

JAN-OLOF TJÄDER, *Some ancient letter-forms in the later Roman cursive and early mediaeval script and the script of the notarii*, in «Scrittura e civiltà» (ISSN: 0392-1697), 6 (1982), pp. 5-21.

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JAN-OLOF TJÄDER

SOME ANCIENT LETTER-FORMS
IN THE LATER ROMAN CURSIVE AND EARLY
MEDIAEVAL SCRIPT AND THE SCRIPT OF THE NOTARII

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What I am putting forward here is not the finished result of a fully documented study. Such a study would hardly seem to be possible in the field with which I shall be dealing. I only wish to suggest the possibility of a hitherto little regarded graphic connection¹.

1 I start from the well-known fact that, as regards the Roman cursive script — from the 2nd century A.D. onwards, at any rate — we have to take into account two opposite poles or branches: on the one hand, an official or administrative script and, on the other, a private script. Up to about A.D. 300, the official or administrative script² is exclusively what is traditionally called the Ancient Roman cursive; the private script is the developing Later Roman cursive. In its most marked forms, the official script was a pure chancery hand, while, in its lower and simpler stages, it may be included in the category of common script: in the intermediate space between the two branches, there was, of course, a certain amount of confusion. Without going any further into the details, I shall simply assert that there was certainly, as early as

1. The text of this paper is, in the main, identical with that of a lecture which I gave at the meeting of the Comité international de paléographie in Switzerland in 1979 entitled « De quelques lettres anciennes dans la cursive récente romaine et de leur rôle dans le développement ultérieur de l'écriture latine ». A very brief résumé was printed in the final report of this meeting (*Le cinquième colloque international de paléographie latine* [Saint-Gall, Berne et Genève, 19-22 septembre 1979]. *Les Actes du Colloque* par M.-C. GARAND, in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 31 (1981), pp. 67-76, on p. 73).

2. Henceforward, I shall, for the sake of simplicity, use only the term « official » (« official script », « official use »), including in this term the ideas of both « official » and « administrative ».

the 2nd century A.D., a clear antithesis between the official script and the private script or, if the reader will, between the Ancient Roman cursive and the Later Roman cursive and that this antithesis was to subsist and be further accentuated during the following century³. This state of affairs may be illustrated, for example, by the letters *e* and *u*:

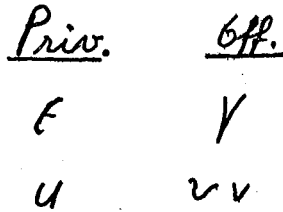


Fig. 1

2 By about A.D. 300, the Ancient Roman cursive had been replaced by the Later Roman cursive in practically all applications. This is to say, in the first place, that what had previously been solely the private script was now the universal common script and that a number of official scripts which belonged to the system of the Later Roman cursive⁴ were developing or had developed.

3. My own view of the development of the Roman script up to about A.D. 300 will be found in TjÄDER, *Considerazioni* (cf. also TjÄDER, *Unzialschrift*). A very thorough and valuable examination of the subject has been made by E. CASAMASSIMA and E. STARAZ, *Varianti e cambio grafico nella scrittura dei papiri latini. Note paleografiche*, in *Scrittura e civiltà* 1 (1977), pp. 9-110 [cf. J.-O. TjÄDER in *Eranos* 75 (1977), pp. 139-41]. There is an excellent survey, which also contains some new ideas, in the chapter entitled «Die lateinische Schrift im Altertum» in Bischoff's *Paläographie*, pp. 71-106. Armando Petrucci's *Problemi e prospettive di storia della scrittura romana fra I e III secolo d. C.* is awaited with interest; it was announced as being in the press in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* in the article by G. Cavallo, quoted in n. 32 (p. 121, n. 7). Cf. also the end of n. 5.

4. Kresten (*Auszeichnungsschriften*, pp. 12 ff.) has given these new official scripts the summary name of *litterae officiales*; a general characteristic of these scripts is their vertical direction. Their most advanced forms, which were used partly in certain provincial chanceries and partly as the closing script in records of *gesta* and *acta* and for the address line in certain official letters, are also characterized by a certain degree of elongation. See, on this script, besides Kresten and the literature which he quotes, TjÄDER, *La b merovingica*, pp. 62 ff.

