

# Using Manuscripts in the Latin Classroom

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## ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen the publication online of numerous medieval and Renaissance Latin manuscripts. These can be marvelous resources for enriching the teaching of Latin if the teacher knows how to utilize them well, and so it is the goal of this article to provide teachers with a basic introduction to manuscripts with an eye for integration into the Latin classroom. Specifically it helps a teacher better understand: how they were made, how to understand the different parts of a manuscript page, how to read the handwritten scripts (paleography), and also where to find them online. The second half of the article presents a small set of specific model exercises for guided classroom use which can help teachers then design their own exercises. These include lessons in script recognition and copying, making your own classroom codex, and even tracing the textual history of a given classroom text back through the centuries to ancient times.

## KEYWORDS

Latin, manuscript, pedagogy, paleography, codex

One of the ongoing challenges of teaching Latin is keeping the lessons fresh and interesting, especially on the visual spectrum. Modern language teachers can reach into a grab bag of goodies—magazines, news broadcasts, YouTube videos, and so on, all in the target language—that Latin teachers usually do not have. Since the majority of class time can easily be spent staring at black print on plain white paper, the desire to find something that is visually stimulating and that actually *supports* the text is one that most of us have probably felt. Textbooks can attempt to meet this need by including photos of Roman ruins or visual reconstructions of ancient daily life, but all too often they are only tangentially connected to the text in question, and they certainly are almost never interactive.

One place, however, where teachers can go to find something that *is* visually engaging, interactive, and clearly connected to *reading Latin* is the world of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts (Figure 1). It used to be the case that only collectors and those teaching at schools with research libraries and rare book rooms had access to these wonderful items, but thanks to the wonders of the internet age an increasing number of high-resolution images and PDFs of Latin manuscripts are now being made freely available online. Accordingly, this article aims to give teachers of Latin (and their students) a brief introduction to 1) their most common features, 2) the important process of text transmission from ancient times to today, 3) using manuscript images productively in the



**Figure 1** – Manuscripts from the Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.  
Personal photo. Used by permission.

classroom, and of course 4) where to find suitable manuscript images. My assumed audience is the high school and college teacher of Latin, but teachers at lower levels and private tutors can find ideas in here to tailor for their own circumstances.

Beginners are often intimidated by the thought of using a manuscript, but even a small amount of preparation can make manuscripts much more accessible. Toward this end, this article is organized into four parts. The first section lays out the many benefits that come from using manuscript images in the teaching of Latin and provides a list of basic terminology. The second section serves as a guided tour that uses selected images of various types of manuscripts to familiarize the reader with their main features. The third section of this article offers a variety of practical suggestions and sample lesson plan ideas for actually utilizing manuscripts as exciting, hands-on supplementary tools in a Latin classroom. The final section provides appendices on where to start for finding online databases of manuscript images as well as other print and online resources for anybody interested in doing further study in this subject area.<sup>1</sup>

### WHY STUDENTS LOVE MANUSCRIPTS

The idea of introducing manuscripts into a Latin class (at any level) may not be an obvious one since most of us tend to think about manuscripts as documents of interest mainly to textual scholars or art historians and as things accessible only to those few who have had formal instruction. This is at any rate how I used to think before one day I was asked during my doctoral days at the University of Iowa to view a previously un-catalogued mid-15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Lucan's *Bel-lum Civile* that they had just discovered misfiled among unrelated material (Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1) (Figure 2). As I was already writing my dissertation on Lucan, I readily agreed, and thus began my self-taught crash course in reading manuscripts. I became fascinated not only by the text itself but also with the visual presentation, the artwork, the smell of the old book (yes, the smell!), and the physical sensation of holding a tangible link to the classical past that I loved so much. I soon began coming up with ideas for sharing this new discovery with my Latin classes at Iowa, and my experiences in this arena ever since have confirmed to me that the visual and physical appeal of manuscripts truly have something of interest to offer everyone.

There are many reasons Latin students love the chance to interact with manuscripts—and why teachers should consider learning how to use them. To begin with, they are physical objects of history that students can touch and manipulate; even working only with digital manuscripts the student can zoom in on a text or “flip” through multiple electronic pages of the document. Hands-on learning is something we build into our Latin lessons far too infrequently. Manuscripts are also visually exciting. Our students today are so-called “digital natives” who have grown up amidst the sensory deluge of multimedia content and the internet, and to this (or any) generation manuscripts are visually appealing, especially when compared to the average Latin textbook format. From a pedagogical perspective, learning to read a manuscript page instills an even deeper attention to detail than textbook Latin due to the difficulty of distinguishing letter forms and abbreviations; the rewards of success are accordingly greater as well. And from a historical perspective, manuscripts

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this article was presented at the 2008 joint meeting of AMICI, the Classical Association of Iowa, and the Illinois Classical Conference hosted by Augustana College. I would like to thank those in attendance for their helpful feedback, in particular Chris Conrad and John Gruber-Miller, whose mutual encouragements to share my lessons and ideas with more teachers and students have directly led to this article. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their numerous suggestions and corrections that have made this article much more accurate and useful than it would have been otherwise.

stand as concrete physical links in the chain that connects the original work of an ancient author and the edited text students see in their books. When students have the chance to encounter the archaic-looking pages and scripts of a Vergil or Caesar manuscript (even if written 1500 years after they lived), for example, the ancient reality of the text in question comes alive for them in a way unlike other classroom experiences. That kind of new awareness also presents a wonderful opportunity for them to appreciate and do some research into the fascinating historical processes by which our texts have come down to us in the first place. This in turn helps them become more critically aware readers of any text once they realize that they cannot take the words on the page in front of them for granted. But perhaps the final reason I can mention is one of the most obvious: they present a fun and rewarding way to improve at reading actual Latin!

### BASIC TERMINOLOGY

At this point it is worth introducing a few key terms related to working with manuscripts:

- **manuscript (ms)** – collective term for any object that contains hand-written texts (as opposed to texts chiseled into stone, for example)
- **codex** – the technology that we would today call a ‘book’; the codex (unlike its predecessor the papyrus roll) had two cover boards connected by a spine into which were sewn folded stacks of parchment or eventually cotton-fiber paper; the term ‘spine’ derives from the fact that leather covers for codices often came from animal skins, and since the skin over the spine area was naturally bent already it was a natural fit for the part of the codex that needed to bend the most
- **folio (f)** – the two sides of a physical ‘page’ or sheet of a manuscript; they are thus numbered by the actual sheet and not by page face as today
- **recto (r)** – the front face of a folio (e.g. folio 6r would be visible on the right side of a page spread after a reader had flipped the fifth folio sheet over)
- **verso (v)** – the reverse face of a folio (e.g. folio 6v would be visible on the left side of a page spread after a reader had flipped folio 6r over)
- **vellum/parchment** – sheets made from animal skins that have been carefully cured and scraped free from hair (the ‘hair side’ of a parchment sheet shows the tiny dots of hair follicles and tends to be slightly rougher than the smoother interior skin on the other side); the two terms are commonly used interchangeably, but strictly speaking parchment refers to sheets prepared from the skins of sheep or goats (or other animals) whereas vellum refers only to the finer sheets prepared from unsplit calfskin
- **ruling** – lines lightly drawn across a page to help the scribe write the text smoothly without dipping up or down (the ancestor of our modern ruled notebook paper)
- **illumination** – artistic decorations added to a manuscript
- **hand** – the hand-writing style used at any given point on a manuscript page



## THE MANUSCRIPT PAGE

## Example 1

The first task is to become familiar with what a manuscript page is likely to contain. When we open a modern book we have certain expectations about what we are likely to see on a page (e.g. plain text, illustrations, sidebars, or maybe footnotes), but a quick glance at the following samples will reveal that manuscripts rarely align with modern expectations. A brief overview is thus in order. The opening page of Iowa xMMs.Hi1 alluded to above (Figure 2) will serve well as my first example.

