



# WHAT IS PALEOGRAPHY?

---

- Paleography in the French tradition is the science as well as the art of deciphering handwriting and decoding the meaning of handwritten texts.
- Periods of study ostensibly range from the earliest examples of recorded documents through early modern handwritten texts of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Paleography also includes "the dating and identification of hands and scripts, and recognition of the place of origin of a manuscript and the scribal practices and conventions represented in it." (Beal, 2008, p. 279)
  - We will come back to these ideas later, but you might want to be especially on the lookout for the discussion of "hands" versus "scripts"!

# WHO STUDIES PALEOGRAPHY? PALEOGRAPHERS!

- Paleographers can study any writings done by hand, from any continent, in any language and writing system.
  - For example, Biblical studies scholars, historians focusing on the Middle East, Far East, and Southeast Asia, scientists, and scholars from many other disciplines all employ paleography in their study of handwritten primary source documents.
  - As such, paleography is an important "auxiliary discipline" to historical studies, and is an essential part of *diplomacy* (the science of studying historical documents).
    - Diplomacy is the field with which paleography co-emerged in the 19th century.



# ARE ARCHIVISTS PALEOGRAPHERS?

---

The image shows the exterior of the Newberry Library in Chicago, a grand stone building with Gothic Revival architecture. It features multiple levels of arched windows, some with intricate tracery, and a prominent cornice with a row of decorative arches. A street lamp with two blue banners hangs in the foreground on the left. Green trees are visible on the right side of the frame.

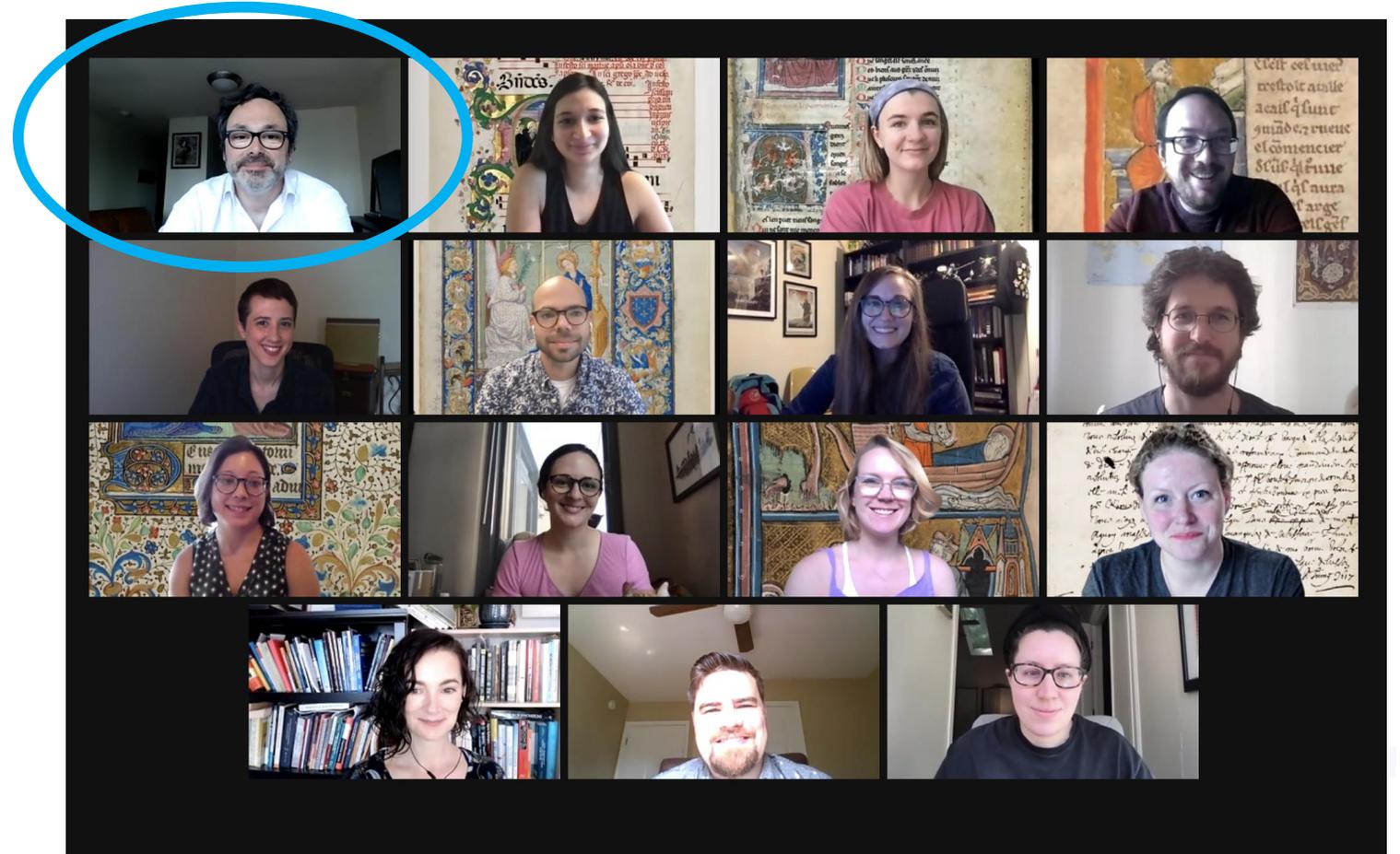
# NEWBERRY LIBRARY

---

# MELLON SUMMER INSTITUTE IN FRENCH PALEOGRAPHY

---

- Class of 2021
- Instructor: Marc Smith of the Ecole des chartes in Paris.