However, the Ancient Roman cursive did not by any means disappear. It remained in a pure form, presumably until about A.D. 600, as a monopoly script in the Imperial chancery⁵, and, in a sometimes slightly mixed form, it was still in use in the first half of the 7th century (cf. P. Tjäder 21, dating from A.D. 625) for the opening line — which contained the indication of date and place — in records of *gesta* and *acta*⁶. This was also perhaps in continuation of an earlier practice. In the common script, the figures retained even after A.D. 300 the appearance that they had in the Ancient Roman cursive⁷. All these circumstances are well known.

3 However, besides these, so to speak, collective continuations or applications, there was a certain continued use also of isolated letters, and it is these letters — in particular, a couple of them — that I am interested in here. The clear cases are *b*, *d*, *o*, *s* and *u*:

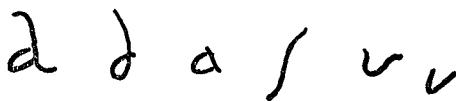


Fig. 2

It should at once be noted that the form of *u* on the left was always written above the line, for example, *-rum*:

5. Fundamental studies of this script — the so-called *litterae caelestes* — have been made by Jean Mallon (*L'écriture de la chancellerie impériale romaine, Acta Salmanticensia, Filosofía y Letras*, IV, 2, Salamanca 1948) and Robert Marichal (*L'écriture latine de la chancellerie impériale*, in *Aegyptus* 32 [1952], pp. 336-50). See also KRESTEN, *Auszeichnungsschriften*, pp. 2-7. Before about A.D. 300, the Imperial chancery script differed from other chancery script probably only on account of its larger size and its greater degree of stylization. An interesting report on *sacrae litterae* dating from A.D. 204 is quoted by S. HORNSHÖJ-MÖLLER, *Die Beziehung zwischen der älteren und der jüngeren römischen Kursivschrift. Versuch einer kulturhistorischen Deutung*, in *Aegyptus* 60 (1980) (pp. 1-63), p. 41.

6. Originally (in Egypt), only for the consular dating and, as time went on — in Italy, at any rate — for the whole line. See TJÄDER, *Scritt. misteriosa*; MARICHAL, *L'écriture latine* cit. and *Scriptorium* 9 (1955), pp. 144-45; TJÄDER, *Pap. Pommersfelden*, p. 33 n. 78; KRESTEN, *Auszeichnungsschriften*, pp. 7-12.

7. J. MALLON, *Pour une nouvelle critique des chiffres dans les inscriptions latines gravées sur pierre*, in *Emerita* 16 (1948), pp. 14-45, and *Pal. rom.*, pp. 123-41.



Fig. 3

l and *n* are less convincing cases and are anyhow of no interest as regards the arguments that I shall deploy here:



Fig. 4

4 It is well known that a rounded *d*, sloping to the left, is frequently to be met with in later book-hands: I confine myself to mentioning the Visigothic script in Spain, the so-called pre-Caroline scripts in northern Italy, the Beneventan script and the Gothic script. It is also well known that there was a *u* written above the line, alone or in a more or less recognizable combination with some other letter⁸, in the book-hands which developed in what is usually called the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages, during the period of « disintegration of scripts ». For example, in the Visigothic book-hand, there is an isolated *u*, unconnected with any letter, written above the line.

5 The idea that we have continuity here inevitably presents itself. Generally speaking, such a continuity would be logical, since the great majority of the book-hands which developed during the period of « disintegration of scripts » have cursive script as their basis.

6 Nevertheless, not much attention has been paid to this possibility. In so far as it has been described in detail, the rounded *d* — in most cases sloping to the left — has been qualified as « uncial », and the *u* written above the line has far from always been traced back to its natural origin. Under these circumstances, an attempt to elucidate the state of affairs may be justified.

8. Cf. below, § 18.

7 I begin with the letters *b*, *o* and *s* and take *d* and *u* afterwards. The questions that I shall try to answer will be as follows. In what connections were the ancient forms of these letters written in the period of the Later Roman cursive, i.e. after about A.D. 300? How long were they in use? Is it conceivable that they had some place in the later development of script⁹?