The first thing to notice is that the page looks rather busy, with multiple kinds of text in different sizes and script types; opening pages of texts (as this is) usually look extra crowded with their special rubrics and capitals to mark major transitions in the text. The text on the page roughly divides into 1) the transmitted text of the work and 2) the extra commentary meant to help the reader understand the text. The main text is typically copied into the center portions of the page and can be located by finding the lines of text that look the most ordered and legible. In this example these lines use larger lettering than the other surrounding scripts. Lines of poetry, as can be seen in the picture to the right, are usually easy to pick out because they tend to have a regular metrical length which leaves larger margins. Prose texts are more variable in that they will sometimes expand closer to the page edges but not always. The surrounding commentary is written into these margins and even between the lines of text. Key features that might be found in any manuscript include:



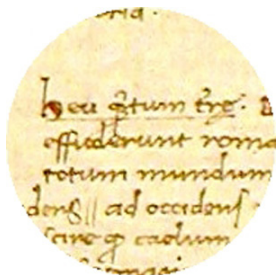
Figure 2 – Lucan, *Bellum Civile* (1.1-21) Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1, fol. 8r. 1465



**Author's Text** (lines 1.14-17 shown here) – The initial letters of each line have been written in their upper-case (majuscule) forms and set off from the rest of the line to help the reader quickly find the start of each successive line amidst the jumble of commentary texts. Also note that these initial capitals are evenly spaced vertically, and one can still faintly see the hand-drawn horizontal rulings to keep that spacing (the precursor to modern lined notebook paper).



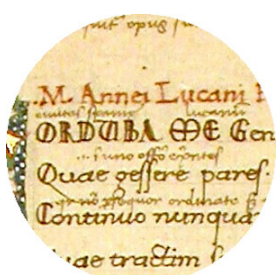
**Painted Initial** – The first letter of a work and each important section break thereafter is frequently written as a super-sized block that instantly draws the eye of the reader to that space while communicating its importance to the text. When designing the layout of a page, scribes regularly had to set aside space for these large initials. They range from the relatively modest in size and coloring (or with no extra coloring at all) to the deeply colorful and ornate, as in the example shown here. This ‘B’ is the very first letter of the first word (‘Bellum’) of Lucan’s epic poem *Pharsalia* (also known as *Bellum Civile*). Accordingly it is the largest of the painted initials on the opening page and clearly marks the start of the most important piece of text. In this case an artist (probably different from the main scribe) artistically decorated the letter with fanciful designs and bright colors, even adding a layer of gold ink to make the ‘B’ stand out yet further and glitter in the Renaissance candlelight).



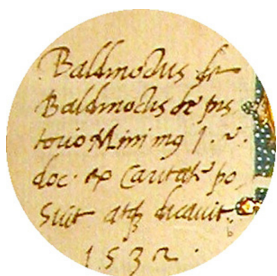
**Marginalia** – Explanatory notes and commentary could be written in the margins for the purpose of clarifying a phrase or passage. Sometimes a scribe would dutifully copy these comments from an older manuscript, and sometimes he would add in his own notes either in place of or in addition to previous sets. The marginal comment seen here starts by underlining the lemma (the abbreviated form of the phrase to be commented on, e.g. ‘*heu quantum terrae*’) followed by commentary in Latin.



**Interlinear Glosses** – In addition to the marginalia, very short explanatory notes could be written immediately above or adjacent to a word in order to explain its meaning or usage. Remember that by the later middle ages many classical Latin words had dropped out of common usage. In the example seen here, ‘*cruorem*’ (from 1.9) is glossed by the interlinear note ‘*sanguinem*’ for the benefit of those who, while they can read Latin, may not be as familiar with the sense of ‘*cruor*’ here. Think of these as the vocabulary helps that today are found at the bottom of a page or in the back of a textbook.



**Rubrics** – Sometimes, particularly at the beginning of a new section or book, readers will encounter words written in red ink (Lat. *rubrica*) rather than black. The red color signifies that these words are not actually part of the author’s text being transmitted but most often represent section headings or other explanatory content that do not fit under marginalia. In liturgical texts the rubrics usually give instructions to the priest and are thus more frequent; the color reminds him not to read those words out loud. In this manuscript example, this rubric gives the author’s name in the genitive (*M. Annaei Lucani*) followed by the given title (*Pharsalia*) and the notice that the work begins here (*liber incipit*). The lines that follow comprise a brief hexameter ‘epitaph’ of Lucan that was not written by him but appears throughout the manuscript tradition (similar to the epitaph that appears in Vergil manuscripts).