# WHAT DO PALEOGRAPHERS DO?

- The paleographer's work extends to decoding a number of document types. The codex, yes, but also:
  - epistolatory content (i.e., letters)
  - diaries
  - financial records
  - judicial decisions
  - edicts, and
  - any other kind of primary source record that might serve a long-term use and deserve to be studied.

# WEEK 3 HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: AN INVENTORY

---

Item un sceler de stavelacte stozor fuzes and  
epoz puz de gomme puz  
Item un sceler de stavelacte stozor aboz de fomme  
fuzes de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
etc puz de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
fuzes de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un and sceler de stavelacte de auz stozor and  
epoz de fomme fuzes de mouta de lumbarda  
de gomme puz de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un sceler de d'azp nou and epoz de fomme  
double de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
nou puz  
Item un and sceler de d'azp nou and epoz fuzes de  
de gomme puz de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un and sceler de d'azp nou double de damat  
double de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un and sceler de d'azp nou double de damat  
double de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un and sceler de d'azp nou double de damat  
double de mouta puz de gomme puz de  
Item un and sceler de d'azp nou double de damat  
double de mouta puz de gomme puz de

Item ...  
pup

# THE BIG PICTURE

---

- What specialized knowledge does the paleographer have? How are the secrets of manuscripts revealed through their close study?
- One aspect that serves as a point of departure is the consideration that paleography incorporates a deep knowledge of writing conventions of the time period under study.
- Writing is a communicative act, recording a message for ulterior consumption by a skilled reader.
  - The paleographer must understand all the nuances of the craft that would be understood by the manuscript's contemporaries; beyond that, the paleographer must also understand both the art and the science of working with centuries-old material culture today. The secrets of such content are generally considered to reside in the material objects under study.
  - This experience working with historical documents leads them to the ability to "fill in the blanks."



# MANUSCRIPT FEATURES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Scripts and writing surface

luminacio mea: a salus mea om  
nino.

Dominiis protector uite mee: a  
quo trepidabo.

Quum appiant super me nocen  
tes: ut edant carnes meas.

Qui tribulant me inimici mei: in

# WHAT IS A "MANUSCRIPT" IN ENGLISH? IN THE INFORMATION PROFESSIONS?

---

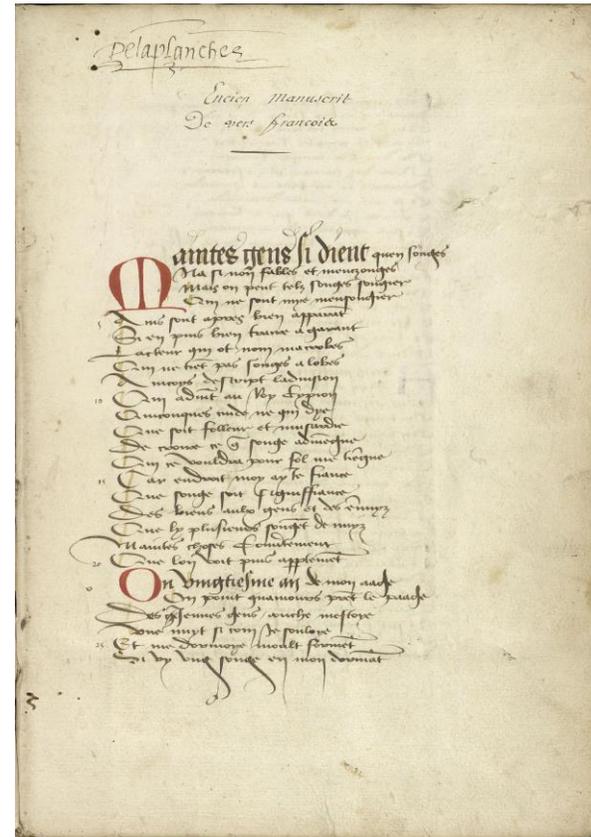
- This is another one where there might be a lot of different answers, depending on whom you ask.
- We can acknowledge that in the most traditional sense, "manuscript" means something written by hand
  - Manu = "hand" (e.g., manual labor, manufacture in its oldest sense)
  - Script = "writing" or "to write"
- In the information professions, "manuscripts" when part of a collection can be synonymous with being unique, and being unpublished.
  - Special collections and archives usually house these handwritten materials.
  - Theses and dissertations, if not published to the web, easily fall into this category in the world of library cataloging.
  - Did you know: In scholarly communication, a "manuscript" is the version that is sent for consideration to a publisher.