8 First, the ancient *s*. In the period of the Later Roman cursive, the ancient form of *s* (see above, Fig. 1) was written exclusively in the abbreviation *cons.* or *conss.* (cf. n. 11) for *cons(ule)*, *cons(ulibus)* or *cons(ulatu)*, i.e. in practice as a final letter. There are examples in papyri from Egypt¹⁰; I know of five cases from Italy, the last of which (in P. Tjäder 33, dating from A.D. 541) is the latest known to me¹¹. The use may even in itself be said to be official, and, of the eight texts in which I have found the abbreviation *cons.* or *conss.* with the ancient form of *s*, seven are also clearly official¹². It is hardly likely that this *s* survived the first half of the 6th century: from A.D. 535 onwards, there were, with few exceptions, only post-consulates, and *post consulatum* was normally abbreviated to *p.c.* In cursive script, the letter was impractical, since, in its rigid form, it did not permit of being connected either to the left or to the right. It has no place in the later development of script.

9 The ancient *b* (see above, Fig. 1) was in more general use than the ancient *s*, but a couple of clearly special cases may be noted.

9. By « the later development of script », I mean primarily what I described in § 4 as « the book-hands which developed ... ».

10. TJÄDER 1, p. 113 n. 1, with three examples (not a complete collection of instances) = CPL 264, 230, 199 *b-c*.

11. P. Tjäder 33 (record of *gesta municipalia*), l. 10, *cons.* or possibly *conss.* for *cons(ule)*; cf. TJÄDER 2, P. 33 n. 11. The other cases (in chronological order) are as follows: P. Tjäder 59 (= TJÄDER, *Pap. Pommersfelden*, and *CbLa* XII, 547) (record of negotiations in the presence of a high-ranking official), l. 10 *con]ssst.* or possibly *con]ssst.* for *cons(ula)(u)* (A.D. 433); P. Tjäder 1, ll. 57 and 67 *conss.* for *cons(ulatu)* (papers concerning a patrimony owned by a high-ranking official; A.D. 445/46); P. Tjäder 47-48 (inventory of the *arca* of the praetorian prefect; first half of the 6th century), l. 8 *cons(ulatu)*. The case in P. Tjäder 59 is the only one in which the abbreviation is not *cons.* or *conss.*

12. Cf. n. 11. No judgement is possible as regards CPL 230, as there it is a question of an isolated consular dating.

One is in the word *suscripsi* (*suscribsi*) or generally in the forms of the verb *subscribere* (*suscribere*) and the other in the concluding formula of a letter (*bene vale*, *bene valeas* or *valeatis*). There are examples of both these uses from Egypt¹³; from Italy, I know of an example of *bene vale* written with the ancient *b* even in the middle of the 6th century¹⁴, and the latest case of the ancient *b* in the verb *suscribere* that I have found dates from A.D. 572; it is in P. Tjäder 14-15, a record of *gesta municipalia*¹⁵. Both the uses are clearly official¹⁶, and the same no doubt applies to the cases in which the ancient *b* was used for whole letters or documents. From Egypt, there are several cases in letters written by officials¹⁷; as regards Italy, another category — to which I shall return later — is to be noted, viz. records of public transactions (usually *gesta municipalia*). I have found the ancient *b* in four such records dating from the period A.D. 433-504¹⁸; on the other hand, it is absent in later records (nine items dating from between A.D. 540 and 625)¹⁹. In all probability, the general use of the old *b* did not

13. Cf. TjÄDER 1, p. 100 n. 3 (not a complete collection of instances). P. Strasb. I, 42, is *CPL*, Annexe 25 (where the incorrect form *subs.*), P. Gen. 62 is *CPL*, Annexe 27 (I think the first word is *Opto*, not *Et*), P. Lugd. Bat. II, Z, is *CPL*, Annexe 28 (where the words *bene valere te cupimus* are missing).

14. In P. Tjäder 55 (« papyrus Butini »); cf. TjÄDER, *Genfer Pap.* Further instances in P. Tjäder 1, dating from the years 445-46, ll. 35 and 43, *bene valeas* and *valeatis* respectively.

15. Col. III, 4, *suscriberent*. See moreover TjÄDER 1, p. 100 n. 2; as regards *suscribere*, P. Tjäder 32, l. 15 (A.D. 540), *suscribendam*, should be added to the examples quoted there, and cf. P. Tjäder 34, 74-75, *scribendum*.

16. It is a question of a signing that is in one way or another official (by a public official) (in P. Tjäder 1, which is a copy — perhaps with the exception of the last three lines — the writing of the *b* in *bene* certainly reproduces the writing of the original). It may be mentioned that the witnesses who signed the private documents in Ravenna (written by *tabelliones* or *forenses*) always used the later *b* in the word *suscribsi*. I shall return to P. Tjäder 32 later.