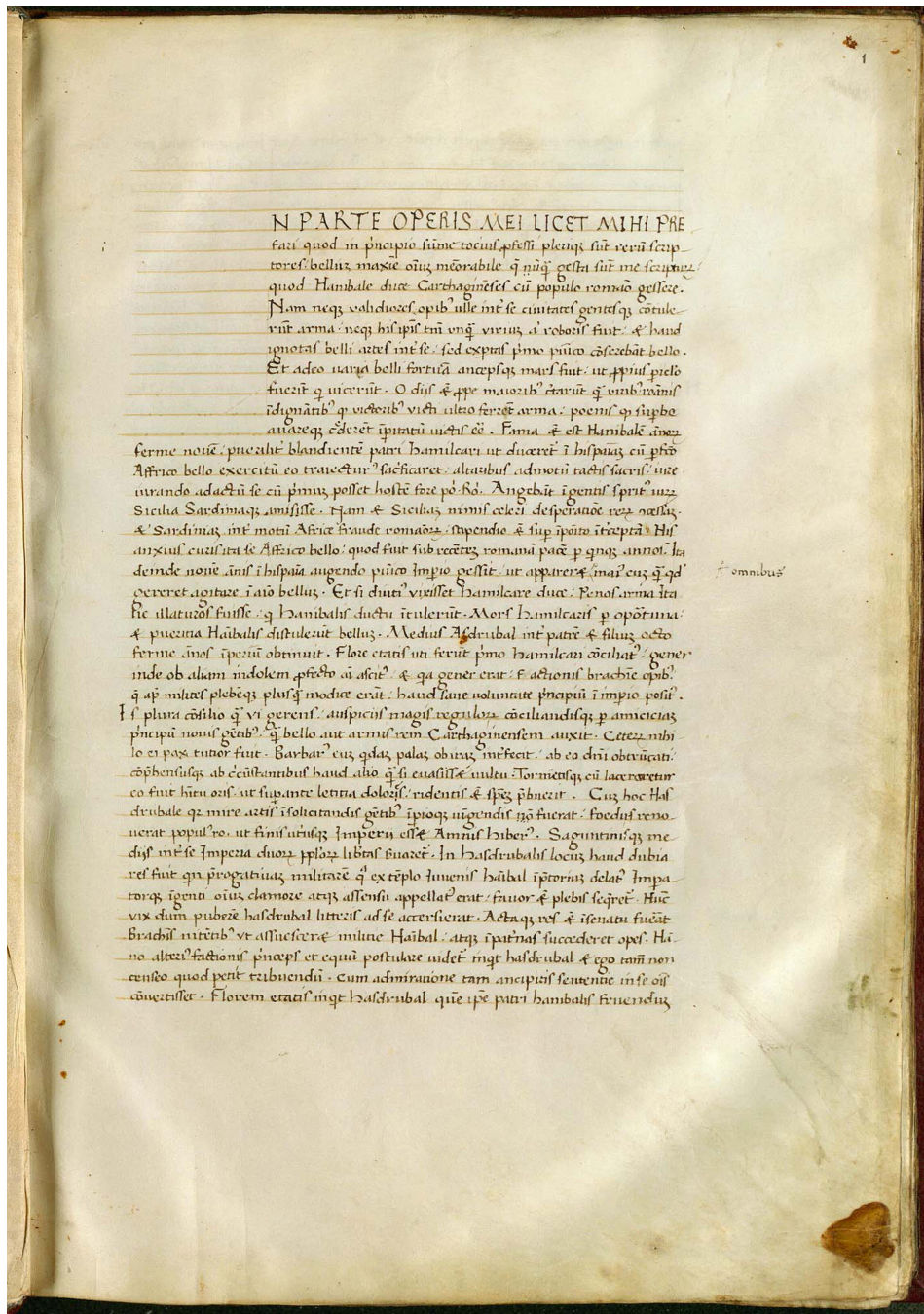


**Later Hands** – Occasionally, there are pages that contain what is clearly a later addition in another person’s handwriting. These can be found for any number of reasons. Personal notes of subsequent owners and readers make up the bulk of this category. In this example we see that a certain Baldinotto Baldinotti, who appears to be the nephew of the original scribe, deposited this book in a library in 1532 (Huskey 106).



### Example 2

This manuscript page (Figure 3) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century represents the simpler end of the spectrum with respect to design and content as it contains only the bare text of Livy with just one marginal note (in this case a scribal correction). Two features of the page are worth noting. First, the original line scoring is clearly visible on the page, particularly in the empty space at the upper left. This empty space is itself the second notable feature, since a large illuminated capital 'I' was meant to go here ("IN PARTE" commencing the first sentence both of Livy 21 and the codex as a whole), but it was never included, perhaps due to lack of time or funds needed to hire the artist.



**Figure 3** – Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* (Book 21). København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 495. fol. 1r. saec. XV



*Example 3*

Here (Figure 4) we see a highly decorated page from a 15<sup>th</sup> century Book of Hours from the Newberry Library in Chicago, IL. These books, which are devotional compilations of liturgical prayers, Psalms, and other Biblical texts, represent one of the largest categories of surviving medieval and renaissance illuminated manuscripts (De Hamel 168). Thus an example is included here since readers are more likely to come across a Book of Hours than a classical text in a stack of manuscripts that might be available in a nearby library or museum. This page, containing John 1:1-14 written in a Gothic script known as textualis quadrata formata (Saenger 77), is filled to the edges with intricate and colorful illuminations. The illuminated capital 'I' also contains an image of the eagle that often symbolized St. John in medieval iconography. Nearly every page of this manuscript is filled to bursting with illuminations and colorful designs, all different. Many other Books of Hours (but by no means all) share similar patterns of rich illuminations.



Figure 4 – John 1:1-14. Book of Hours. Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 44. fol. 15r. saec. XV2



## Example 4

I have included this page from a late 12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Vergil, containing *Aeneid*



**Figure 5** – Vergil, *Aeneid* (9.55-108). København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 2006, fol. 60v. saec. XII2

9.55-108 (Figure 5), because it contains the visually striking feature of a sizeable hole in the parchment. A long tear curving up the page from the right side of the hole interferes with the lines of text. Somebody (the scribe or someone else) attempted to sew the tear together, and then the scribe dutifully wrote the lines *around* the hole and tear line the best he could.

All of this illustrates an important fact about the production of manuscripts: they were *expensive*. Today, if we tear a hole in a sheet of notebook paper we throw it away and reach for another. If one of our favorite books gets damaged we would think little of going out to buy another copy. But in an age when every book was made by hand and the very pages themselves were derived from animal skins after a laborious and costly curing process, book materials were simply too valuable to waste.

## READING THE MANUSCRIPT:

### PALAEOGRAPHY

Even a brief inspection of the examples above will show that the texts on manuscripts are not that easy to read without a bit of practice. Today we are used to the standardized letter forms that appear in modern print fonts, but manuscripts reveal that medieval and renaissance scribes employed many different script types over the centuries. Beginners often balk at the prospect of deciphering all those “squiggly shapes,” but it is worth remembering that the process of learning unfamiliar scripts in Latin is ultimately no different than the way in which we all at one point learned the various forms of English block print or cursive: *exposure* and *practice*.

There are two chief areas of difficulty facing a manuscript reader. The first difficulty is recognizing the actual letter forms. This is most easily done by comparing a manuscript text with the same text in a modern printed edition, since this will typically confirm what the manuscript



has written on it (although one must still watch out for textual variants). Furthermore, our modern expectations for when to see upper-case letters go unfulfilled since many script types did not employ majuscules as we do today (e.g. the first letter of sentences in Newberry MS 44 above). Also of particular note is that forms of ‘s’ written before the 19<sup>th</sup> century (even in printed books) frequently are straightened vertically and thus look more like an ‘f’ but without the full horizontal mark through the shaft. Additionally, depending on the script type the letters ‘a’, ‘i’, ‘n’, ‘m’, ‘r’, and ‘u’ tended to be written with nearly identical vertical strokes (minims). Thus the first five letters of the phrase “*in mundo*” can be difficult to distinguish from each other, particularly in Gothic scripts. Finally, it is common to find the ‘ae’ diphthong shortened to just ‘e’ in many scripts. Exposure and practice are the key!

The second difficulty is the extensive system of word abbreviations that can permeate the texts. The use of abbreviations was heavily influenced by scribal practice in Ireland which spread to the continent in the early middle ages, but in some form it goes all the way back to antiquity and the so-called *notae Tironianae*, the system of shorthand ascribed to Cicero’s personal scribe Tiro. Anyone who has tried to copy by hand many pages of text can understand why medieval scribes used abbreviations so much—they save valuable page space and more importantly time. Fortunately, the majority of text abbreviations are formed by the use of a small handful of regular signs (*sigla*) that can be easily learned. The most common by far is a short stroke written above part of the abbreviated word, typically the ending, so show that something has dropped out. It usually stands for a missing ‘m’ or ‘n’ and sometimes an accompanying vowel as well (see Figure 6). In Iowa xMMs.Hi1 shown above (Figure 2), for example, we can see abbreviation examples at the end of the first written line of text (following the giant ‘B’) where the scribe wrote “**plusq**” with extra marks to indicate “**plusq(uam)**.” A second example can be seen in the third line of the next section (following the giant ‘Q’) in the word “**spoliada**” for “**spolia(n)da**.” And earlier in that same line, the scribe wrote “**supba**” with an angled line across the downward ‘p’ shaft to show that he was abbreviating the word “**sup(er)ba**.” Figure 6 lists the most common sigla used in manuscripts.