# AND "ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS"?

---

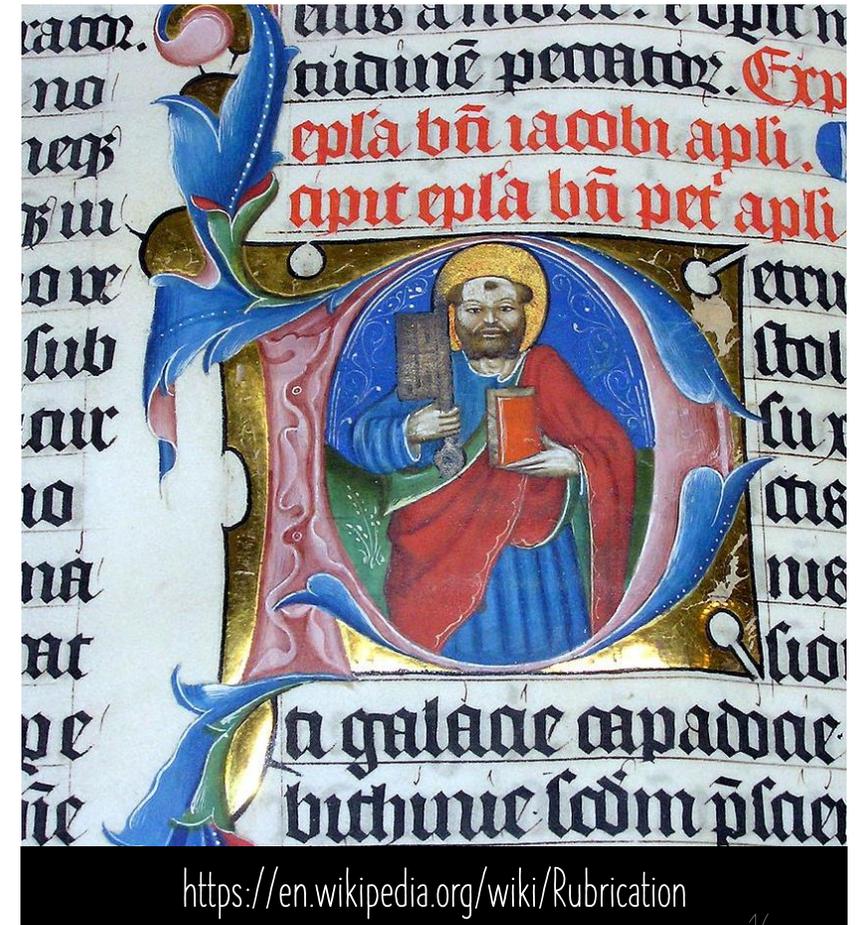
- Illuminated manuscripts are hand-written books with painted decoration that generally includes precious metals such as gold or silver. The pages were made from animal skin, commonly calf, sheep, or goat. Illuminated manuscripts were produced between 1100 and 1600, with monasteries as their earliest creators. Wealthy patrons also wanted these illustrative works for personal libraries and encouraged the formation of private workshops that flourished in French and Italian cities between the 13th and 15th centuries. The decline of the illuminated manuscript tradition coincided with the ability to mass produce printed text and the increasing numbers of literate people who wanted secular as well as religious books. --<https://www.nga.gov/conservation/paper/manuscript-project.html>

# "ILLUMINATED" OR NOT?



# THE INDIVIDUAL OR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

- Modest writing projects, like letters, diary entries, or even inventories would probably be written by one person.
- Complex writing projects like very expensive books on the previous slide might have employed:
  - A scribe writing the text
  - A rubricator adding text in red (or red and blue, as was the tradition in France)
  - An illuminator adding decorative letters or entire scenes
  - A subsequent reader adding annotations/marginalia





# HOW DID EUROPEAN LANGUAGES EVOLVE IN THEIR WRITTEN FORM?

---

- In other words, what are some features of medieval writing? This is an ambitious question! The list below is not comprehensive, but is more a point of departure:
  - Little to no upper case/lower case distinction
  - Little to no punctuation
  - No accent marks
  - Inconsistent use of letters
  - Inconsistent spelling of words
  - Individual letters might be written differently in different parts of the word (beginning, middle, end)
  - Abbreviations were inconsistent; their use was inconsistent



## ABRÉVIATIONS FRANÇAISES

Cette liste intègre et étend celle qui figure dans Maurice Prou, *Manuel de paléographie latine et française*, 4<sup>e</sup> éd. refondue avec la collab. d'Alain de Boñard, Paris, 1924, p. 455-474.

N. B. La forme propre du signe abrégatif est ici simplifiée par nécessité. On gardera à l'esprit que dans la pratique, elle permet souvent des distinctions précises (et qui varient selon les époques), selon que le trait monte, descend, boucle, enveloppe le mot, etc.

