



**Early Modern Graphic Literacies: Charting the uses of graphic devices  
in English printed books ca. 1475–1800 (on-going project)**

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What kinds of graphic devices (such as braces, diagrams, or tables) did late medieval and early modern readers encounter? What roles did such devices play in the transmission of knowledge in vernacular books?

The on-going four-year research project Early Modern Graphic Literacies addresses early practices of data visualisation in vernacular books printed in English during the hand-press era, 1473–1800.

Our aim is to provide the first comprehensive qualitative and quantitative survey of graphic devices in early modern English books in order to shed light on the development of vernacular graphic literacies and early strategies of data visualisation. We map the diachronic and synchronic distribution of graphic devices in different kinds of publications, intended for different kinds of audiences, and develop a model for the classification of the devices. We also examine how graphic devices are contextualised linguistically and typographically on the page (for instance, through captions), and how they are contextualised in the paratextual matter within the book (for instance, by promoting the usefulness or novelty of the devices). To answer these questions, we employ methods from three disciplines: discourse/text linguistics and philology; book history and bibliography; and digital humanities.

Our diachronic survey is based on data systematically sampled from the *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) and the *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (ECCO) databases. In this poster presentation we introduce the project and offer preliminary results on the use of graphic devices in English books 1475–1550, with particular reference to genre and audience design.