

The Greatest Handwriting Mystery of the Eighteenth Century

The Junius Letters

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Between January 21, 1769, and January 21, 1772, a series of letters were published in a London newspaper. These letters were highly critical of King George and the British government. Although the letters were signed with several different names, they collectively came to be called "The Letters of Junius." The true identity of Junius remained a mystery for decades after the letters' publication. Many people conducted their own investigations in an attempt to identify Junius. Most of these investigations were not directed toward any handwriting comparisons. However, in 1868, a "general Expert in handwriting" named Charles Chabot was hired specifically to conduct handwriting comparisons in this matter. Chabot's reports were published in 1871. His examination techniques and reasoning processes provide ample evidence of his skills in this area and lend significance to his identification of the writer of the Junius letters. His explanations of the manner in which he conducted his comparisons also reveal that the principles used by today's Forensic Document Examiners originated much earlier than generally thought.

Introduction

King George III ascended to the British throne in 1760. George III, although the third of the Hanoverian monarchs, was the first one born in England and the first one to claim English as his first language. In most respects, the King was well-liked by the common people of the time. He was one of the most cultured rulers in Britain's history, starting a collection of books that he donated to the British Museum and which eventually became the core of a national library. George III started the Royal Academy of Arts, had his own astronomical observatory and was very interested in agriculture. This latter interest earned him the nickname of "Farmer George." This is a much kinder moniker than the one he was given in the last decade of his reign - "Crazy George." In 1811, he was determined to be mentally unfit to rule and his eldest son acted as Prince Regent until George's death in 1820.

In spite of being a good family man, having fifteen children with his wife Charlotte, George III

had some very difficult times during his sixty-year reign and is best remembered as the King who lost the American colonies. Although he strongly opposed independence for the colonies, the King was not directly responsible for some of the most oppressive policies which forced the colonists to declare their independence. The Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Duties of 1767 were strongly supported by Parliament, with which George III had a strained relationship at the time. The financial condition of Britain was under severe pressure due to the need to garrison troops and provide administration to the far-flung corners of the ever-expanding British Empire. There had also been some expensive wars with France and Spain.

Although George III made strong efforts to adhere to the powers given to the monarchy by the British constitution, he seemed to be fairly inept in political matters for the first decade of his reign. He had a particularly difficult time in handling the disputes between the two political parties of the day, the Whigs and Tories. This led to an in-

ability to forge ministries that could garner the support of the House of Commons. This problem was finally solved by the ministry of Lord North, which lasted from 1770 until 1782.

It was into this environment that the Letters of Junius were thrust by their publication in *The Public Advertiser*, a newspaper published in London. The newspaper's publisher was Henry Sampson Woodfall. In this age before radio, television and e-mail, the primary manner in which information was shared with the citizens was through newspapers. What we would now call "Letters to the Editor" were very popular and were frequently written under pseudonyms. Woodfall received his first letter from the writer who would

later assume the name of Junius on April 28, 1767. This letter bore the name Poplicola. Other letters that the writer of the Junius letters would admit having written were signed Mnemon, Atticus, Lucius, Brutus, Domitian, Vindex and Philo-Junius. Each of these names was used to attack a specific target of the writer.

The first letter published in the name of Junius in *The Public Advertiser* was on Saturday, January 21, 1769 (Figure 1). The primary topic of this letter was how the heads of the various departments of state were selected and the way this had led to a deterioration of the entire country. His principal targets were the Duke of Grafton who was the First Lord of the Treasury and Lord North