*Équivalences* : ' = signe générique (tilde)    p̄ = p « barré » = *per/par*    p̄ = p « barré courbe » = *pro*    ˆ = signe ondulé *ur*

A	
ab'	aboutant - aboutissant
about'	aboutant - aboutissant
aca'e - acae'	a cause
acau'e - acaue'	a cause
accoust'	accoutumé
acoust'	acoustumé
acq <sup>on</sup>	acquisition
acqui'on - acquion'	acquisition
ad'	a dict - a dit
ad <sup>ans</sup>	admodiateurs
adjo <sup>ur</sup>	adjourné
adm'de	admende
adrec'	adreciees - adreçantes
aff'	affin
aff <sup>er</sup>	affermer - affirmer
aff'es - affes'	afferres - affaires
aff <sup>on</sup>	affirmation - affirmation
als'	alias
am'de	amende
ann'	annuel - annuelle
ap'liq' - apliq'	apostolique - appostolicque
app <sup>ans</sup>	appellans
appart' - appot'	appartient
apparten' - appten'	appartendra - appartenant - appartenances
app <sup>ons</sup>	appellations

baill'	bailliage
barth'i	Barthelemi
bich'	bichet
bn'	bien
bns'	biens
bo <sup>g</sup> '	bourgeois
bouch'r - bouchr'	bouchier
bourg'	bourgeois
bourg <sup>on</sup>	Bourgogne
bout'	boutant
bt'	bout

C	
ca'e - cae'	cause
cap <sup>on</sup>	capitulaire - cappitulaire
cau'e - caue'	cause
cau'on - cauon'	caution
ced'	cedit - cedit [transcrire ced.]
cestass'	c'est assavoir
ch'al - chal'	cheval
chapp <sup>on</sup> - chapp're - chappre'	chappitre
chap <sup>on</sup> - chap're - chapre'	chapitre -

conten'	contenant
cop'	copie - coppie
copp'	coppie
co <sup>t</sup> '	court
cour'	courante [monnaie]
coustem's	coustemens
coum't'e	couverture
cymet'e	cymetiere

D	
d'	de
d'	deniers [transcrire d.]
d'	di(c)t
d' b'	d'un bout
d' c'	d'un costé
da <sup>le</sup>	damoiselle
da <sup>le</sup>	damoiselle
dam <sup>le</sup>	damoiselle
damoi <sup>le</sup>	damoiselle
dam <sup>er</sup>	damierement - darrenierement
darr'	d'arrerages
dau'e - daue'	d'autre - d'aultre
dau'pt	d'autre part
dault'	d'aultre
dce'	dicte - dite



# HANDWRITING IN BOOKS IN FRANCE 9TH-15TH CENTURY

---

Caroline Minuscule – S. ix-xii

abcdefghijklmnopqrstu<sup>u</sup>xyz &

Praegothica – S. xii

abc**d**efghijklmnopqro**r**st**v**ux &

Gothic / Textualis – S. xiii-xiv

abc**d**efghijklmnopqro**r**st**v**uxyz †

Northern Textualis (formata) = Textura – S. xv-xvi

abc**d**efghijklmno**p**qr**r**stuxy**z** †

# "AND" TYRONIAN?

---

Tironian notes (Latin: *notae Tironianae*; or Tironian shorthand) is a system of [shorthand](#) invented by [Tiro](#) (who died in 4 BC), [Marcus Tullius Cicero](#)'s slave and personal secretary and later a freedman. Tiro's system consisted of about 4,000 symbols that in classical times were extended to 5,000 signs. During the [medieval period](#), Tiro's notation system was taught in European monasteries and was brought to about 13,000 signs. The usage of Tironian notes declined after 1100 AD but were still in some use in the 17th century. A handful are still common today. --

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tironian\\_notes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tironian_notes)



