other manuscripts.

**alii alia** = "here some (conjecture) some (words); others, other (words)", often written when no conjecture seems right.

**alterum** τε = "the other τε" = "the second of the two τε 's". (For example, see under "del." For its opposite see "prius".)

**an** | **anne...?** "perhaps", introducing the editor's tentative suggestion

**ante** = "before" (both in time and space), e.g. "τε ante corr." = τε before correction.

**ap.** = **apud** = "at". See "ad"

**a.r.** = *ante rasuram*, "before erasure".

**ca.** = *circa* = "about, approximately".

**cens.** = *censuit* (pl. *censuerunt*) = "judged", "considered".

**cett.** = *ceteri codices*, "the other manuscripts"

**cf.** = *confer* = compare. "Cf." is often followed by the number of a passage, in which you will find a usage similar to that which the editor posits here. (In old editions you sometimes see "cp." = "compare")

**ci.** = **cj.** = **conj.** (q.v.)

**cl.** = **coll.**

**cod(d).** = *codex* (*codices*) = mss. = manuscripts. E.g. "τε codd." = all MSS have this, but it seems wrong. Cf. "emend."

**coll.** = *collato codice* (pl. *collatis codicibus*) = lit. "with that MS collated" (i.e. after collating that MS); or else = *collato loco* | *lectione* = lit. "with that place | reading compared" (i.e. after comparing that place or reading with this one -- for an example, see under "def.").

**conj.** = *conicit* (*coniecit*, *conieci*) = "conjectures" ("conjectured", "I conjecture"). So e.g. "te conj. Wil." = "Wilamowitz conjectured te". Or e.g. "τε conieci" = "I have conjectured τε" (i.e. "τε is my conjecture").

**cont.** = *continuavit* (pl. *continuaverunt*) = "continued (to)" e.g. "10-12 El. cont. Smith" = "Unlike others, Smith thinks that Electra (who has been speaking up to verse 9) continues to verse 12."

**cont.** = *contulit* = compared.

**corr.** = *correctio* = correction.

**damn.** = *damnavit* = "condemned", i.e. thought corrupt.

**deest** or pl. *desunt* = (this word) is missing, [these words] are missing). E.g. "τε deest L" = τε is missing in L. (Compare "om." "Om." is normally used when the modern editor feels certain that the omission was made in error; "deest", when he feels less certain of this. *Deest* and *desunt* are used especially for inscriptions and papyri; see e.g. under "ll.") 'Deest' sometimes indicates that the evidence of a papyrus is unavailable for this letter/word/passage (because the papyrus is damaged or its reading for some other reason is illegible)

**def.** = *defendit* = defends, or (pf.) has defended. E.g. "τε def. Hude coll. 7.21.3" = "Hude defends τε here, comparing its use at 7.21.3 with its use here."

**del.** = *delevit* = "deleted", or **delevi** = "I have deleted", e.g. "alterum τε del. Wil." = "Wil. deleted the 2nd τε". (For more about this see under "secl.")

**dett.** = *deteriores* (*codices*) = inferior MSS.

**dist.** = *distinxit* = has punctuated. Often refers to a period; e.g. "post τε dist. Hude" = "Hude punctuates with a full stop after τε."

**dub.** = *dubius* = doubtful or *dubitanter* = doubtfully.

**e** or **ex** = "from" or "on the basis of". E.g. "ὁμῶς ᾧν] ὁμοίως Leutsch e schol." = "the MSS have ὁμῶς ᾧν. Leutsch, unlike us, emends that to ὁμοίως on the basis of the scholium here" (i.e. because the scholium has, or implies, that reading here). Or e.g. "-βρόντα ] -βρέντα conj. Snell e *Pae.* 12.9" = "Snell conjectures that -βρόντα, given by the MSS, is a corruption of the very rare form -βρέντα, which occurs in *Paeon* 12, line 9"

**edd.** = *editores* = editors. **edd. vett.** = *editores veteres* = old (usually 15th or 16th-century, and Italian) editors or editions. So e.g. "alterum τε del. edd.vett." = "earlier editors deleted the 2nd τε". (These "edd. vett." are sometimes cited because they may have used good MSS now lost.)

**ed. pr.** = *editio princeps* = the first printed edition.

**em.** = **emend.** = *emendavit* (*emendat*) = emended (emends). Used when all the MSS are plainly wrong (see "codd."). E.g. in his text an editor prints ... τε..., and in his apparatus says: "τε] δε codd. (emend. Wil.)" = "the best MSS have δε; the τε which I print is an emendation, probably right, by Wilamowitz".