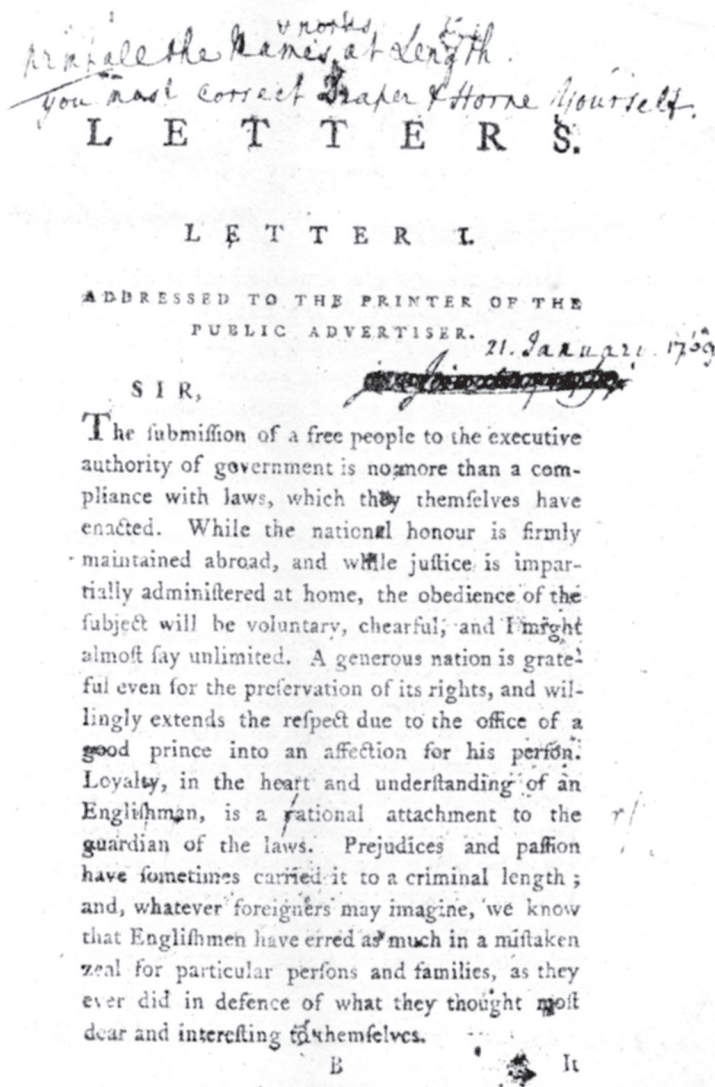


Figure 1

who was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The next year, Lord North would become the Prime Minister. In this letter, Junius also assailed the Commander-In-Chief of the British military, the Marquis of Granby. It was this one paragraph of a very long letter that, more than anything else, seems to have propelled Junius to his lofty status as a critic, for Sir William Draper felt compelled to respond to this criticism in support of his friend, Lord Granby. The lively exchange of letters between Junius and Draper, which were all published in *The Public Advertiser*, caught the public's attention and made Junius something of a celebrity. Unfortunately for Sir William, he was not nearly the literary talent that Junius was and his own reputation suffered as a result of this battle of words.

A frequent topic of attack for Junius was the John Wilkes controversy. Wilkes entered Parliament in 1757 but he attacked George III in his periodical *The North Briton*. As a result, he was expelled from Parliament in 1764 and thrown in prison. Wilkes was repeatedly reelected to his seat in Parliament, but was not allowed to take the seat until 1774. Wilkes was a staunch defender of the liberties of the American colonies. Junius attacked the government for not allowing Wilkes to assume his rightful place in Parliament for a decade.

The letters of Junius championed the cause of the rights of the English people. Junius was also frequently critical of the King and of many of his ministers and members of Parliament. Junius' public criticisms of the King were very unusual for this time and put him in great danger should his identity have been discovered. In his private letters to Woodfall, Junius was particularly concerned about his identity being discovered. He even told Woodfall that "I am sure I should not survive a discovery three days."

Junius was a prolific letter-writer for the next three years. In 1769 alone, he had fifty-four communications with Woodfall. Many of these were simply instructions on when Junius wanted certain of his letters to be published. Woodfall also had a number of communications to Junius. Communications from Junius to Woodfall were sent directly to the printing office. Any return package to Junius was sent to one of several locations which had been pre-arranged between the two, such as the Somerset Coffee House, the New Exchange and Munday's. The names on the parcels had also been selected prior to the delivery. It is not clear how Junius retrieved the packages sent

to him, although he appears to have picked up some of them himself while others were picked up by a third party. Junius had indicated that he would issue no further letters under his name after a letter dated October 5, 1771. However, events occurred that he found extremely offensive, compelling him to write five additional letters. Four of these were either addressed to or about Lord Mansfield. In Junius' opinion, Mansfield had granted bail to someone not worthy of it. This person was John Eyre, who, although well-off financially, had been caught in the act of theft from a public office. The last issue with a letter from Junius was published on January 21, 1772.

