Note on Transcription Meredith Neuman, *Jeremiah's Scribes: Creating Sermon Literature in Puritan New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 20013), vii-viii. http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/15100.html

Throughout my transcription of manuscript sources, I have erred on the side of minimal textual intervention, correction, and explanation. The visual experience of the manuscript page affects the interpretation of text. Short of providing photographic surrogates for every passage (which still might not be entirely helpful to anyone unfamiliar with seventeenth-century handwriting), something like a "pseudo-facsimile" record of the manuscript page has seemed most prudent.

I have retained abbreviation and superscription throughout. The abbreviation "y^e" is "the"; "y^t," "y^n," and "y^m" are usually "that," "then," and "them," respectively (although there is always the possibility for irregular abbreviation and superscription in auditor notes). Common "w" contractions include "w^n" for "when" and "w^t" for "with" or "what." Abbreviations are often specific to a given notetaker and can be figured out through frequency and context ("Xt" for "Christ" or "L." for "Lord," for example).

Similarly, I have refrained from correcting or modernizing spellings. Beyond illustrating the typical irregularity of early modern orthography, idiosyncrasies of notetaker, place, and occasion are useful in understanding the range of notetaking practices. Even the most tortured phonetic renditions can usually be sounded out, but occasionally I have supplied my own marginal gloss in square brackets to the right of lines wherein particularly puzzling forms of words appear.

Notetakers often developed their own set of symbols (sometimes drawn from shorthand, sometimes drawn from other sources or simply made up) to stand in for commonly recorded words. Whenever possible, I note and translate the symbol in square brackets (for example, [symbol: God]). Where I have been unable to determine the meaning of a particular symbol, I have simply indicated [symbol].

Throughout my transcriptions of the sermon notes, I have preserved line endings and noted the ends of pages. (For in-line citation, I have adopted the conventions of quoting poetry, with a single slash to indicate line break.) Especially when recording in the meetinghouse, the notetaker's recording is often constrained by the real space and configuration of the page. Accordingly, I have tried to describe the material page as a visual as well as textual field.

In places, I have been unable to make out certain words and phrases. While eyes better trained than mine may yet be able to decipher where I have failed, it seems that messiness and indeterminacy might be considered textual features of notetaking, as anyone knows who has later found her own writing illegible, due to haste, carelessness, distraction, excitement, sleepiness, or other factors.

There are many more details on the manuscript page than simple transcription can relate. Beyond such variables as character position on the line, ink variation, and stray marks, handwriting style itself can convey much. While I can include interlinear rules and notations such as [small cross-out] to indicate specific marks, other features are less easily conveyed in typographic transcription. Letters are loosely or tightly formed, the size of characters varies, spacing is generous or closed up, letters may be formed differently from moment to moment, and the size and orientation of the paper can affect what and how the notetaker records. To record all these details would obstruct the main line of argumentation, however, and quickly would become an exercise in diminishing returns.

Nevertheless, without wishing to fetishize the manuscript page, I hope to emphasize all the factors that can bear upon interpretation of text. Illustrations in this volume will aid the curious reader in imagining the visual field of the notebook. In order to provide further examples, I am developing an online resource for images and transcriptions of sermon notebooks.

The ultimate solution for the vagaries of transcribing the manuscript page rests in creating more access to surrogate images so that the individual reader can consider the interplay of visual and textual fields independently.