There are resources that can help explain less common abbreviations (see Appendix 2). Exposure and practice are the keys to building skill in reading manuscripts. The sample activities at the end of this article provide some ideas for how you and your students can practice palaeography at a fairly basic level.

### SCRIPT TYPES

As your class begins to interact with manuscripts, at some point you or your students will likely notice the wide variety in possible script types that can appear. Different scripts with varying letter forms were used throughout the medieval period, often with certain styles dominating in certain regions and/or in specific centuries. Simply put, a script style can be identified by examining the letter forms carefully and comparing them with known examples of various styles. This of course can only be done quickly

- |      |          |                      |
|------|----------|----------------------|
| I.   | — , ˘    | = m, n               |
| II.  | 9 . 2    | = con, com, cum, cun |
| III. | 9 2      | = us, os, is, s      |
| IV.  | ~ ~ . .  | = r, re, ra, ar      |
| V.   | 2 ~ v ~  | = ur, tur, er        |
| VI.  | 2, 2, 2f | = rum                |
| VII. | 7, &     | = et, e.             |

**Figure 6** – List of common abbreviation symbols.  
Adriano Capelli, *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane* (6th ed., 1987), xxiv.

after much practice. Mastering the intricacies of all of these lies beyond the scope of this article, but some of the print and online resources included in Appendices 2 and 3 at the end of this article will point in the right direction those interested in learning more. For print, a wonderful starting place is Michelle Brown's *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600* (1993) which devotes a page or two to a wide, representative sampling of the most common script types likely to be encountered, complete with illustration and transcription. But perhaps the best place to dive in is the highly useful Medieval Writing website, for not only does it explain the process of manuscript production but also provides an extensive list of palaeographic scripts with sample texts *and* most usefully a visual description of how each letter is typically written in that style.<sup>2</sup> By studying these examples along with their transcriptions, you and your students will soon be able to decipher the scripts found in other manuscripts.

### FROM AUTHOR TO TEXTBOOK

When faced with a hand-written text (*manū scriptum*), students get to see a tangible intermediate link between the ancient author and the printed text in their books, and it is my experience that at this point they often start to get more interested and ask good questions regarding who wrote manuscripts, how the process went, how long it took, etc. Finding answers (even if tentative) to these questions should be encouraged since it not only fosters students' historical awareness and joy of discovery but also pays dividends in their deeper appreciation of *why* manuscripts are essential. Scholars strive to establish the best text that they can by comparing the contents of multiple manuscripts, for the truth is that variant spellings, words, or even lines will sometimes appear among different manuscripts of the same work. In scholarly editions of a text the more important of these variant readings are summarized at the bottom of the page in an *apparatus criticus*. Thus looking at manuscripts provides a wonderful opportunity to explain the basics of this important process of textual transmission, to whatever degree of detail is desired.<sup>3</sup>

In simplest terms, the following outline covers the basic steps that nearly every ancient text experienced between first composition and its eventual appearance on a modern printed page:

1. The ancient author composes or dictates the work.
2. Somebody (author or patron or savvy bookseller) pays copyists to make copies.
3. Other scribes make copies from these initial copies.
4. Yet other scribes make copies from the later copies.
5. One or more copies of the work are read (or even rediscovered!), studied, and copied during the Renaissance (note that a few works were not discovered until more recent times).
6. In the wake of the printing press, incunabula—the earliest printed books that appear up through 1500—start to appear, many of them classical works; whether in the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *editio princeps* or “first printing” is produced based either on a single manuscript (more often the case with incunabula) or on multiple existing manuscripts that are collated by an editor.
7. Other printed editions are subsequently published by different editors up to the

<sup>2</sup> The index of scripts is found at: <<http://medievalwriting.50megs.com/scripts/scrindex.htm>>. Less extensive but still highly useful is the set of clearly presented examples found at the Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections website ([http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research\\_and\\_education/palaeography/palaeography\\_scripts/index.html](http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research_and_education/palaeography/palaeography_scripts/index.html)).

<sup>3</sup> For more information (and tons of fascinating details to impress your students with), Reynolds and Wilson's *Scribes and Scholars* provides the best account of this process of textual transmission from antiquity to today; less detailed and more accessible for most is the Medieval Writing website (for both see Appendix 2).



present day, usually based on a combination of previous printed editions and new examinations of the main surviving manuscripts.

8. A textbook prints a text that is taken directly from one of the existing published editions.

In order to help students really capture that sense of history that lies behind their printed text, these steps can be researched for many of the authors that high school and college classes regularly read. In the following section of suggested activities I look in more detail at Vergil's *Aeneid* as an example of how one can go about compiling such a series of historical snapshots.

### TEXTUAL VARIANTS

Different manuscripts inevitably reveal slight differences in their contents. Since a scribe is (we assume) doing his best to faithfully copy his source, the differences between any two given manuscripts are because either a) the source manuscripts for each were themselves different, b) one or both of the scribes made an error in transcription, or c) one or both of the scribes intentionally diverged from his source in an attempt at correcting what he believed to be a previous error. Thus all differences arise due to human error somewhere in the line of copying. Anyone who has attempted to copy out by hand line after line of a text knows that he or she is at some point highly likely to make a few mistakes, ranging from introducing accidental spelling errors to skipping entire lines of text! When those mistakes are not caught, whoever subsequently copies from *that* copy is likely to re-copy the original mistake and perhaps unwittingly add a few more. We call the majority of these differences 'variants' since we do not know for sure which of the available options may be correct (if indeed any of them, as the true original may not be preserved any longer); the term 'error' is reserved for those differences that are clearly incorrect. Let us say, for example, that three separate English manuscripts have at the same point in the text the words 'dog,' 'hog,' and 'fog.' If the context makes it clear that an animal should appear, the first two remain possible variants while the third can be safely classified as an error.

Our manuscripts of classical authors are no different in this regard. It often comes as a surprise to students to learn that all the manuscripts of Vergil, for example, do not contain exactly the same words at all points. This realization naturally leads to the question: "So what did Vergil actually write?" Due to the above problems, we cannot claim to know with total accuracy what any ancient author actually composed. Before anyone panics, however, we can confidently say that in most cases we are *nearly* certain, for the contents of the various manuscripts for any given author usually do agree on the order of 98-99%. The situation is even better when we realize that most of the variant wordings are minor and do not clearly affect the meaning of the sentence in which they are located. Yet in any work there remain at least a small percentage of variant readings among the manuscripts that are potentially significant for our understanding of the text. And for a few authors—Catullus is a noted example—their manuscripts are rife with contested variant readings (alongside modern scholars' own proposals for what Catullus meant to write), and our decisions about those variants, or more properly the decisions made by the editor of the text we choose to read from, affect our understanding of what Catullus is even saying in his poems.