Many people sent letters to the paper in response to the Junian letters. Some of these letters were intended to be published while others were to be passed on directly to Junius. These letters sometimes challenged Junius to a one-on-one debate on some topic or claimed to know Junius' identity. One of the latter writers, David Garrick, was particularly persistent in his attempts to identify Junius. It finally got to the point that Junius asked Woodfall to contact Garrick personally and tell him to stop meddling or he (Junius) would destroy Garrick.

By the content and language in the letters, it was obvious that the writer was well-educated, knowledgeable about the law, the constitution and the activities of Parliament and at least moderately wealthy. Many of the Junian letters addressed actions taken by and speeches given in the Parliament only one day prior to the letter being written about them. He was also privy to the inner secrets of many of the titled families of the time. When Woodfall was preparing to publish the first of the letters, he offered the writer half of the profits. Junius refused the money and told Woodfall to keep the profits for himself. He also told Woodfall that if the publication of any of the letters resulted in Woodfall being subjected to prosecution, Junius would cover his legal expenses.

Although specific publication numbers for *The Public Advertiser* are not available, the December 19, 1769, issue containing Junius' letter to the King required the publication of an additional 1750 copies. Many subsequent issues containing letters from Junius also required the printing of additional copies of the *Public Advertiser*.

Woodfall had expressed a desire to publish a compilation of all of the Junius letters. The writer of the letters agreed to this and, as long as his anonymity could be insured, wanted to oversee

the production of this volume and add some notes, a dedication and a preface. So powerful was the effect of Junius' letters on those in positions of power and on the common people that at least two letter compilations had been published by others. These unauthorized compilations contained a number of errors that concerned Junius and he was anxious to have them corrected with the Woodfall edition of his letters. The letters were eventually published by Woodfall in three volumes in 1812 and again in 1814. Over a century after the original letters were published, Woodfall's collection was republished by John Wade (1894) (Figure 2).

Although a few glory seekers claimed to be Junius at the time, none of them were taken seriously. The true identity of Junius was one of the great mysteries of the 18th century. The first published information about the handwriting of the Junian letters was *The Identity of Junius with a Distinguished Living Character Established* by John Taylor (1816). Taylor published a second edition of this book in 1818. This latter edition contained Taylor's assessment of the handwriting and its similarity to that of a well-known politician. In Taylor's opinion, the writer of the Letters of Junius was Sir Phillip Francis (Figure 3).

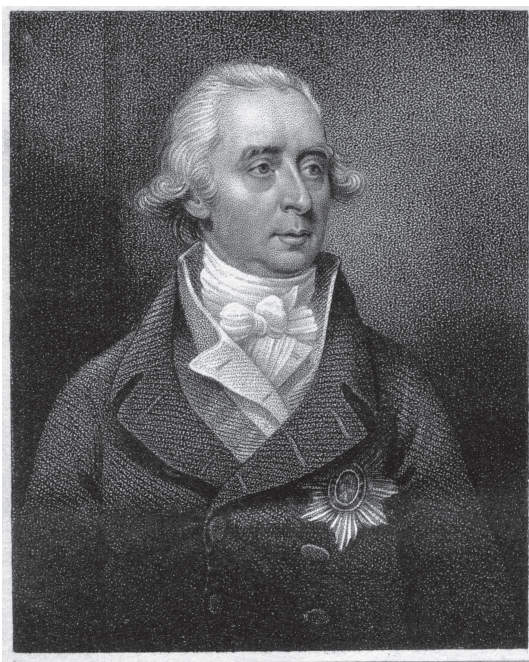
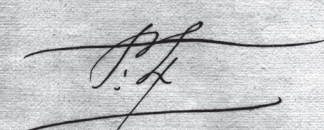
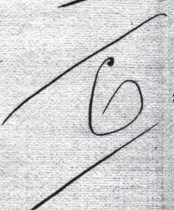


Figure 3. Sir Phillip Francis

Francis was born in Dublin on October 22, 1740. He had a number of political appointments, including one in 1763 to a post in the War Office. He resigned this post in early 1772, the same time as the last of the Junian letters. Francis left England and went to India, where he served at least six years as a member of the government of Bengal, leaving there in December of 1780. No later than 1784, Francis held a position in the House of Commons and on October 29, 1806, King George III bestowed on Sir Phillip the Order of the Bath. Francis was the person primarily responsible for the establishment of a constitutional club called The Society of the Friends of the People. The two objects of this group were to "...restore the freedom of election, and a more equal representation of the people in parliament..." and to "...secure to the people a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives." This latter object, in particular, was a frequent topic for Junius in his letters. Francis supported the resistance of America to the Stamp Act, agreeing with the colonies that it was not fair to submit to taxation by a House of Commons in which the colonies were not represented. Coincidentally, or maybe not, Henry Woodfall and Francis both attended St. Paul's school, with Woodfall starting about two years earlier than Francis. Some people take this as the reason that the handwriting in the Junian letters was disguised and that Junius never allowed Woodfall to see him.