17. See TjÄDER 1, p. 100 n. 3, with an incomplete collection of instances. P. Lond. III, 731, is *CPL* 142 and *ChLA* III, 205; P. Strasb. 1 is *CPL* 262; P. Ryl IV, 623, is *CPL* 263 and *ChLA* IV, 253; P. Rainer is *CPL* 267.

18. In chronological order, P. Tjäder 59 (cf. n. 11); P. Tjäder 10-11 dating from A.D. 489, P. Tjäder 12 (Marini 84) from A.D. 491, and P. Tjäder 29 from A.D. 504 (the last there are *gesta municipalia*; in P. Tjäder 29, there are exceptions on l. 6 (*caelebraverit*), l. 8 (*Februariorum*) and l. 10 (*vocabulum*)).

19. P. Tjäder 31 dating from A.D. 540, P. Tjäder 33 from A.D. 541, P. Tjäder 9 and 26 from the middle of the 6th century, P. Tjäder 8 from A.D. 564,

last much beyond A.D. 540²⁰. The last known case, produced by Jean Mallon, is to be found in an inscription from Ephesus dated A.D. 585, which is a copy of a Greek rescript with Latin dating²¹.

It is certain that this form of the letter did not survive beyond A.D. 600, except for a rudimentary use in the « scrittura iniziale »²² for a couple of decades. The letter had disadvantages: it did not look like a *b* and, as the terminal point in its development, it had become practically identical with the new *d*. The only difference was that *b* could be connected with the following letter:

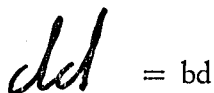


Fig. 5

Like the ancient *s*, it did not leave any traces in the later development of script.

10 As an interim summary, I may say that the ancient forms of *b* and *s* were forms which were conservatively adhered to but which had no future and did not survive beyond late antiquity. However, the study of them has yielded an indication: that the sphere in which they were used was the official or administrative script, and in Italy, the records of *gesta* are conspicuous in this respect, especially as regards *b*.

11 I can be brief as regards the letter *o*. It is evident that the ancient way of writing this letter, which implied disarticulated writing, survived in the period of the Later cursive, alongside the current way of writing, which was that of the Later Roman cursive:

P. Tjäder 14-15 from A.D. 572, P. Tjäder 4-5 from A.D. 552-75, P. Tjäder 27 from the second half of the 6th century (see *CbLA* IX, 406) and the late P. Tjäder 21 from A.D. 625. P. Tjäder 9, 26 and 27 are brief fragments. I now think that P. Tjäder 9 and 8 derive from the same scribe.

20. A late, deviant case is the curious occurrence in P. Tjäder 13, which dates from A.D. 553 and is a deed of gift written by a *forensis*, who used the ancient *b* in about two-thirds of the cases. He also has the ancient *d* in one case (l. 11, *eisdem*).

21. MALLON, *Pal. rom.*, pp. 112-13 and 117; TJÄDER, *Et ad latus*, p. 115 n. 76.

22. See § 2 and especially TJÄDER, *Scritt. misteriosa*, p. 210.



Fig. 6

In certain cases, especially in the new chancery scripts (see § 2), the choice of the disarticulated way of writing could have been determined by the large size²³, but in other cases, there is no technical basis for the choice and it must, as in the cases of *b* and *s*, have been a question of conservative adherence to an older form. There is a clear preponderance of official hands; in the cases in which the letter occurs in private documents, it is more often than not a question of witnesses' signatures written by persons in official positions²⁴. In spite of a certain degree of clumsiness (the connection with following letters had to be made in an artificial way; see Tjäder 1, 109-10), this form of *o* was still in existence around and after A.D. 600²⁵. As far as I know, it did not, however, leave any traces in the later development of script; it may have survived in documentary script and in private script but, generally speaking, it seems logical to think that it succumbed to the smoother, current, later form. Thus, on the whole, the ancient *o* fits into the picture given by the letters *b* and *s*.