It is the perfect time when looking at manuscripts in a classroom setting to introduce this important issue of textual variants. The benefits are numerous: students better appreciate the manuscript's place in the line of transmission and perhaps most importantly they encounter reasons to pay closer attention to the words in front of them when they get their own chance to decide between variant readings. The *apparatus criticus* at the bottom of the page of a scholarly edition

collects important variant readings (but not all the minor ones) that can also help guide curious readers to places where a given manuscript might diverge. Alternatively, they can be spotted by comparing any given manuscript page with the same text in a modern printed edition and noting any differences.

One easily-spotted example is the uncertainty at *Aeneid* 1.2 whether Vergil wrote ‘Laviniaque’ or ‘Laviniaque.’ Both readings are attested in the manuscript tradition, and modern scholars cannot make up their minds either as to which reading to print.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, the change in overall sense is relatively minor between the two options, and we can understand the gist of the passage without having to make a firm decision. Sometimes, however, an additional letter can make an entirely new word. The last word of Lucan 1.16 is a good example: the majority manuscript tradition (including Iowa xMMs.Hi1 seen earlier in Figure 2) agrees in reading *quaque dies medius flammantibus aestuat horis* (“and where the noon-day [i.e. the south] blazes with its burning hours”). Many modern editors, however, think that at some point in the distant past a scribe wrote ‘horis’ in place of a different original word—perhaps ‘oris’ (“regions”) or ‘auris’ (“breezes”)—and then all subsequent scribes kept dutifully copying the error. They suggest this variant arises from the frequent linguistic phenomenon of intrusive aspiration during the middle ages, namely the addition of the ‘h’-sound to various words. Yet in these situations there is also the possibility that in the other direction a Renaissance scribe, attempting to correct this known problem, might have hypercorrected and removed too many ‘h’s from words in his copy. In the end analysis, the correct reading of *horis* here is not crucial for understanding Lucan’s overall plot or themes, but anyone interested in careful study of the work must still decide which reading seems most likely to be the original. It must ultimately remain educated speculation, but one does not have to look at manuscripts for very long to appreciate that the nicely-edited texts we have today are thanks to the hard philological work that textual editors have put into producing high-quality scholarly editions over the years.

## CONCLUSION

It is my real hope that the information and sample activities contained in this article inspire teachers and their students to take a closer look at what manuscripts have to offer. At the very least it is possible to show some of these images to your classes and see what kind of interest they generate. From there it is very easy to click on some of the links in Appendix 1 to start browsing through a few of the many wonderful manuscripts that are now available online. Not only are they visually stimulating and historically significant but most importantly they also promote *actually reading Latin*. Students attempting to decipher the text of a manuscript are required to pay extremely close attention to detail—more even than they have likely paid thus far—to what the letters and words they’re looking at really are, what the implied forms (and thus case endings) of abbreviated words likely are based on the syntax and grammar of the passage, and what the potential meanings of words might be from context. This is especially true when dealing with potential textual variants. In short, go discover the visually exciting world of Latin manuscripts and invite your students on the journey with you.

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4 E.g. Mynors in his OCT (1972) prints ‘Laviniaque’ whereas Goold’s Loeb (1999) text prints ‘Laviniaque.’



## SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR USING MANUSCRIPTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Note to teachers: The various lesson plans in this section are primarily ideas in outline for you to use/ignore/adapt in whatever way you think best for your given class. Given that each class is unique, and that the time allowed each class for such activities may vary, multiple lesson ideas are included to provide you with the greatest flexibility possible in crafting activity plans tailored to your own needs. It also should be reiterated that I am largely self-taught in this field. The disadvantage here is that I speak not as a refined expert but as an enthusiast, and thus my descriptions may at times be less technically precise than those of a better-trained scholar. The advantage, however, is that my experience hopefully proves that anybody with an interest in manuscripts can learn to enjoy them and use them well in their own classes.

### *Activity #1 – Basic Palaeography*

Palaeography is the study of ancient writing. A skilled palaeographer can look at a manuscript and identify not only the exact script type (e.g. Irish insular miniscule vs Italian littera textualis) but also the geographical region and century in which it was copied. Here, however, we are just interested in getting a little better at the core skill of deciphering the script we see on the page. Repeated exposure and practice are the essential ingredients, both for the teacher and the students. When first starting out, I recommend the following basic procedure:

1. pick a manuscript of a known work (e.g. Vergil's *Aeneid*, the Bible, etc.).
2. find a modern edited text of that work.
3. review the common orthographic issues discussed in the above palaeography section to help make sense of letter forms and potential alternate spellings and abbreviations.
4. set both the manuscript and the modern text side-by-side and begin comparing them; this will help students figure out what the manuscript text is "supposed to say" and will give them practice in recognizing the letter forms of whatever script type your manuscript is written in.
5. make note of any variances in your manuscript from the modern text's reading.
6. try copying out a portion of the text in the exact same script style just as it appears on the manuscript page; this forces the reader to pay attention to scribal details that might otherwise be missed.

After working through a portion of one manuscript, then pick another and repeat the process. It needs to be emphasized that while the above method is a decent way to proceed for the time being when teaching yourself or helping students take their first steps, the *real goal* is to be able to decipher the script of a given manuscript without needing to compare it with a modern printed text, since that is where the best benefits to improving a student's Latin abilities will actually come. And as always, repeated exposure to different types of manuscripts and script types is the best way to improve your palaeography skills and thus ultimately your Latin skills.

What follows here are a few manuscript samples that will help you (and your students) become more familiar with reading manuscripts so that you can then present them to students, either as in-class assignments or as take-home exercises. For each one, apply the 6 steps outlined above. Once you are comfortable doing it, then bring it into your Latin class. I find that it is usually best to start with group work as some individuals left on their own can quickly become lost. Later on,

after you and your students get more comfortable with reading manuscripts, you could ideally find a manuscript of the actual text being read in class (e.g. Vergil, Caesar, Ovid, etc.,) for everyone to work through together over the course of a few weeks or even a term.

### #1a – Lucan's *Pharsalia* (or *Bellum Civile*)

Iowa xMMs.Hi1 is a decent place to start as the scribe's handwriting is relatively clear and easy to read. This script, a kind of humanist cursive, developed in the early Renaissance as a conscious imitation of the elegant Carolingian scripts from the early middle ages. For reference, here is the text of Lucan 1.1-7 as printed in Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition (1997):

Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos  
iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem  
in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra  
cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni  
certatum totis concussi viribus orbis  
in commune nefas, infestisque obvia signis  
signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.

5

Now examine the following image (Figure 7) from Iowa xMMs.Hi1 seen earlier in Figure 2 (dated 1465) and try to match the above words to the manuscript's words.