# HANDWRITING IN BOOKS IN FRANCE 9TH-15TH CENTURY

---

Southern Textualis (formata) = Rotunda - S. xiv/xv

abcd **efgh** iklm nopqr **2** s t v u x y z **z**

Cursiva (formata) : Bataarde - S. xiv/xv

abcd **efgh** iklm **no** pqr **2** s t v u x y z **z**

Hybrida (formata) : Bataarde bourguignonne - S. xv

abcd **efgh** iklm nopqr **2** s t v u x y z

GOETEC MAEUSCULE

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V U X Y Z

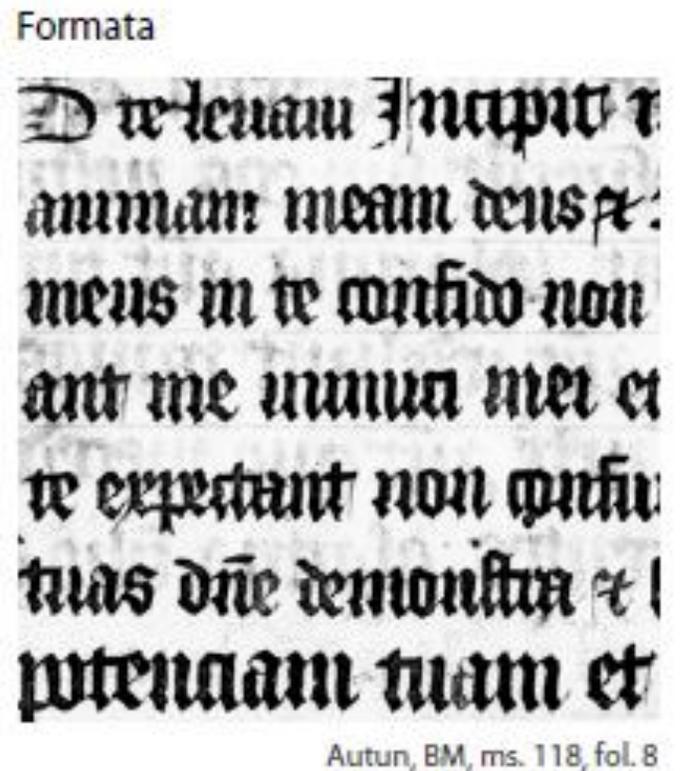
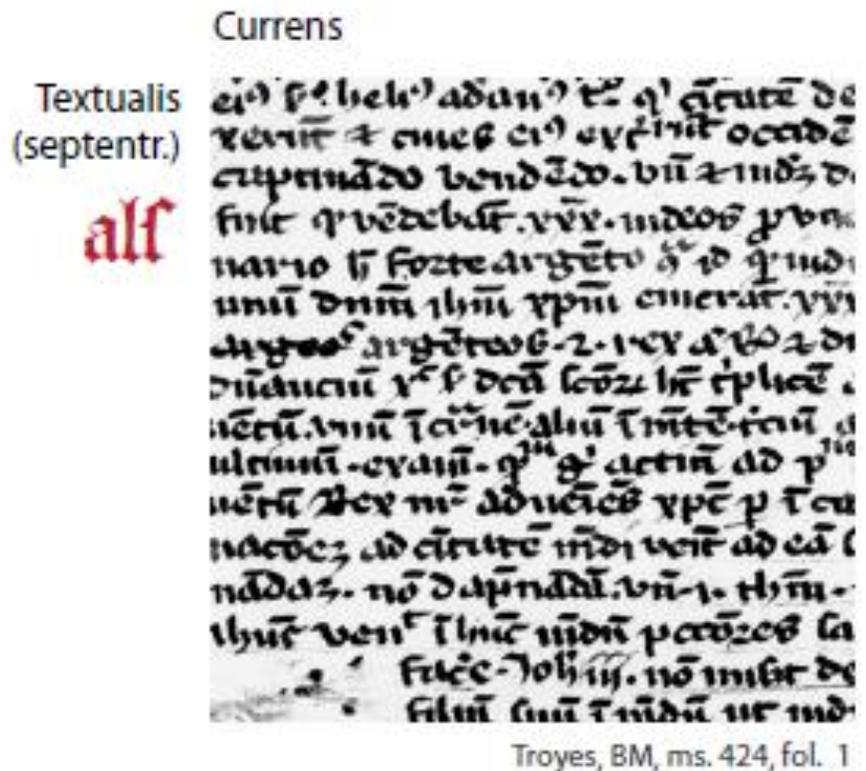
# EXAMPLES OF BLACKLETTER

---

- Blackletter (sometimes black letter), also known as Gothic script, Gothic minuscule, or Textura, was a script used throughout Western Europe from approximately 1150 until the 17th century. -- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackletter>
- The next four slides show ways that blackletter scripts were used...

**NORTHERN EUROPEAN: *TEXTUALIS*, ALSO KNOWN AS *TEXTURA* OR *GOTHIC BOOKHAND*, WAS THE MOST CALLIGRAPHIC FORM OF BLACKLETTER, AND TODAY IS THE FORM MOST ASSOCIATED WITH "GOTHIC".**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackletter#Textualis>

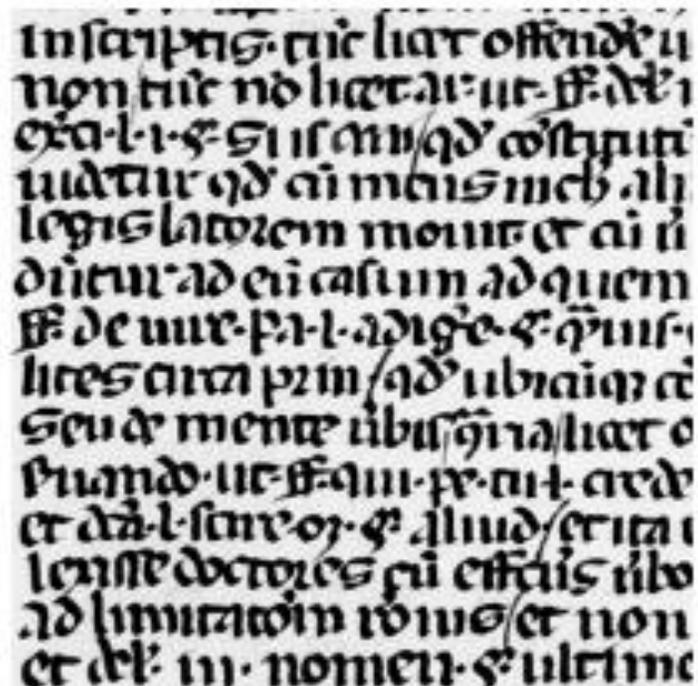


# SOUTHERN EUROPEAN TEXTUALIS

Currens

Textualis  
(merid.)