**exp.** = *expunxit*: has deleted.

**fere** = "almost" or "in general"

**fin.** or **ad fin.** or **sub fin.** = at or towards the end (of the line, passage, page, etc.)

**fort.** or **fors.** = *fortasse* or *forsan* = perhaps; conceivably. (I.e. the editor stresses that he is guessing.)

**fr.** = *fragmentum* = fragment

**gl.** = *glossa* = gloss

**γρ.** or **gr.** = γράφεται (pl. γράφονται) = (lit.) "is written" ("are written") -- applies to variant readings which are labelled as such in the MS itself, usually by this same abbreviation." So e.g. "δέ] τε γρ. A<sup>2</sup>" means that next to δέ, the second hand in A (e.g. a corrector) has written "γρ. τε" (or "τε γράφεται"), meaning that he has seen that variant reading in another MS. (When the variant is *not* thus labelled in the MS itself, our apparatus has not "γρ." but "v.l.", for which see below.) Often the nature of these additions is discussed in the modern editor's Preface.

**h.v.** = *hunc versum* = "this verse"

**iam** = "already", usually with the name of a scholar whose emendation was already close to the truth (cf. *praeunte* below).

**i.m.** = *in margine* (see "marg.")

**indic.** = *indicavit* (pl. *indicaverunt*) = "indicated", especially of a lacuna, e.g. "post h. v. lac. indic. Smith" = "Smith marked a lacuna after this verse"

**inf.** = *infra* = "below".

**inf.** = *inferior* = "inferior", lower, later; or = *infra* = "below".

**init.** = *initium* or *ad initium* = "near the beginning" (of the line, of the word, etc.)

**ins.** = *inseruit* = inserted

**inscr.** = *inscriptum* (or *-a*) = written into; or = *inscriptio*.

**interl.** = *inter lineas* = "this word is interlinear", written between the lines.

**i.r.** = *in rasura* (see "ras")

**i.t.** = *in textu* = in the text, in the text itself.

**lac.** = *lacuna* = lacuna, i.e. a gap in the transmitted text.

**lect.** = *lectio* = reading, i.e. (usually) the word(s) that a MS has in this place.

**lit.** or **in lit.** = in *litura* = "on top of an erasure", or a blot (see "ras.")

**ll.** = **litt.** = *litterae* = letters. E.g. "desunt ca. 15 ll.", "about 15 letters are missing".

**loc.** = *loco citato* = in the passage cited

**loc.** = *locum* or *locus* = place (in a work), e.g. *ad locum* = "at (that) place", or *loc. coll.* = (lit.) "with (that) place compared".

**malim** = "I would prefer", expressing the editor's tentative preference

**m.** = *manus* = "hand", i.e. copyist

**marg.** or **mg.** = *margen* = margin. "τε in mg." = "τε (was written) in the margin".

**m.r.** = *manus recentior* = a more recent copyist

**ms(s)** = manuscripts (no difference between this and "codd.")

**mut.** = *mutavit* = has changed

**nonnulli** = *nonnulli editores* = some editors

**nota** = "indication of speaker", in dramatic texts, e.g. "Chor. trib. A: nulla nota B"  
= "manuscript A marks this line as the Chorus's but manuscript B does not indicate the speaker"

**numeri** = 'meter'

**olim** = "once", of a suggestion later withdrawn, or regarded as superseded, by its author

**om.** = *omittit* or *omisit* = omits or omitted. E.g. "τε om. A" = τε is missing in A (lit. "A omits τε" -- but probably not deliberately).

**P.** (PP.) = Π (pl. ΠΠ) = Pap. (pl. papp.) = papyrus. E.g. "τε P. Berol." = "the Berlin papyrus has τε here", or e.g. "τε P.Oxy. 1356" = the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1356 has τε, or "τε Π<sup>corr</sup>" = "in the papyrus τε was written by the corrector". (Good libraries have editions of all the papyri; and if a reading is important to you, it is sometimes worthwhile to look these up. For a papyrus is usually an *ancient* copy of the text, usually 3rd c. B.C. to 3rd c. A.D.; and its modern edition usually has a commentary, in which the editor may give you his expert impression of what that copy is worth generally, and perhaps also offer his own, very acute opinions about the reading in question.)

**p.c.** = *post correctionem* = "after correction" (see under "a.c.").

**pler.** = *plerique* = "very many or most" (editors or MSS).

**plur.** = *plures* = "most" (editors or MSS).

**possis** = "you could", i.e. consider or try this very tentative conjecture.

**pot. qu.** = *potius quam* = '(is) more likely than', 'rather than' e.g. (re a papyrus reading) "N] pot. qu. Λ" = "the letter may seem to be a *lambda*, but it is more likely a *nu*."