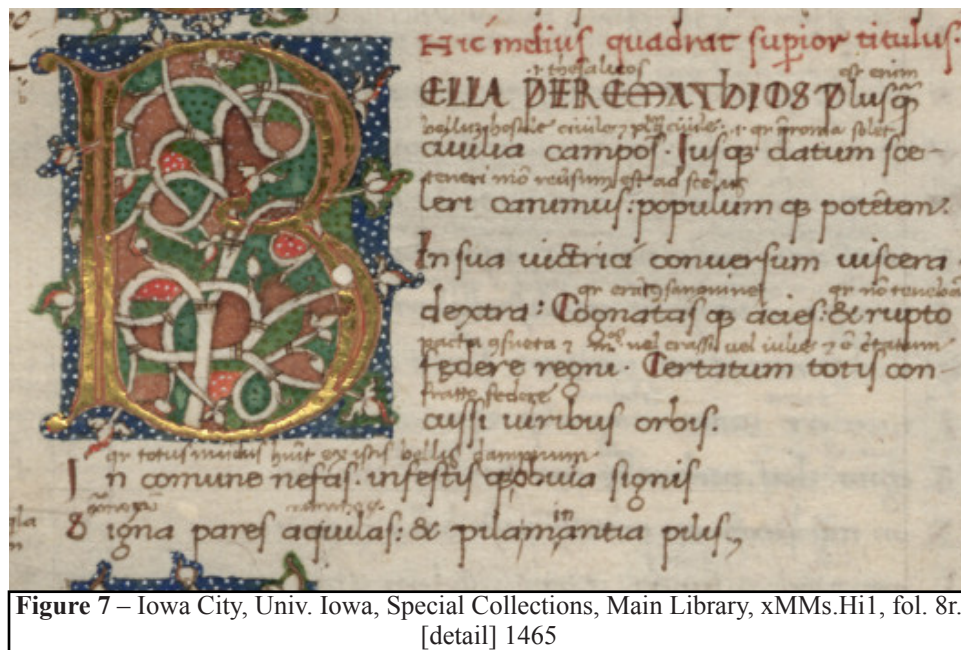


Figure 7 – Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1, fol. 8r.  
[detail] 1465

#### Helpful Notes:

- the illuminated capital 'B' causes the line endings to be irregular for the first five lines of the actual poem
- the round 's' (which we use exclusively today) is written instead with the straight 's' (f) that is often found throughout medieval and Renaissance palaeography



- the ‘-que’ of ‘Iusque’ is abbreviated, as is the ‘-que’ below it in ‘populumque’
- potêtem = pote(n)tem (this symbol usually stands for a missing ‘m’ or ‘n’ but can at times also stand for other truncated letters)
- the extra mark in ‘victrici’ connecting the two letters ‘ct’ is known as a ligature but otherwise has no special meaning
- & = and (which everyone recognizes, but it shows that the ampersand is one of the few scribal abbreviations that has managed to survive into modern usage)
- federe = foedere (diphthongs like ‘ae’ and ‘oe’ are often written as just ‘e’ to reflect contemporary pronunciation)

Next look at the same text from a different manuscript: Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5, fol. 2r (Figure 8). This manuscript, copied in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century in Italy, is written in a blackletter script known as gothic textualis media (Saenger 191). There are a few spelling differences in this one.

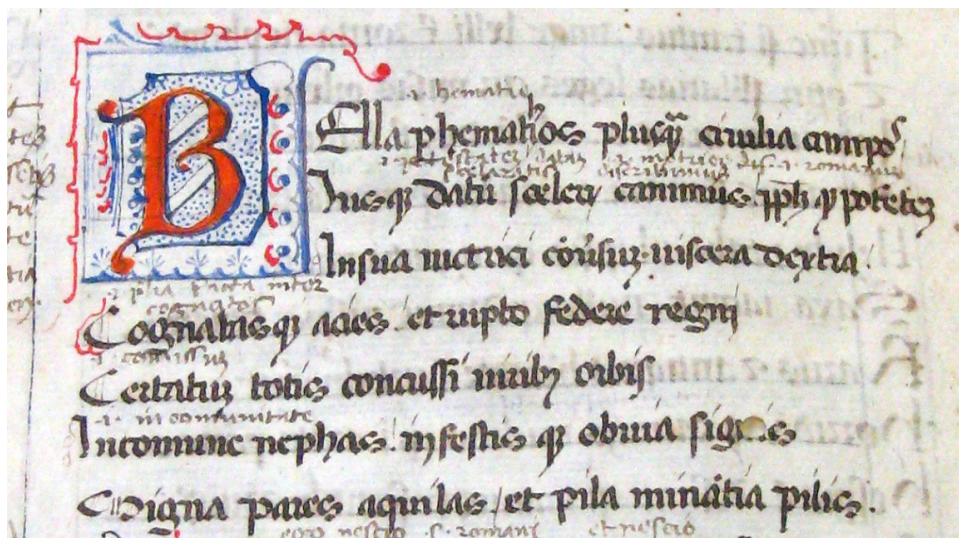


Figure 8 – Lucan, Bellum Civile (1.1-7). Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5. fol. 2r. [detail] saec. XV2

#### Helpful Notes:

- ‘phamethios’ looks like one word but it is in fact ‘p(er) hemathios’ (note the horizontal slash through at the bottom of the descender)
- the ‘h-’ on the front of ‘emathios’ is an example of aspiration common in medieval manuscripts; words that begin with a vowel will occasionally pick up an ‘h’ just as sometimes a familiar ‘h’ will drop out from a word
- there is of course no real ‘v’ in the Latin alphabet; it is a relatively modern convention for representing a consonantal ‘u’, hence ‘ciuilia’ as here

- many script styles (such as this one) make it difficult to spot the distinction between many similar-looking letters, e.g. 'ciuilia' or 'canimus' on the next line can look at first like a jumbled mess due to the similar-looking minims
- 'p(o)p(u)l(um) q(ue)' near the end of the second line is extremely abbreviated; note also the abbreviation '-3' (really a sideways 'm' with a tailing downstroke) for words ending in '-m' or '-n'
- 'cóúsu3' = 'co(n)v(er)sum'
- 'nephās' = 'nefas' (reflecting similar pronunciations of 'f' and 'ph' at the time of copying)

### #1b – Vergil's *Aeneid*

For reference, the opening twenty lines of the *Aeneid* are as follows (Mynors's OCT):

Arma uirumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris	
Italiam fato profugus Lauiniaque uenit	
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto	
ui superum, saeuae memorem Iunonis ob iram;	
multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem,	5
inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum	
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.	
Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso,	
quidue dolens, regina deum tot uoluere casus	
insignem pietate uirum, tot adire labores	10
impulerit. Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?	
Urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni)	
Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe	
ostia, dives opum studiisque asperrima belli,	
quam Iuno fertur terris magis omnibus unam	15
posthabita coluisse Samo. hic illius arma,	
hic currus fuit; hoc regnum dea gentibus esse,	
si qua fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fouetque.	
progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci	
audierat Tyrias olim quae uerteret arces;	20

The following page shows the same text from Newberry ms 95.5, fol. 53v (Figure 9). It was copied c.1450-1500 and employs a script known as humanistic textualis formata (Saenger 184).





Figure 9 – Vergil, Aeneid (1.1-20). Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 95.5. fol. 53v. saec. XV2

#### Helpful Notes:

- note the frequent use of ‘-’ as an abbreviation for ‘-us’
- the last word of line 9 reads ‘cāus’ for ‘ca(s)us’
- ‘thyberinaque’ = ‘tiberinaque’ (another example of aspiration)
- the small tachygraphic form that looks like ‘H’ is really ‘N’ in line 19 = ‘enim’
- in line 20 this manuscript reads ‘everteret’ instead of the usual reading of ‘vertereret’



### #1c – Gospel of John

After trying the Lucan and Vergil manuscripts, for the third drill see how the opening of John's Gospel compares in difficulty. We will use the Gospel of John 1:1-8a text from Figure 4 above (Newberry 44) (repeated here in miniature). The Vulgate text reads:

*In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est. In ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum: et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Ioannes. Hic venit in testimonium ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non...*

#### Helpful Notes:

- the first 'v(er)bum' is abbreviated
- 'fuit' is written here with a double 'ff' following scribal convention for this script style



Figure 4 – John 1:1-14. Book of Hours.  
Chicago, Newberry Library,  
MS 44. fol. 15r. saec. XV2

Once students have practiced with these examples, ask them to go back and attempt to decipher other portions of these (and similar) texts *without* having a printed edition as a crutch. They should practice writing out their own transcriptions first and then check them against a printed text. Afterwards, discuss what aspects were most challenging and what they remembered from the first round of practice exercises that helped them. See Appendix 1 for links to other high-resolution image scans available online that can be used for further practice.