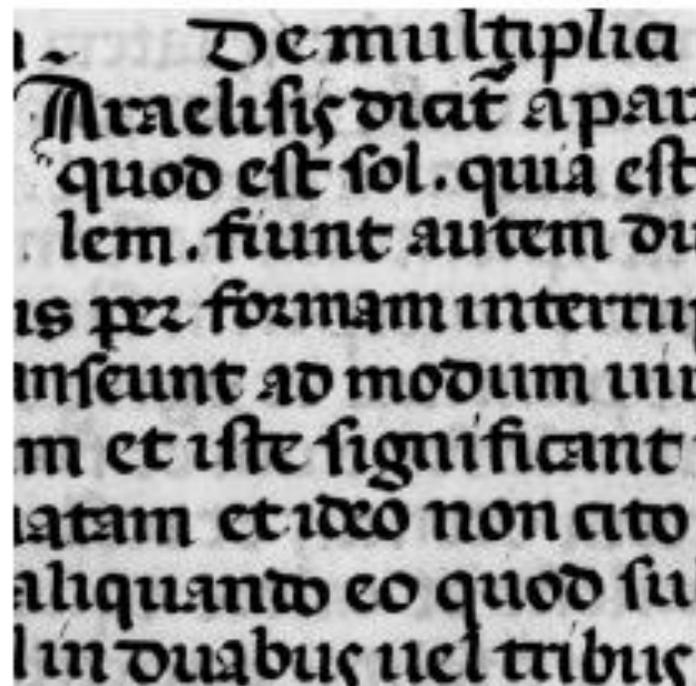
als



In scriptis. tunc licet offendere u  
non tunc no licet. ac. ut. ff. de  
exa. l. i. §. si uis an. qd. constituti  
uidetur qd. ai mens. nich. ali  
legis latorem mouit. et ai u  
ditur ad eu casum ad quem  
ff. de iure. pa. l. adige. §. q. uis.  
lices circa p. m. qd. ubi ai q. ce  
seu de mente ubi q. n. a. licet o  
puando. ut. ff. qui. pe. tu. crede  
et ad. l. scire. o. §. aliud. et ita i  
lenisse doctores cu. effe. u. ubi  
ad limitatoin. id. uis. et non  
et del. iii. nomen. §. ultime

Metz, BM, ms. 28, fol. 131v

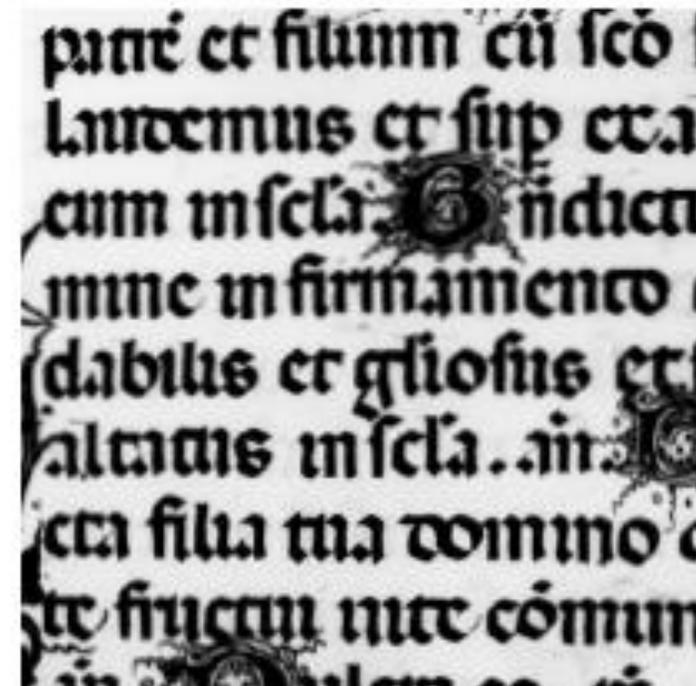
Libraria/media



De multiplica  
Israelis dicit a par  
quod est sol. quia est  
lem. fiunt autem du  
is per formam interru  
inseunt ad modum ui  
m et iste significant  
latam et ideo non cito  
aliquando eo quod su  
l in duabus uel tribus

BNF, lat. 6524, fol. 24

Formata



patre et filium cu scō  
Laudemus et sup et a  
cum in sc̄la. **S**̄ndicti  
mine in firmamento  
dabilis et gl̄iosus et  
altatus in sc̄la. **A**̄n.  
cta filia tua domino c  
te fructu uite cōmun