12 I now pass on to the ancient forms of *d* and *u* and begin with the ancient *u*. Three different uses for this letter are to be noted within the framework of the Later cursive script. In the first place, it could be written above the line — and this is, gene-

23. Cf. TjÄDER, *La b merovingica*, 72-73.

24. As regards P. Tjäder 1-28 (TjÄDER 1, pp. 109-10, very briefly), see, for example, P. Tjäder 16, ll. 50-59 (probably an *ex caballarius sacri stabuli*) with isolated cases, especially clearly in l. 53 *Iohanne*, and ll. 81-90 (an *exceptor illustris potestatis*) with several cases, for example, l. 81 *Iohannis*; P. Tjäder 20, 91-97 (an *ex epodecta* (= *ypodecta*)) throughout. There are many occurrences in P. Tjäder 8 (record of *gesta* dating from A.D. 564). On P. Tjäder 29-59, I refer the reader to the palaeographical sections («Schrift») in the introductions to the texts in TjÄDER 2. On P. Tjäder 10-11 A and 34 and P. Tjäder 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 14-15 B, 18-19, 20, 21, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37 and 38-41 A, see also the first Italian part of *CbLA*.

25. There are some cases in P. TjÄDER 21, which dates from A.D. 625 and is the last record of *gesta* among the Ravenna texts. The clearest cases are on l. 3, *notum*, l. 8, *Donus*, and l. 9, *Heraclio*.

rally speaking, characteristic of the ancient *u* in the period of the Later cursive script — in a large size and often with a wave-like appearance, without being connected with the following letter (cf. above, Fig. 1, the left-hand form). This form is fairly common both in Egypt and in Italy and is well documented in official texts; in Italy, it is most common in the connections *-rum* and *-bus* and occurs in these connections throughout the 6th century and even in the first half of the 7th century²⁶.

In the middle of the 4th century, *-que*, for example, might be written thus in Egypt:



Fig. 7

In the second place, in a small size, *u*, written high up in the line, might be connected with the following letter. Here is an example which probably dates from the 5th century:

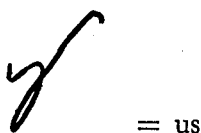


Fig. 8

I have found this variant of the letter, which also seems to have been official, practically only in papyri from Egypt²⁷. From Italy, for the period in question here, I know of only two isolated cases, which are difficult to judge; the later of the two dates from about

26. The material is in TJÄDER, *Scritt. curiale*, pp. 15 ff. (also regarding the Tablettes Albertini); as regards P. Tjäder 1-28, see also TJÄDER 1, pp. 113-16. For further reference cf. n. 24. The form was used in the termination *-bus* in P. Tjäder 38-41, l. 24, dating from A.D. 616-19, and in *-rum* in P. Tjäder 28, l. 7, dating from A.D. 613-41.

27. TJÄDER, *Scritt. curiale*, pp. 15 ff.

A.D. 600²⁸. In Italy, in the 5th and 6th centuries, such a *u* must, as far as can be judged at present, rather have been interpreted as an *a*.

In the third place, the large *u* written above the line could be turned to the right and connected with the following letter by a stroke running downwards. This treatment of the letter is practically limited to a single case, viz. when *u* is preceded by a *q*, and it is practically exclusively attested in Italy, where it is even the rule. Its representation in the script is very characteristic: here is *-que* from P. Tjäder 4-5, dating from the period A.D. 552-75:



Fig. 9

In this case also, the use is predominantly official: this downwards-connected *u* is especially common precisely in P. Tjäder 4-5, which is by far the most comprehensive record of *gesta* that has been preserved and, like the unconnected *u* written above the line (see above), it occurs throughout the 6th century and even in the first half of the 7th century²⁹.

28. P. Tjäder 20, l. 105 (signature of witness), *orrearius*; the second case is P. Tjäder 32, l. 3, dating from A.D. 540, *crededimus* (*-mus* added above the line). The *cristianus* in P. Tjäder 4-5B, VII, 10 (see TjÄDER 3, Pl. 29) is not comparable, since there it is a question of the large *u* written above the line and occasionally connected with the following letter in a different position than in the normal *que*, *qui* and *quo*. However, I have found a similar *u* in a document dating from A.D. 777 (Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi E VII 214 6, last published by L. BERTINI, *Peredeo vescovo di Lucca*, Pisa 1973, pp. 25-27, and reproduced in *Archivio paleografico Italiano* I, Pl. 6) in the words *urnas* (l. 8) and *superius* (both *u*'s; l. 10). There will be a new edition of this document in the first Italian part of *ChLA*. It is quite possible that there are several examples from approximately this period; I have not pursued the inquiry any further.