Between Taylor's 1818 volume and 1871, many other books were written alleging that the Letters of Junius had been written by one of a number of other people. Most of these seem not to have addressed the handwriting at all. Their conclusions were based on other issues. Some of those who did focus on the handwriting put forth the opinion that the letters were written by William Greatrakes, the Earl of Chesterfield, Lord Lyttelton, Lady Temple (wife of Earl Temple), Lord George Sackville, General Lee or any of several other candidates.

1871 saw the publication of a remarkable book entitled *The Handwriting of Junius 1769*. This book was written by Mr. Charles Chabot (1871) and has an extensive preface by the Honorable Edward Twistleton. Twistleton was the Irish Poor Law Commissioner for a period of time. He resigned his post during the Irish Potato Famine in protest over the oppressive British government policies toward Ireland. After having used Mr. Chabot in a previous case on which handwriting

LETTERS & PARTICULAR WORDS COMPARED.			
SIR. P. FRANCIS.		JUNIUS.	
		From Woodfalls Specimens.	
N ^o I	My W th	M ^{or} W th	N ^o IX
	Friendship	Truly	27
	Quarter	Question	2
	Body	D. of B	10
	Burthens	Bile	41
	Direction	Dedication	40
	Course	lover	10
	know	know	40
	who	who	8
	I can have	I have	40
		can	8
II	I shall	I shall	40
	from	from	10
	send	send	10
	with the	with the	8
	with the	with the	8
	may	may	10
	obliged	oblige	8
N ^o II	think	thin k	N ^o 10
	Use	in closed	8
	You	You	40
III	earnestly	earnest	VI
IV	me the	me the	10
	proof	proofs	40
	of the	of the	40
	first	fast first	40
	connect it	corrected	40
		correct	40
V	et	et	8 41
X & c ²		et c ²	VIII
			6
			8

* From a M.S. Now lying at the Publisher's.

The Roman Numerals refer to the Fac Similes in this Work.

Vol. 6, 328 Strand.

Figure 2. One of the comparison charts reproduced from *The Letters of Junius - Woodfall's Edition Revised and Enlarged by John Wade*.

had been examined, Twistleton retained Chabot on April 12, 1868, to compare the handwriting of Junius with that of Sir Phillip Francis. Chabot's first report to Twistleton was dated August 12, 1869. There were subsequent reports following this one and, at Twistleton's request, Chabot submitted a report dated January 21, 1871, which compiled all the previous reports in a format suitable for publication. This book is fascinating in many respects, not the least of which is its weight of several pounds.

Discussion

There are some observations in the Preface about the law and the use of handwriting in courts that provide some interesting historical information. For instance, Twistleton states that the Ecclesiastical Courts of England had always allowed the comparison of handwriting. These courts were presided over by a single judge, with no jury. It was in the Courts of Common Law where such comparisons were not allowed and the reasoning behind this was summed up by a quote from Sir Joseph Yates, "Proof by comparison of hands would be of no proof to a jurymen who could not read." Thus, the exclusion of handwriting comparison from Common Law Courts was at least partially the result of the low literacy rate of those eligible to serve on juries.

In the early 1800's, the Court of Common Law began to allow handwriting comparisons in two specific instances: 1) in the case of ancient documents, and 2) if the documents to be used were already in evidence in the case. In 1853, a group called the Common Law Commissioners recommended the rule of exclusion (#2 above) be abolished. In their report, they stated:

The ground on which the exclusion of other writings as a medium of comparison is said to rest is that this species of evidence might cause inconvenience by raising collateral issues, and come by surprise upon the party to be affected by it. Another reason assigned is that the party interested would select such writings only as would best serve his purpose, and that they would not be likely, therefore, to exhibit a fair specimen of the handwriting, and might be liable to the imputation of contrivance.

