

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 49

Reading dates and numbers in Latin and English documents

Many documents are dated not by the modern calendar year (the 'year of the Lord', or *anno domini*), but by the regnal year: the number of years since the ruling monarch came to the throne. '1 Elizabeth I', for example, means the first year of the reign of Elizabeth I. Elizabeth I came to the throne on 17 November 1558, so the year 1 Elizabeth I ran from 17 November 1558 to 16 November 1559.

Until 1752, the year in England began officially on 25 March (Lady Day), and not 1 January. December 1558, for example, was followed by January 1559, and 24 March 1558 by 25 March 1559. The change to 1 January was brought about by an Act of Parliament passed in 1751.

The same Act cut eleven days out of the year 1752 in order to correct a divergence which had arisen over the centuries between the calendar and solar years. Thus Wednesday 2 September 1752 was followed immediately by Thursday 14 September.

Years	
year	<i>annus</i>
in the year (of)	<i>anno</i>
in the year of the Lord	<i>anno domini</i>
in the year of the reign of	<i>anno regni</i>

Months	
month/in the month (of)	<i>mensis</i>
January (of)	<i>Januarii</i>
February	<i>Februarii</i>
March	<i>Martii</i>
April	<i>Aprilis</i>
May	<i>Maii</i>
June	<i>Junii</i>
July	<i>Julii</i>
August	<i>Augusti</i>
September	<i>Septembris</i> or vij ^{ris} or *7 ^{ris}
October	<i>Octobris</i> or viij ^{ris} or *8b ^{ris}
November	<i>Novembris</i> or ix ^{ris} or *9 ^{ris}
December	<i>Decembris</i> or x ^{ris} or *10 ^{ris}
* These abbreviations for September, October, November and December (which mean the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months respectively) may also be found in documents written in English, in which they are likely to be in the forms 7 ^{er} , 8 ^{er} , 9 ^{er} and 10 ^{er} .	

Days of the week	
day	<i>dies</i>
on the day (of)	<i>die</i>
Sunday (on)	<i>die dominica</i>
Monday	<i>die lune</i>
Tuesday	<i>die martis</i>
Wednesday	<i>die mercurii</i>
Thursday	<i>die jovis</i>
Friday	<i>die veneris</i>
Saturday	<i>die sabbati</i>

Other words commonly used in dating	
on the feast of	<i>in festo</i>
before	<i>ante</i>
after	<i>post</i>
next	<i>proxima</i>
on the eve of (the day before)	<i>in vigilia</i>
on the morrow of (the day after)	<i>in crastino</i>
in the year of the reign of king/queen...	<i>anno regni regis/regine...</i>
after the conquest	<i>post conquestum</i>
in the year aforesaid	<i>anno predicto</i>

Some examples of dating clauses	
<i>Die veneris proxima post festum sancti Michaelis Archangeli anno regni regis Edwardii tercii post conquestum tercio decimo</i>	Friday, 1 October 1339 (Friday next after Michaelmas, 13 Edward III)
<i>ij^o die Septembris A.D. M^occcc liij^o</i>	2 September 1454
<i>Septimo die Aprilis Anno Regni Regis Henrici octavi tercio decimo</i>	7 April 1522 (13 Henry VIII)
<i>xxj^{mo} die mensis Decembris anno domini millesimo quingen^o quinquagesimo sexto</i>	21 December 1556
The twentieth day of February in the year of our Lord 1602	20 February 1603

For more information about dates (including saints' days and other religious festivals, regnal years, and terms of the law courts) see C.R. Cheney and M. Jones (eds), *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History* (Cambridge University Press, revd 2000).