### Activity #2 – Student Scribes

Following up on Activity #1, for even more student engagement (and fun), challenge the class to become scribes and create their own manuscript texts. This can be a great artistic outlet for students and a great change of pace from the usual kinds of assignments. The first four chapters of Clemens and Graham as well as the Medieval Writing website (see Appendices 2-3) provide plenty of details on the various stages of historical manuscript production and will prove useful for any such project. Since actual calf-skin vellum is quite expensive these days, for a writing surface I recommend using high-quality “parchment” color résumé paper, easily found in any office supply store. To start with, each student can attempt to duplicate any of the manuscript images in this article as close to the original as he or she can make it. Depending on the image being copied, this could include not only the palaeography of the main text but also marginal notes, illuminated capitals, and other illustrations. You could alternatively assign it as a group project in which each

member is responsible for reproducing a different feature of the manuscript page. Four people in a group works out well since then: 1) one sketches the overall design and rules the text lines, 2) the next writes the text itself, 3) the third writes any marginal or interlinear notes, and 4) the final person adds in any decorated capitals or other illuminations. You can even add a level of fun competition by letting them know that a group of judges (perhaps a few other teachers) will award a prize of some kind to the best-designed manuscript page. Throughout this process, students can experiment with various kinds of inks, colored pencils, or paints, depending on how elaborate they want the final product to be.

Once the students have some practice doing this, the next potential stage is to let them design their own manuscript page for showcasing any Latin text of their choosing. First the students need to look through pictures of a variety of manuscripts to choose a specific handwriting style that they will try to emulate. The scripts database of the Medieval Writing website will provide them with alphabets in the various scripts (see Appendix 3). Once they have chosen which script to use, they should practice copying out the various letters in a notebook and also sample words to get the letters to flow well together. Only after these preparatory steps should they proceed with writing their own texts. Once students work past the initial learning curve, this ability to write in what amounts to medieval calligraphy can be quite addicting, so I encourage this practice as much as possible.

### ***Activity #3 – Make Your Own Manuscript Codex***

Following on the previous lesson idea, the ultimate step (for the advanced student or maybe an honors section) is to set about actually creating a whole manuscript codex. They do not have to be big; a tiny codex of even four or eight pages can serve as a starting point. One option is to have each student buy a commercial “make-your-own-book” kit, various sizes of which can usually be found at art and craft supply stores like Dick Blick, etc. After following the binding instructions, they could then proceed to design the content of the various pages as above in activity #2. Another option is to have the class actually gather their own materials and bind their own books. This does require some preparation but is not as difficult as it might sound. Relevant web searches (especially on YouTube) for “book binding” and “how to make a book” will provide plenty of helpful information. See Appendix 3 for some useful web resources in this arena.

### ***Activity #4 – Mapping the history of your text***

In explaining the process of text transmission to students, it is visually interesting—and thanks to the internet no longer that difficult—to bring in relevant pictures for each step. We cannot show students a photo of Caesar hard at work on his commentaries, but quick searches online will reveal reproductions of medieval copyists at work, writing instruments, the physical components of a codex (such as vellum sheets, stitching, covers), and so forth. Internet searches for early (and current) editions of any given author will complete the picture.

To make things more concrete, challenge the class (or individual students as an enrichment project) to research as many of the transmission stages as they can for a given text, perhaps one they’ve seen before in class. The majority of the necessary research material for such a project can be found in the introductions to the pertinent Loeb or Oxford Classical Text (OCT) editions of the text in question, along with the author’s entry in the invaluable work *Texts and Transmission* by Reynolds and Wilson (see Appendix 2). The date of a text’s *editio princeps* can usually be found online; Wikipedia’s entry on the subject ([editio princeps](#)) actually gives a fairly thorough list. Lists

of critical editions of the text can also be gleaned from a combination of the above resources and online searches (Google Books deserves special mention here).

Let us take Vergil's *Aeneid* as an example, both because it is a text most every Latin student encounters at some point and because it boasts more extant manuscripts than any other ancient text outside the Bible (and is thus a bit more likely to show up in a collection to which you may have access). The information listed below came from a few sources, mainly the introductions to both Mynors' OCT edition (1972) and Goold's revision of the Loeb edition of Vergil (1999). Editions like these provide a list of the important manuscripts that have helped editors shape the printed text, and these are listed as abbreviations (called the *sigla*) representing usually the location (past or current) of that manuscript. Consult these types of editions for other authors to find similar information.

Following the outline earlier in this article, the story of the *Aeneid* from author to textbook can be reconstructed something like this:

1. Vergil composes the *Aeneid* (which is thankfully not burned *post mortem*!).
2. The text is "published" and quickly becomes famous.
3. Scribes make copies of the copies of Vergil continuously through late antiquity, including a number of scribes in the 5<sup>th</sup> century who produce a set of copies that are the oldest substantially-complete manuscripts that still exist; of particular note are those traditionally called M (= Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 39.1) and P (= Vaticana [Città del], Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1631).
4. Scribes make further copies of these copies and so on up through the middle ages (a group of 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts are also particularly important) and the Renaissance.
5. The *editio princeps* is printed in 1469 in Rome, edited by the noted Renaissance humanist Giovanni Andrea Bussi.
6. Vergil's *Opera* are edited and printed numerous times in subsequent centuries as editors continue to compare the best and oldest manuscripts available; notable examples through the 19<sup>th</sup> century include the critical editions of Heinsius (1676), Heyne (1767-1775), and Ribbeck (1859-1868, rev. 1894-1895).
7. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notable critical editions include the two Oxford Classical Texts of Hirtzel (1900) and Mynors (1969, rev. 1972) as well as the edition by Geymonat (1973).
8. Your classroom textbook uses or adapts one of the modern critical texts.

Using this process as a general guide, choose an author the class might be interested in and start filling in the steps. This kind of project admittedly requires a level of research that may be beyond where you want to go, but it can be a fascinating way to chart the scribal journey that a favorite text in your class has taken from ancient times to today. After picking a work to explore, even sharing the information found for one step per week can make for an enjoyable break from regular grammar/translation work, whether you do the research yourself or show your students how to find this kind of information in modern editions of the text.