This seems to be exactly the same concern we have today. An investigator, attorney or other

concerned party might pre-select the known samples that are submitted to us to make the opinion they desire more likely. As a result of the Commissioners' report, the restriction was abolished in civil cases by the Common Law Procedure Act of 1854. In 1865, the restriction was abolished in criminal cases.

Twistleton makes a number of comments about handwriting and handwriting comparisons that we could just as easily hear, or make ourselves, today. Although Twistleton makes no claim to be a Handwriting Expert, he seems to have a grasp of our profession of which many of our current critics could only dream. One of his observations that is extremely appropriate in our current environment is that "knowledge and ability in other subjects has no necessary connexion [sic] with skill in the comparison of handwritings." Further, he states:

It is idle for an unpractised volunteer to look at two documents, and to suppose that he sees what is in them. He does not know what to observe. He may fancy that two handwritings are similar, when their essential differences are numerous; or he may pronounce them to be wholly unlike, when, radically, they are identical.

Twistleton further states:

...comparison of handwritings, as an instrument for ascertaining who is the handwriter of a disputed document, seems very superior to the declaration of a witness as to his belief, however familiar he may be with the hand of the supposed writer. If there are sufficient materials for comparison, this superiority is great, even when there is no disguise; and in the case of a really good disguise, the superiority is overwhelming.

He goes on to say:

If the expert has skill in analyzing his own impressions, he can go through the proofs of everything which he asserts and can make others see what he sees. If he makes a mistake, his error admits of proof. Hence the case with which he deals, however complicated, becomes merely one of reasoning, in which internal circumstantial evidence is applied to demonstrate a disputed fact.

In his argument that effective comparisons of handwriting must go further than a cursory examination, Twistleton says:

There may, for example, be a generic similarity of hand in many writers from their having been educated in the same school, or taught by the same writing master; whereas the elementary principle which underlies all positive proof by comparison of handwriting, requires that in two documents alleged to be penned by the same hand, there should be individual coincidences which cannot be accounted for by any such accidental causes.

Twistleton gives the following requirements for identifying or eliminating someone in a handwriting comparison:

The principles which underlie all proof by comparison of handwritings are very simple, and, when distinctly enunciated, appear to be self-evident. To prove that two documents were written by the same hand, coincidences must be shown to exist in them which cannot be accidental. To prove that two documents were written by different hands, discrepancies must be pointed out in them which cannot be accounted for by accident or by disguise.

Little information is available about Charles Chabot. Twistleton refers to Chabot as an Englishman descended from a French Family. He was a lithographer by trade and had been a "general Expert in handwriting" for the previous sixteen years. According to Dr. Christopher L. Wright, of the British Library, the 1881 London Post Office Directory lists Charles Chabot as a "Handwriting Expert" in its Commercial Section. He is not listed in the 1891 Directory (personal communication October 21, 2000).

The overwhelming majority of *The Handwriting of Junius 1769* is comprised of Chabot's reports to Twistleton, including the voluminous illustrations he used to support his opinion and copies of every document used in his comparisons. He seems to have been extremely thorough in his work. He mentions having used all of the original manuscripts of Junius, from the British Museum, in his examinations. He also made use of all the previously published materials about the authorship of these manuscripts, beginning with *Junius Identified*. Chabot makes some brief

comments about each of these earlier works and the merits of their observations concerning the handwriting itself. In his opinion, nearly all of these other publications make only very general comments about the handwriting, focusing on the pictorial similarities or differences noted by the authors. Some of the earlier books' only handwriting focus was directed toward the spelling or punctuation. Chabot believed that a more detailed examination of the writing was necessary to form any opinion, especially because the questioned writing was disguised. He makes his argument for this detailed examination when he says:

Anonymous writers, when they disguise their hands, generally betray themselves in details: they rarely commit themselves throughout the writing of an entire word. Hence opportunities of comparing words become circumscribed. A comparison of letters taken separately affords not only a much larger field of observation, but in many cases invites attention to circumstances under which particular formations only of certain letters are employed, thereby pointing out what may prove to be very distinctive features of the writing under examination.

Chabot also stresses the need to have adequate lighting before undertaking handwriting comparisons and the necessity of utilizing a magnifying glass.