29. For the material, see n. 26. The latest instances that I have noted are in P. Tjäder 38-41, dating from A.D. 616-19, l. 37, *sibique* (unclear in the reproduction in TjÄDER 3, Pl. 137) and P. Tjäder 21, dating from A.D. 625, l. 7, *qui*. Here I may also point out that a *v*-shaped *u* could in isolated cases be written on the line, as it is in P. Tjäder 8, dating from A.D. 564 (record of *gesta*).

Both in its unconnected and in its connected forms (the latter in the connections *que*, *qui* and *quo*), the large *u* written above the line was both a practical and a decorative letter. It was employed especially at the end of a line, where it was used to regulate the length of the line. In the common connection *-rum*, for example, it allowed of a ligature (*r + m*) and on account of its position, it was an aid in reading. It is quite clear that it might have had a future even after the 6th century.

13 Finally, there is the ancient *d*, the picture of which is very clear. There is a single form (cf. above, Fig. 1).

There can be no doubt that this ancient *d* was an official letter in the period of the Later Roman cursive. There are a few instances from Egypt; there are several from Italy, including about 100 in the above-mentioned record of *gesta* (P. Tjäder 4-5) and about 25 in another record, which was perhaps written in Rimini (the Italian papyri which I quote here were otherwise generally written in Ravenna)³⁰. The instances in private writings are sporadic. The combinations *de* and *di* predominate, and in the cases in which the ancient *d* occurs in private writings, it is these combinations that are concerned. The latest example of this ancient *d* that I know of from the period in question here dates from about A.D. 600 (in P. Tjäder 46). Scriptorially, this *d* had no disadvantages. It was sufficiently like the later *d* to be identifiable without difficulty and, unlike the latter, could be connected with the following letter. The combination *di*, in particular, was a shorthand form:



Fig. 10

It is clear that this ancient *d*, like the *u* written above the line, could have had a future even after the 6th century.

30. This refers to P. Tjäder 33, dating from A.D. 541. See moreover, as regards P. Tjäder 1-28, TJÄDER 1, pp. 102-3 (also including particulars concerning the Egyptian papyri and the Tablettes Albertini); for further reference, see n. 24.

14 Thus, the possibility of continuity indicated in §§ 5 and 6 is a fact. Even if we had not had the answer at hand, we must have guessed that the ancient cursive forms of *d* and *u* were transmitted into the early mediaeval period. Now we have the answer at hand (cf. above, § 4), and the remaining questions are: exactly which way was taken and which scribes carried on these letter-forms? But I shall first make a couple of remarks on the present study.

15 This study may, it is true, seem to be a thin one. But it is well known that we have a very limited material at our disposal for the study of both the Later Roman cursive and the Ancient Roman cursive. The additional material that could have been produced from inscriptions, marginal notes in MSS. and books written in cursive script would probably not have altered the picture appreciably. A more real difficulty is that of deciding what is private script. In the Egyptian papyri, in particular, one does not find much that can reliably be described as private script³¹ and, on the whole, writing was predominantly an official matter, especially after A.D. 300³². But in Italy, which is still the most important region in respect of this judgement, there is a distinct difference between especially the *tabelliones* and *forenses*, on the one hand (private script), and the *exceptores* (writers of records of *gesta*), on the other (official script). In this connection, it should, of course, be borne in mind that we must not imagine that there were rigid divisions between the different categories of scribes. The example from P. Tjäder 13 quoted in n. 20 is an instructive one.

16 I remarked in § 6 that, where it occurs, in early mediaeval book-hands especially, the rounded *d* sloping to the left has been qualified as « uncial ». It may be that this has perhaps not

31. For another part of the Empire, cf. R. Marichal's classification of the script in the papyrus documents from Dura-Europos in the introduction to *ChLA IX*, 1977, pp. 16-19.