BNF, Smith-Lesouëf 22, fol. 29

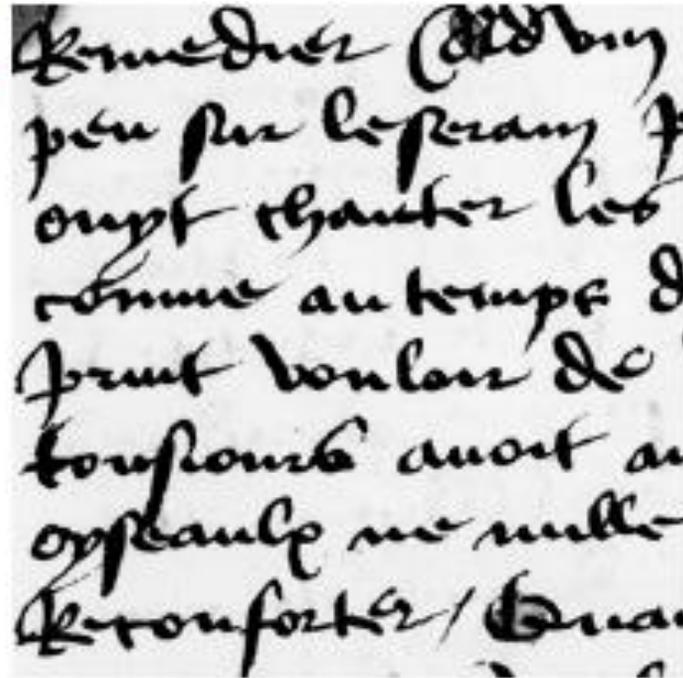
# CURSIVA

*Cursiva* refers to a very large variety of forms of blackletter; as with modern cursive writing, there is no real standard form. It developed in the 14th century as a simplified form of *textualis*, with influence from the form of *textualis* as used for writing charters. *Cursiva* developed partly because of the introduction of paper, which was smoother than parchment. It was therefore, easier to write quickly on paper in a cursive script. --

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackletter#Cursiva>

## Currens

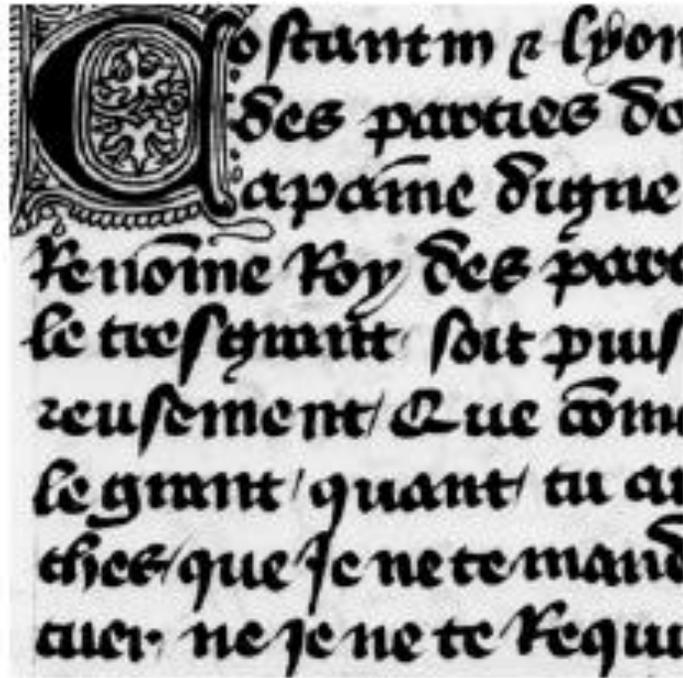
Cursiva  
all



Remedier (ad) by  
pen sur le seray f  
oyt chanter les  
comme au temps d  
prunt volor de  
tousiours auot au  
oyseauls ne mille  
Le conforter / Qua

BNF, lat. 1487, fol. 30

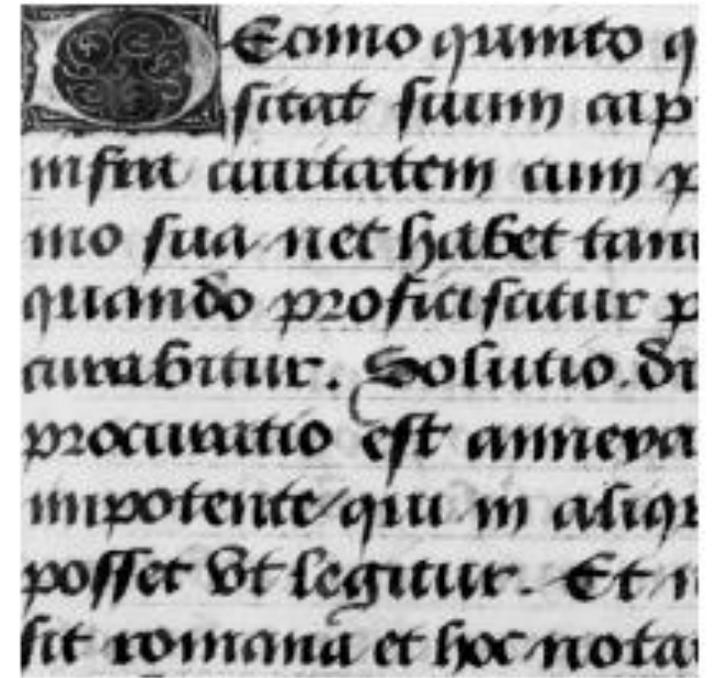
## Libraria/media



Costant m a Lyon  
Des parties de  
apaine digne  
le noime Roy des par  
le tres grant soit plus  
reusement / Que com  
le grant / quant / tu as  
ches / que se ne te mand  
cier / ne se ne te requi