Early in Chabot's report, he has a paragraph which sums up his findings. The wording of this paragraph is so well-phrased that its reproduction here may be of some value:

I find generally in the writing of the Letters of Sir Philip Francis so much variety in the formation of all letters which admit of variety as to render his handwriting difficult to disguise in any ordinary manner, and consequently easy to identify. I discover also in the writing of the Letters and Manuscripts of Junius variations in the formation of certain letters, in some cases very multifarious, and of frequent occurrence, and that these variations closely correspond with those observed in the writing of Sir Philip Francis. They are, however, chiefly confined to the small letters in both handwritings; the habitual formation of capital letters be-

ing seldom departed from in any essential particular in either. I find also, in some instances, wherein Junius makes exaggerated formations of certain letters, exact counterparts of them are to be found in the writing of Sir Philip Francis, and in some cases as nearly as possible with the same frequency. I further find in the handwriting of Sir Philip Francis a repetition of all, or nearly all, the leading features and peculiar habits of writing, independent of the formations of letters, which so distinguish the Junian writing. These are so numerous, so varied, and in some cases so distinctive, that, when taken collectively, it is scarcely within the limits of possibility that they can be found in the handwriting of any two persons. I am, therefore, irresistibly driven to the conclusion that the Junian Manuscripts and the forty-four Letters of Francis have all been written by one and the same hand.

Chabot freely admits that many of the individual similarities found between the writing of Junius and that of Sir Francis might be found to a limited extent in the writing of others who were alleged to have written the anonymous letters but he reminded those proponents of these other authors that, "The force of the inference depends on the strength of all the points of similarity viewed collectively." This is one of the points argued so well by Twistleton in his preface. When describing the similarities between the writing of Francis and Junius, Chabot frequently takes the opportunity to describe how a particular characteristic found in Junius' writing is not found in the writing of any of the other subjects who had been suggested as the real Junius. Chabot also has a clear grasp of the fact that some similarities are of more significance than others, depending on the uniqueness of the similarity. While he

points out many of these similarities in his charts (Chabot refers to them as "facsimiles"), it is difficult for the modern examiner to assess the accuracy of Chabot's claims regarding the strength of the significance, since we are not familiar with many of the peculiarities of handwriting from the 1700's, but the charts are easy to follow along with Chabot's narratives. One of the charts illustrates the habit of Francis and Junius to put an inverted "i" in the word "time" (Figure 4) and some other words. This certainly looks odd and, if seen in cursive writing today would be highly significant, but to know its significance in the writing of people from the mid- to late-1700's would require a lot of research into the habits of such writers. Chabot himself was aware of this limitation and remarks at one point that a particular mark used by Francis to denote that some letters had been omitted in a word, a mark which is also found in one of the Junius letters, "may have been common in the last century, but no instance has attracted my attention in a very large amount of different handwritings of that period which I have examined in the British Museum."

In remarking that the writing in the Junius letters is disguised, Chabot says:

I find that the principal features of the disguise consist of the very common practice of altering the accustomed slope, and, in many cases, writing in a smaller hand, whilst that which is of more importance, viz. the radical forms of letters, is repeatedly neglected. It is difficult, whilst the mind is engaged on the subject-matter of the writing, to avoid occasionally, indeed frequently, falling into some of the habits of writing peculiar to the writer.

It is still true today that changes in slant and size are two of the most frequently-used methods of

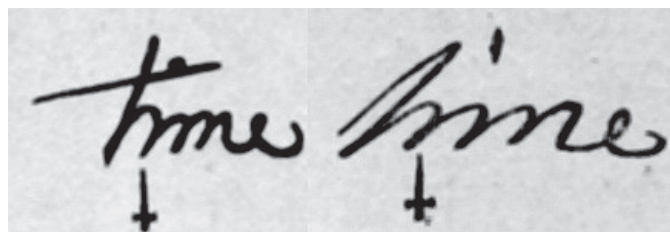


Figure 4

intentional disguise in handwriting and they are still very ineffective methods.