32. Cf. G. CAVALLO, *Dal segno incompiuto al segno negato. Linee per una ricerca su alfabetismo, produzione e circolazione di cultura scritta in Italia nei primi secoli dell'impero*, in *Alfabetismo e cultura scritta nella storia della società italiana. Atti del seminario tenutosi a Perugia il 29-30 marzo 1977*, Perugia 1978 (pp. 119-45), pp. 143-45.

always been intended to be a description of its origin, but one must nevertheless regard the term as doubtful. The *d* of the Uncial script is, of course, that of the Ancient Roman cursive³³, so that, however one considers the question, one still comes back to this source. And it is difficult to find a convincing explanation of why the rounded *d* of the early mediaeval book-hands should have been taken over from Uncial script. The Uncial script was a canonized script, and Jean Mallon has said of it that it had « très peu de vie, très peu d'histoire, peu d'avenir après le huitième siècle, et une importance presque nulle dans l'évolution générale de l'écriture latine » (*Pal. rom.*, p. 103). Besides its occurrence in Uncial script, the rounded *d* sloping to the left occurs in the 6th century — with the exception of the uses pointed out here — only as the designation of the numeral D (cf. above, § 2), but it is impossible that the signs for numerals should have been of any significance in this connection.

17 There is also another half to this question — the letter *u*. The Uncial script cannot, under any circumstances, have been responsible for the propagation of the *u* written above the line, nor are the signs for numerals, in spite of the fact that the ancient, *v*-shaped *u* was used as a sign for V in the 6th century and later, and in spite of the fact that a ligature of a *u* written above the line and an *i* was in use for VI during the same period.

18 As regards *u*, another couple of fields may be defined (cf. § 4), in which the *u* written above the line survives in a more or less special form in early mediaeval script. In the cursive Visigothic script in Spain and the Merovingian diploma script in France, we have this form of *u*, the so-called straight *u*, which is nothing but the *u* written above the line and connected downwards in a somewhat reduced form, released from the letter with which it was once connected³⁴:



Fig. 11

33. See, for example, TJÄDER, *Unzialschrift*, and BISCHOFF, *Paläographie*, pp. 86 ff.

34. See TJÄDER, *Scr. curiale*, p. 29, with further reference, and below, n. 36.

In early-mediaeval « Merovingian » book-hands, the *u* written above the line and connected with the following letter is to be found in a sometimes reduced form³⁵. I have myself assumed that the same *u*, connected with the preceding *q*, gave rise to the special letter *q* in the script of the Papal Curia — which would accordingly have originally been a sign for *qu*³⁶.

19 Now I come to the positive conclusion. We have seen that, among the official texts in which especially the ancient *d* and *u* (but also the ancient *b*, *o* and *s*) can be found, records of *gesta* (usually *gesta municipalia*) occupy a prominent place in Italy³⁷. These records were written by *exceptores*, who, at any rate originally, were stenographers, or possibly by other scribes with equivalent training. When the institution of *gesta* began to weaken (in Italy towards A.D. 600), these *exceptores* may have gone over to the ranks of « ordinary scribes » and possibly they may even earlier have served as book-scribes. But it is really not the *exceptores* but another category of scribe whom I imagine to have been especially the transmitters of the ancient letter-forms discussed here — scribes who were also stenographers and who wrote records, viz. the ecclesiastical *notarii*. We know nothing about their script, except for what we may venture to conjecture, but it would not seem to be a too bold assumption that they practised a script which was very similar to that used by the secular *exceptores*. We can probably assert, with greater certainty, that these *notarii* gradually went over to — or also devoted themselves to — a different scriptorial activity, primarily the writing of documents. P. Tjäder 32, which is an *epistula traditionis* dating from A.D. 540, was, to all appearances, written by a *notarius*, probably in Faenza³⁸, and it contains several of the ancient letter-forms discussed here³⁹. I suspect that a *notarius*

35. See, for example, *EL* no. 68, Pl. XLVII (Corbie, 7th century), l. 4, *quorum*, and BISCHOFF, *Paläographie*, p. 135 n. 18 (Luxeuil), and cf. the following note.

36. TjÄDER, *Script. curiale*. For the basic form of *u*, a reduced form (which gave rise also to the previously mentioned forms, with the exception of that quoted from Corbie), see *ibidem*, pp. 24 ff.

