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**Jessica M Otis\*** (jotis2@gmu.edu). *"The Diverse Wits of Man": Multiplistic Numeracy in Early Modern England.*

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a numerate person as someone "competent in the basic principles of mathematics, esp. arithmetic; able to understand and work with numbers." But for the people of early modern England, this definition would have seemed almost trivial; they believed that God had endowed all humans with the ability to calculate, and those who could not were legally condemned as mentally incompetent. While numbers were thus an almost-universal technology of knowledge, symbolic systems for recording and manipulating numbers were far more diverse. There were performative, object-based, and literate options, and people regularly transcoded between multiple symbolic systems as they went about their daily lives. This talk will examine how the various symbolic systems of early modern England functioned in symbiosis with one another before the widespread introduction of Arabic numerals, and demonstrate that early modern patterns in Arabic numeral adoption are consistent with multiplistic numeracy. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English men and women did not adopt Arabic numerals wholesale but rather in a context-specific fashion, employing them side-by-side and interchangeably with other symbolic systems. (Received September 14, 2020)