Chabot was well-acquainted with the concept of natural variation in handwriting. He referred to this as "variety in the formation of letters." He went to pains to point out variation in some letter forms in Sir Francis' writing and how this same degree of variation was found in the writing of Junius. One of the examples he gives is of the letter "r." He gives examples of 13 variations of this letter form in the writing of Francis and where they are also found in the writing of Junius. He even gets into some rudimentary statistics by mentioning that "these different formations of the letter *r* ...are formed as nearly as possible in the same proportions in the feigned hand of Junius as in the natural hand of Francis." He doesn't, however, give numbers to these proportions. He does give numbers to exceptions to some of the habitual characteristics he comments on. This is related as remarks like "...there are 487 exceptions to this general rule in 1646 instances in Junius" when referring to one of the "r" formations. Chabot found twelve to fourteen different variations of the letter "r" in the writing of Junius (Figure 5). He said the same twelve to fourteen variations were also found in the writing of Francis.

Chabot believed that Francis had practiced the Junius hand quite extensively and that this resulted in some of the characteristics from the Junian hand being incorporated into his routine handwriting. He specifically cites the letter "f" and the double "ff" (Figure 6). He gives examples of certain formations of these letters which are common in the Junian letters and which suddenly appear for the first time in Francis' handwriting in 1769. In commenting on the many different forms of "f" seen in the hand of Junius and Francis, Chabot reveals an understanding of class characteristics in handwriting and their relative lack of importance in making an identification of a handwriting sample. He states, "the adoption of the orthodox formation of the letter *f* would not have contributed much to discover him if he had confined himself to that formation, since it may be considered the common property of all ordinary writers."

Chabot also had a firm grasp on the fact that the manner in which cursive letters are formed is often affected by the letters which precede and follow the letter being examined. He took great pains to find instances in the known writing of Francis which had the same letter combinations