37. For *b*, see §§ 9 and 10; for *o*, see nn. 24 and 25; for *s*, cf. n. 11.

38. For the more detailed demonstration, see TjÄDER 2, P. 32.

39. *u* written above the line and connected with the following letter in l. 1 *cunctoque*, l. 5 *omnibusque*, l. 6 *perceptoque*, and l. 8 *ideoque* (in all cases *-que*); *u* written above the line and unconnected presumably at the end of l. 14, *obty[limus]* (*-mus*); the ancient *b* in l. 15 *suscribendam* (cf. above, n. 15). It has another feature

may also have written P. Tjäder 33, a record of *gesta* which may have been written in Rimini (at any rate not in Ravenna)⁴⁰: this text contains, above all, a considerable number of ancient *d*'s⁴¹. It seems to me to be natural to assume that it was precisely the ecclesiastical *notarii* who, having gone over to secular writing, originally formed and gave a name to the Italian notariate. However, I shall not go in any detail here into this complicated question⁴². Anyhow, there may, as early as the 6th century, have existed in large parts of central and northern Italy an « ecclesiastical » script based on record script and propagated — also by teaching — by *notarii* who were in course of development into « notaries », and this « ecclesiastical » script may obviously also have been transformed into book-hand. It is an established fact that, about the beginning of the second half of the 6th century, book production passed to a large extent into the hands of ecclesiastical institutions.

20 I would thus imagine a graphic connection as follows: ecclesiastical record script of official type (*notarii*, stenographers) > an « ecclesiastical » document script based on this script (*notarii* who had gone over to ordinary, secular writing) > book-hands originating from this « ecclesiastical » document script and containing the ancient *d* or the ancient *u* written above the line or both.

pointing to the record script in the *q*'s written with a shortened or greatly shortened tail in l. 1 *q(uinquenna)l(i)*, l. 5 *omnibusque*, and l. 7 *quinque* (the second *q*). This text has, moreover, also one of the two early cases known from Italy of a small *u* written high up in the line and connected with a following *s* (see above, § 12 with n. 28).

40. I have to refer to TJÄDER 2 (P. 33) in this case also.

41. See above, § 13. The *u* written above the line and connected with the following letter in l. 4 *p]roprietateque* and *omnibusque*, in l. 5 *eiusque* (-*que* in all cases) and in l. 5 *quoquam* (*quo*-); the *u* written above the line and unconnected in l. 4 *fontibus*, *pertinentibus* and *adiacentibus*, in l. 4 *earum*, and in l. 10 *duorum* (-*rum*). In l. 1 *fuertunt*, the *u* written above the line is not connected with the following *n* but with *t* (ligature *r + n*). This record also contains a case of the ancient *s* in *cons.* (or *conss.*) (see above, n. 11), and in l. 1 *dato praetio* it twice has the early way of writing *o* (see above, § 11). The *q* written with a shortened tail (cf. n. 39) is to be found in l. 1 *q(uemque)*, l. 5 (twice) *quod*, l. 9 *eloquitur*, and l. 10 *q(uon)d(am)*.

42. I refer the reader to TJÄDER 1, p. 419 no. 49; TJÄDER, *Pap. Pommersfelden*, pp. 14-16; A. PETRUCCI, *Notarii*, Milano 1958, pp. 7-8, containing some lines of thought similar to that presented here; G. Costamagna in M. AMELOTI - G. COSTAMAGNA, *Alle origini del notariato italiano*, Roma 1975 (*Studi storici sul notariato italiano*, II), pp. 147 ff.

21 This study may also be regarded as part of a personal endeavour to seek a uniform and non-eclectic explanation of the genesis of a certain script or a certain scriptorial phenomenon. This endeavour was the basis of my studies of the Uncial script and of the script of the Papal Curia⁴³. The present study remains to be verified in many respects — in so far as this can be done — but I should be glad if it could be accepted as a provisional result that, in the connections mentioned above, the designation « uncial *d* » (cf. above, § 6) should be deleted; it may cautiously be replaced by the neutral phrase « the rounded *d* »⁴⁴.

43. TjÄDER, *Unzialschrift* (and cf. *Eranos* 78 [1980], p. 73); TjÄDER, *Scritt. curiale*.

44. I have already put forward this suggestion in *Scriptorium* 31 (1977), p. 124 (review of *Ricerche Medievali* VI-IX); it was accepted by Marco Palma in his article *Nonantola e il Sud. Contributo alla storia della scrittura libraria nell'Italia dell'ottavo secolo*, in *Scrittura e civiltà* 3 (1979) (pp. 77-88), p. 82 with n. 21.

In connection with my remarks in § 21, I may be permitted to point out here also (cf. *Eranos* 78 [1980], p. 74) that I consider it very doubtful that the special *g* of the Visigothic script was taken over from the Uncial script and should thus be qualified as « uncial ». This *g* could be placed in the context presented here, but in that case a palaeographic demonstration would seem to be still more difficult.