Cardinal and ordinal numbers			
1	I or i or j	1st	<i>primo</i> (i ^o or i ^{mo})
2	II or ij	2nd	<i>secundo</i> (ij ^o)
3	III or iij	3rd	<i>tertio</i> (iij ^o)
4	IV or iiij or iv	4th	<i>quarto</i> (iiij ^o or iv ^{to})
5	V or v	5th	<i>quinto</i> (v ^o or v ^{to})
6	VI or vj	6th	<i>sexto</i> (vj ^o or vj ^{to})
7	VII or vij	7th	<i>septimo</i> (vij ^o)
8	VIII or viij	8th	<i>octavo</i> (viij ^o)
9	IX or ix	9th	<i>nono</i> (ix ^o)
10	X or x	10th	<i>decimo</i> (x ^o)
11	XI or xj	11th	<i>undecimo</i> (xj ^o)
12	XII or xij	12th	<i>duodecimo</i> (xij ^o)
13	XIII or xiiij	13th	<i>tertio decimo</i> (xiiij ^o)
14	XIV or xiiij or xiv	14th	<i>quarto decimo</i> (xiiij ^o)
15	XV or xv	15th	<i>quinto decimo</i> (xv ^o)
16	XVI or xvj	16th	<i>sexto decimo</i> (xvj ^o)
17	XVII or xvij	17th	<i>septimo decimo</i> (xvij ^o)
18	XVIII or xviiij	18th	<i>octavo decimo</i> or <i>duodevicesimo</i> (xviiij ^o)
19	XIX or xix	19th	<i>nono decimo</i> or <i>undevicesimo</i> (xix ^o)
20	XX or xx	20th	<i>vicesimo</i> (xx ^o)
21	XXI or xxj	21st	<i>vicesimo primo</i> (xxj ^o)*
22	XXII or xxij	22nd	<i>vicesimo secundo</i> (xxij ^o)*
28	XXVIII or xxviiij	28th	<i>vicesimo octavo</i> or <i>duodetricesimo</i> (xxviiij ^o)
29	XXIX or xxix	29th	<i>vicesimo nono</i> or <i>undetricesimo</i> (xxix ^o)
30	XXX or xxx	30th	<i>tricesimo</i> (xxx ^o)
40	XL or xl	40th	<i>quadragésimo</i> (xl ^o)
50	L or l	50th	<i>quingésimo</i> (l ^o)
60	LX or lx	60th	<i>sexagesimo</i> (lx ^o)
70	LXX or lxx	70th	<i>septuagesimo</i> (lxx ^o)
80	LXXX or lxxx or iiij ^{xx}	80th	<i>octogesimo</i> (lxxx ^o)
90	XC or xc or lxxxx or iiij ^{xx} x	90th	<i>nonagesimo</i> (lxxxx ^o)
100	C or c	100th	<i>centesimo</i> (c ^o)
200	CC or cc or ij ^c	200th	<i>ducentesimo</i> (cc ^{mo})
300	CCC or ccc or iij ^c	300th	<i>trecentesimo</i> (ccc ^{mo})
400	CCCC or cccc or iiij ^c	400th	<i>quadringentesimo</i> (cccc ^{mo})
500	D or d or CCCCC or ccccc or v ^c	500th	<i>quingentesimo</i> (ccccc ^{mo})
600	DC or dc or vj ^c	600th	<i>sescentesimo</i>
1000	M or m	1000th	<i>millesimo</i> (M ^{mo} or m ^{mo} or m ^l)

*In documents written in English, these may be in the forms xxjth and xxijth, meaning 'one and twentieth' and 'two and twentieth', etc.

Roman, rather than Arabic, numerals were used in England until the sixteenth century and continued to appear in many Latin documents thereafter.

Counting was often in scores (twenties), indicated by a superscript xx. $iiij^{xx}$ or iv^{xx} , meaning four score (80), is especially common.

A superscript C or c indicates multiples of a hundred: thus vj^c means 600 (or sometimes six hundredweight).

A half is *dimidia*, often abbreviated to *di.* or *d.*

Pounds, shillings and pence (*libre*, *solidi* and *denarii*) are usually abbreviated in accounts to *li.*, *s.* and *d.*, often written as superscript.

$\frac{1}{2}d.$ (*obolus*) and $\frac{1}{4}d.$ (*Quarta* or *quadrans*) are usually *ob.*, *qa* and q^a .

Sums of money may also be expressed in marks (13s. 4d.), or in fractions or multiples of a mark. Half a mark (6s. 8d.) is especially common.

Examples of sums of money	
$lv^s ivd$	55s. 4d.
$cxxj^{li} xvj^s j^d ob.$	£121 16s. 1½d.
$xxxiiij^s x^d ob' q^u$	33s. 10¾d.



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