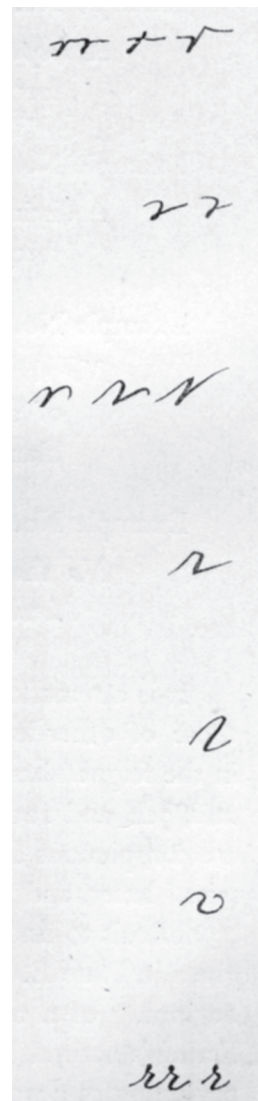


Figure 5

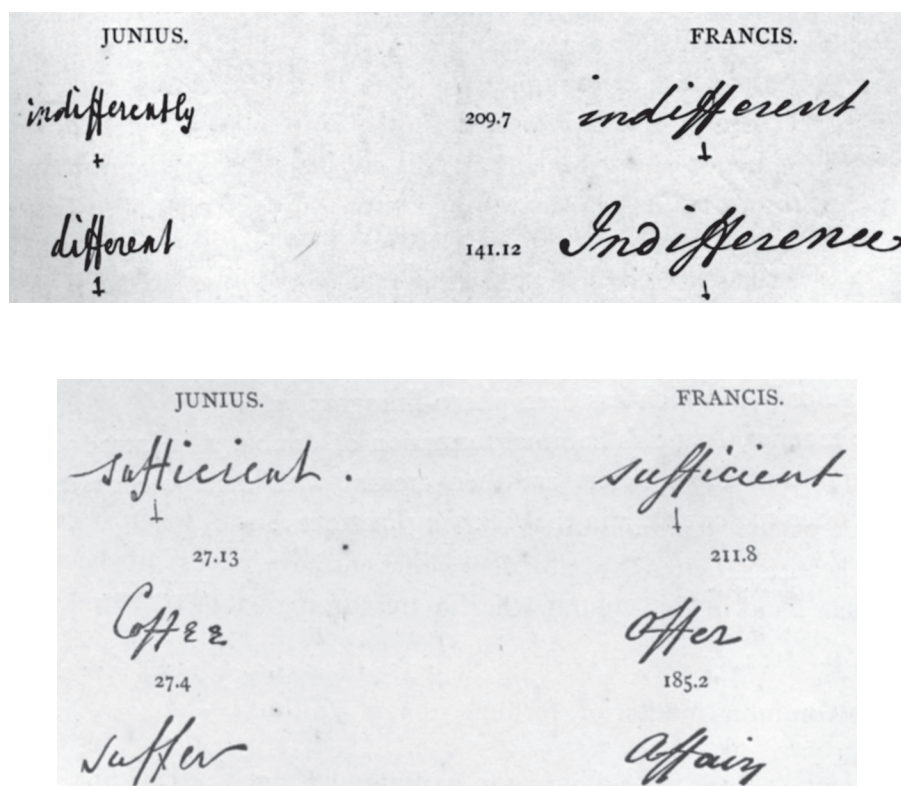


Figure 6

as those in the Letters of Junius. Thus, he avoided the disappointing practice seen in some of today's poorly-trained "examiners" who compare any two letters, regardless of their context.

In addition to the individual letter forms, Chabot also gave attention to punctuation, alignment, numerals, the manner in which dates are written and spelling. Both Francis and Junius had an unusual habit of employing a colon in place of a period. They also display some peculiar misspelling habits. Among the common misspellings he cites are "untill" instead of "until," "enquire" instead of "inquire" and "inclosed" in place of "enclosed."

Three of the pioneering writers in the field of Questioned Documents who published texts in this field, William Hagan, Daniel Ames and Albert S. Osborn, all referred to Chabot's findings in this matter. In his book *A Treatise on Disputed Handwriting*, Hagan (1894), during a lengthy examination of the actual finger motions required to produce the writing of Junius and that of Francis, states "...the evidence of form all tend to verify

Mr. Chabot's conclusion that the Junius Letters were written by Sir Phillip Francis." Ames (1900) in *Ames on Forgery: Its Detection and Illustration*, voices high praise for the work of Chabot in this matter. Ames says "...the Junius Letters are attributed to Sir Philip Francis with a degree of positiveness that would warrant a jury's verdict in an ordinary case, and the mystery of a century is cleared away. Probably there is not recorded a greater triumph for expert testimony with respect of evidence from handwriting."

The comments from Osborn (1946) in *Questioned Document Problems*, reflect a much different view of Chabot's conclusion. Osborn states that "...the conclusion as to the authorship of the letters, as announced in this book, was quite certainly erroneous." His further statements, however, do not address any of the individual characteristics of the words and letters in the Junius and Francis. His reasoning is summed up in one sentence addressing the writing of Francis, "The most conclusive and final answer to this contention is the fact that in all of his lifetime he never wrote

anything that, in force and extraordinary literary skill and power, was equal to the Junius letters or even approximated their excellence." He further states of Francis' writing that, "...none of it approached the masterly skill in language shown throughout the Junius letters." Without reference to any specific handwriting characteristics, Osborn attributes the Junius letters to John Horne Tooke who, according to Osborn, "...had the ability to write them." In his earlier work, *Questioned Documents: Second Edition*, Osborn (1929) offered slightly more insight about his view of this case and Chabot's book. In the bibliography, Osborn states, "The introduction to this book by Honorable Edward Twistleton, covering many pages, is one of the best discussions of the principles of handwriting identification that has ever been issued. It is possible that Mr. Charles Chabot and Mr. Twistleton were misled in their investigation by improper standards and "planted" documents. Mr. Twistleton was writing nearly one hundred years after the Junius controversy began and with the materials in hand Mr. Chabot and Mr. Twistleton make out a good case." Today's examiners are certainly acquainted with the danger of "planted" exemplars and the difficulties that they can cause in a comparison. Osborn doesn't explain his reasons for thinking that the standards might have been improper.

Conclusion

Charles Chabot makes a compelling argument that Sir Phillip Francis was, indeed, the writer of the Letters of Junius. Studying his reports shows how well-grounded Chabot was in the principles of Forensic Document Examination. He made use of the available scientific instruments, used the same principles that are in use today, prepared photographic charts to illustrate the bases for his opinions and was able to effectively argue the reasoning behind his opinions. It's a shame we have no information about his training and the development of his skills in this area. Also, there is no record that he passed his expertise on to any others. The bottom line is that, in London in the late 1860's, Forensic Document Examination was not only alive and well but flourished in the person of Charles Chabot.

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