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## MANUSCRIPTS CITED

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- Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 95.5 (Vergil)
- Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5 (Lucan)
- Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1 (Lucan)
- København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 495 (Livy)
- København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 2006 (Vergil)

## APPENDIX 1: WHERE TO FIND MANUSCRIPTS

Images of manuscripts can be found in one of three places: 1) in an actual manuscript codex (or facsimile), 2) photos printed in a book, and 3) in an online digital database. For physical manuscripts, contact the special collections librarians at any research library (usually on university campuses) within driving distance and ask what Latin manuscripts, if any, they have in their holdings. Even small colleges often have surprising treats for the Latinist tucked away in their archives, and archivists in my experience are usually excited to show their collection off. For books with photos of manuscripts, see Appendix 2 below on print resources for some books with great photos, often with accompanying transcriptions.

It is exciting to see that the number of manuscripts published online is increasing every year, and one can assume that this growth will only persist as the cost of large file storage continues to drop. Below is but a partial list of places to find manuscripts online to help you get started:

### 1. E-Manuscripts of the Royal Library of Denmark

[http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/materialer/haandskrifter/HA/e-mss/e\\_mss.html](http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/materialer/haandskrifter/HA/e-mss/e_mss.html)

This fantastic database is an exemplary model for the online publication of manuscripts, as navigation is easy and one can view not merely sample images but entire manuscripts in high-resolution. The ‘Codices Latini Haunienses’ link leads to the listing of authors and works available on the site.

### 2. Catalogue of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts

<http://manuscripts.cmrs.ucla.edu/>

UCLA hosts a wonderful database of links to the growing number of fully digitized manuscripts available online. Searches are easy, and the results are fantastic.

### 3. Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

<http://www.hmml.org/collections10/collections10.htm>

The Hill Museum at St. John’s University in Minnesota has compiled one of the largest databases of manuscript images in the world. A search on their site will turn up many manuscripts, but note that only some have images available online. I recommend searching by century of manuscript production as an easy way to browse their holdings.

### 4. Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections

<http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/>

This database lists virtually every manuscript housed in any accessible library in all the Netherlands. Most (but not all) manuscript descriptions have a sample image available for viewing. Their ‘Highlights’ section is a good place to start, but to find classical texts, go to the search menu and then choose “classical literature” under the ‘Browse by Category’ section.

### 5. Digital Scriptorium of Columbia University

<http://scriptorium.columbia.edu/huntington/search.html>

This excellent database offers a few sample images of most of their manuscripts.

### 6. Bodleian Library of Oxford University

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/medieval/browse.htm>

The venerable Bodleian offers a sampling of manuscript images in an easy-to-navigate site.

### 7. Mount Angel Abbey

<http://www.mountangelabbey.org/library/manuscripts.htm>

This abbey in Oregon has made available for download a number of medieval Books of Hours.

## APPENDIX 2: PRINT RESOURCES

1. Clemens, Raymond, and Timothy Graham. *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

This is one of the best introductions to the study of manuscripts currently available. There is a lot of detail here, but it is organized very well so that information is usually easy to find. It makes extensive use of many manuscripts from the Newberry Library collections throughout. Chapters 1-4 are particularly useful for understanding the details of manuscript production, while 11-16 offer invaluable help in working with specific types of manuscripts such as Books of Hours or charter rolls.

2. Bischoff, Bernhard. *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Trans. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Bischoff is *the* recognized standard scholarly work on Latin palaeography. It is densely packed with great information, but it is a fairly scholarly tome. The main chapters on script development make for a dry read, but once you have oriented yourself in some of the other resources listed here, Bischoff is the place to go for more detailed, accurate information.

3. Brown, Michelle. *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

This valuable book presents a history of palaeography through a series of clear manuscript samples beginning with some of our oldest surviving examples from the first few centuries AD and proceeding through to the Renaissance. This allows the reader to see the evolution of writing styles and letter forms over time. Each excerpt is accompanied by a transcription and can be used as a ready-made palaeography lesson. For anyone interested in trying to write out their own manuscript pages in authentic medieval hand styles (as in Activity #2), this is the book to consult.

4. Brown, Michelle. *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994.

This small handbook gives a handy glossary of the terms used in manuscript studies, often with helpful companion illustrations.

5. De Hamel, Christopher. *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1994.

This hefty tome is filled with lavish illustrations that focus mostly on the history of manuscript artwork throughout the centuries. It is still valuable (especially for the pictures) but is not quite as accessible as the Clemens and Graham book above.

6. Shailor, Barbara A. *The Medieval Book*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Shailor writes a very accessible and succinct introduction to the different types of books that existed in the middle ages as well as how they were made. The numerous illustrations throughout provide great images for classroom use.

7. Cappelli, Adriano. *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1987.

Cappelli is *the* standard dictionary of medieval manuscript abbreviations and sigla. Anyone who wants to get serious with deciphering Latin palaeography will at some point need to consult this volume.



8. Reynolds, L.D., and N.G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

This highly-informative book is considered the standard history of textual transmission of classical works from the ancient world through today.

9. Reynolds, L.D., and N.G. Wilson. *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

Although this volume is unfortunately out of print (and accordingly quite expensive), it remains the single best place to find information on the manuscript traditions of each of the main classical authors in one place.

10. Ullman, B.L. *Ancient Writing and its Influence*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963.

A classic work on the development of the alphabet and writing styles from earliest times up to the modern day. It is well-written and hits the right balance between detail and accessibility for non-specialists. Recommended for students who want to know more about why we write the way we write today.

### APPENDIX 3: OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

1. <http://web.ceu.hu/medstud/manual/MMM/home.html>

The **Medieval Manuscript Manual**, hosted by the Central European University in Hungary, is one of the best sites on the web for learning about manuscripts from how they were produced to terminology to writing styles, etc. The site is well organized and offers clear explanations that beginners can understand. I recommend both teachers and students start their research here.

2. <http://www.medievalwriting.50megs.com/writing.htm>

The **Medieval Writing** website, like the MMM above, is another treasure trove of information on medieval writing and book production that is highly accessible for the beginner. The site's 'Index of Scripts' is particularly useful.

3. <http://www.hist.msu.ru/Departments/Medieval/Cappelli/>

This online version of **Capelli's Dizionario Di Abbreviature** is a welcome reference to any budding palaeographer. The interface is a bit clunky, and the page images are very large, but the content is all there. The images are of the 1912 edition and thus in the public domain.

4. <http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/bitstream/1808/1821/3/47cappelli.pdf>

Even better is this freely available **English translation of Capelli's introduction**. This important document teaches readers the crucial art of deciphering manuscript abbreviations.

5. [http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research\\_and\\_education/palaeography/index.html](http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research_and_education/palaeography/index.html)

The National Library of the Netherlands hosts the **Palaeographic Atlas** page which summarizes the variety of script forms found in manuscripts, complete with image samples and a helpful listing of all the major styles in chronological order.

6. <http://www.chd.dk/>

This page from the **Institute for Studies of Illuminated Manuscripts** in Denmark offers a wealth of information for anyone wanting to read a Book of Hours, one of the most common surviving types of manuscript.

7. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-vNiyexqeU>

This video offers a succinct introduction to the basic elements that go into making your own book. Such information will prove useful for any projects that involve the class attempting to build their own codices. Note that the many other related instructional videos seen at the above link will give you and your class a great start in knowing how best to proceed.

8. <http://www.evellum.com/>

**Evellum** is a company that produces software on a variety of medieval topics, and their *Ductus* program is specifically designed to teach about palaeography and manuscript production. The software is not cheap but it looks to be of high quality. I have no personal experience with it, but it might be worth looking into.