**p.r.** = *post rasuram*, after an erasure

**praeunte / praemonente** = "with (so-and-so) preceding (i.e. leading the way)", used of an emendation that is indebted to some observation, suggestion, warning, or objection by a prior scholar.

**prius** (or **prior**) = the earlier (of the two); e.g. "prius τε" = the first τε (for its opposite, see "alterum").

**pro** = "instead of, in place of", e.g. "δε pro τε A" = "A has δε instead of τε".

**prob.** = (*ad*)*probavit* = "has agreed, has approved" (or = the present participle *probante*); e.g. "τε coni. Hude prob. Wil." = "Hude conjectured τε ; Wilamowitz agreed" (or abl. "with Wil. agreeing").

**quo servato...** = "retaining which, ...", indicating a reading to be adopted or a suggestion to be considered elsewhere in the passage if one retains the present reading in the text

**ras.** = **in ras.** = *in rasura* = on, on top of, an erasure, e.g. "τϵ in ras. A" = "A has τϵ (written) over an erasure".

**recc.** = *recentiores*, lit. "later (MSS)". For Latin MSS this usually means 15th, 16th-century Italian; for Gk. it means late Byzantine. The recc. are usually derivative (all copied from copies of the capital MSS), yet sometimes they alone preserve some ancient readings, which they got by collation (i.e. they took readings from good ancient MSS now lost).

**recte** = rightly. Usually used when the editor is citing someone else's conjecture, which he thinks right.

**rell.** = *reliqui* = the other (MSS), the remaining (MSS)

**s.** = **saec.** = *saeculum* = century.

**Σ** (pl. **ΣΣ**) = *scholium* (pl. *scholia*), i.e. Hellenistic or Byzantine note(s) on this passage. Many of these notes originated in ancient commentaries, which were published separately from the text and resembled modern commentaries. In the early middle ages, they ceased to be copied (so that hardly any survive, except in a few papyrus fragments); but in the early middle ages, many remarks taken from them were written in the margins of the texts themselves. So modern editors always scrutinize the scholia, because some quote or reflect the text as it was in ancient times, perhaps in a purer state.

**Σ<sup>abc</sup>** = the scholion or (pl.) scholia on this passage in manuscripts A, B, C.

**sc.** = **scil.** = *scilicet* = no doubt, certainly.

**schol.** (pl. *scholl.*) = scholium (scholia), or (sometimes) scholiast. (See above, Σ).

**scripsi** = "I have written"; e.g. "τϵ scripsi: de codd." -- i.e. "τϵ is my emendation; the MSS have δϵ".

**secl.** = *seclisit* = "has bracketed" as interpolated or out of place. "*Secludere* is normally used for text that is regarded as genuine but has somehow landed in the wrong place: it will be found frequently in the apparatus of a text which we know was left unfinished by the author, e.g. Lucretius's *de rerum natura*. *Delere* is normally used for text that is regarded as spurious" (thus Mark Possanza in his review of *Scribes and Scholars*, *BMCR* for 02.07.06.)

**sim.** = *similia* = similar (words); see "vel sim."

**s.l.** = *supra lineam* = above the line (in effect, means the same as "s.s.")

**sq.** = *sequens* (pl. *sequentia*) = following; e.g. (a note by Snell, referring to a blank space in line 3 of a papyrus): "3 sq. fort. ζ" = "the following letter perhaps is ζ."

**s.s.** = **sscr.** = **suprascr.** = *suprascriptum* (pl. *suprascripta*) = this word (or words) written above the line.

**stat.** = *statuit* (pl. *statuerunt*) = "fixed / set up / ordained", usually of a lacuna, cf. "indic." above

**subscr.** = *subscriptum* (pl. *subscripta*) = this word (or words) is written below the line.

**sup.** = *supra* = above, or *superior*.

**suppl.** = *supplevit* (or *supplet*) = "completed", i.e. by restoring; i.e. supplied. E.g. in my text I print in diamond brackets a word that the MSS omitted, e.g. "<τ<ε>", and my apparatus says "τ<ε> suppl. Wil." = "Wilamowitz supplied τ<ε>".

**suprascr.** -- see "s.s."

**susp.** = *suspiciatus est* = "suspected" or "doubted" the authenticity of a reading or passage

**s.v.** = *sub voce* = under the word or heading; e.g. "τ<ε> Suda s.v. Ἀρχέλαος", i.e. the Suda (a Byzantine encyclopedia) has τ<ε> where it quotes this passage in its entry for Archelaos.

**tent.** = *tentavit* = (lit.) "attempted", tried. "tent." marks a conjecture that could be right, but is very uncertain.

**traic.** = *traiecit* (pl. *traiecerunt*) = "transferred" a passage or phrase to another, specified location in the text

**transp.** | **transt.** = *transposuit* | *transtulit* = "transposed", changed the word order or line order.

**trib.** = *tribuit* (pl. *tribuerunt*) = "attributed / ascribed / assigned" to an author or interpolator, or to a character in a drama.

**tum** = "then", usually introducing a reading that it seems right to adopt if we also adopt a reading mentioned previously.

**v.** (pl. **vv.**) = *versus* = verse(s). Often used not for "verse" in our sense but just for a "line" of writing.

**vel** = or.

**vel sim.** = *vel simile* (pl. *vel similia* or *-es*) = "or some similar word(s)"; "or some similar conjecture(s)" (often applied to mere conjectures that are plainly not worth much).

**vett.** = *veteres* (*codices* | *editores* | *editiones*) = old (MSS | editors | editions) (See above under "edd.")

**vd.** = *vide* = "see" (imperative).

**vid.** = *videtur* = seems; usually in the form "ut vid." = as it seems; apparently.

**v.l.** (pl. **vv.ll.**) = *varia lectio* (*variae lectiones*) = variant reading(s) in the MSS. Usually they are rather unimpressive variants that look like mere conjectures, perhaps ancient, perhaps Italian renaissance. (There is a difference between this and "γ<ο>". On that see "γ<ο>").

**vit.** = *vita* = life, referring to an ancient biography; e.g. "vit. Thuc. 3" referring to the third paragraph of the ancient life of Thucydides.

**vox** (pl. *voces*) = word(s). (In classical Latin, this is the normal word for "word".)

**vulg.** = *vulgo* = commonly. Often refers to the corrupt, and much contaminated, 'vulgate' text of the renaissance.

X sometimes = Σ.

: **colon** in the apparatus separates different variants and / or conjectures

] **single square** bracket in the apparatus separates the reading printed in the text (= usually that given by most MSS) from the variants and conjectures. For examples, see under "e or ex" and "emend."

~ The 'swung dash' is used by some editors (e.g. Barrett, Diggle) to mean 'but not', e.g. "nonne] non A (~A<sup>c</sup>)" = the text of A has the incorrect *non*, but a corrector wrote *nonne*

## SIGNS IN THE TEXT ITSELF

[...] Square brackets, or in recent editions wavy brackets "{...}", enclose *words etc. that an editor thinks should be deleted* (see "del.") or marked as out of place (see "secl.").

[...] Square brackets in a **papyrus text**, or in an **inscription**, enclose places where *words have been lost through physical damage*. If this happens in mid-line, editors use "[...]". If only the end of the line is missing, they use a single bracket "[..." If the line's beginning is missing, they use "...]" Within the brackets, often each dot represents one missing letter.

[...] Double brackets enclose *letters or words deleted by the medieval copyist himself*.

(...) Round brackets are used to supplement words abbreviated by the original copyist; e.g. in an inscription: "trib(unus) mil(itum) leg(ionis) III"

<...> diamond (= elbow = angular) brackets enclose *words etc. that an editor has added* (see "suppl.")

† An *obelus* (pl. *obeli*) means that the word(s etc.) is very plainly corrupt, but the editor cannot see how to emend. If only one word is corrupt, there is only one obelus, which precedes the word; if two or more words are corrupt, two obeli enclose them. (Such at least is the rule--but that rule is often broken, especially in older editions, which sometimes dagger several words using only one obelus.) To dagger words in this way is to "obelize" them.

A **dot under a letter** (used for papyrus texts, inscriptions) means that an "a", for example, *seems* to be an "a", but the traces are very faint and it could conceivably be some other letter.



POSTSCRIPT: Why even today is an apparatus usually written in Latin? Mainly for brevity. Latin can be made more laconic than any modern language; and over the centuries the abbreviations have evolved into a sort of short-hand, extremely clear yet of great subtlety.

But why should one ever look at the apparatus? I have known full professors at "major research institutions" who never did, and even in hard places seemed hostile to all speculations about the text. But even the soundest classical text, e.g. that of Vergil, is partly a *construction* by modern editors, who are not infallible (on Vergil see e.g. Edward Courtney, "The Formation of the Text of Vergil", *BICS* 28, 1981, p. 13-29); and the worst texts, e.g. that of Propertius, are often so corrupt that in a given place *each particular MS has only gibberish*. In such a case modern editors can construct a tentative text only because each MS seems to retain different scraps of the truth. For an especially good, long, grippingly interesting analysis of a bad text, see J. L. Butrica, "Editing Propertius", *CQ*, n.s. 47, 1997, p. 176-208.