Toulouse, BM, ms. 512, fol. 99

## Formata



Como quinto q  
sitat suum ap  
mfer civitatem cum p  
mo sua nec habet tam  
quando proficiatur p  
curabitur. Solutio. Si  
procuratio est annexa  
impotente qui in aliq  
posset vt legitur. Et  
sit romana et hoc nota

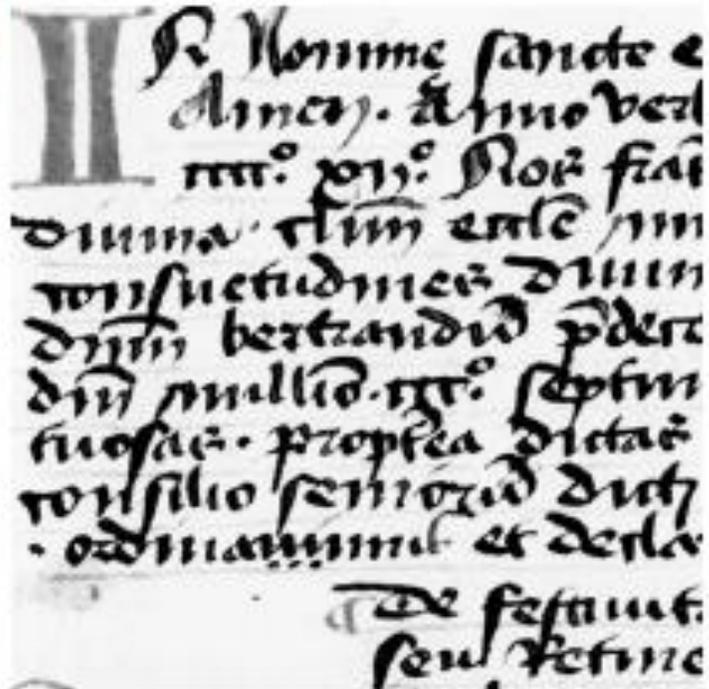
BNF, lat. 3354, fol. 39

# HYBRIDA

*Hybrida* is also called *bastarda* (especially in France), and as its name suggests, is a hybrid form of the script. It is a mixture of *textualis* and *cursiva*, developed in the early 15th century. From *textualis*, it borrowed vertical ascenders, while from *cursiva*, it borrowed long ⟨f⟩ and ⟨ſ⟩, single-looped ⟨a⟩, and ⟨g⟩ with an open descender (similar to Carolingian forms). -- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackletter#Hybrida>

## Currens

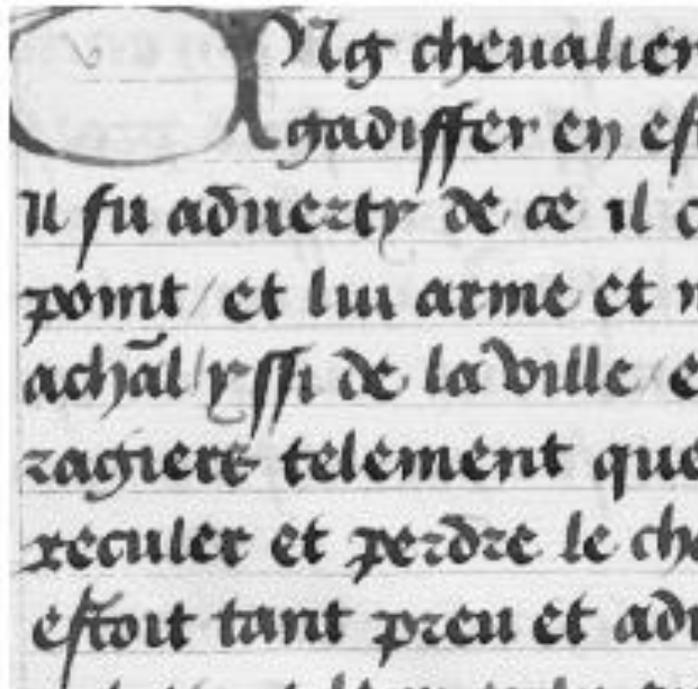
Hybrida  
als



II R Homme sainte e  
Amey. Anno ver  
m. p. Noz frai  
diuina. cum eate m  
consuetudines diuin  
dum bertrandid pder  
dum nullid. r. septim  
tuosae. proplea dictae  
consilio seniorid dicti  
odmannid et de la  
De festant.  
seu. festine

Bourges, BM, ms. 208, fol. 12

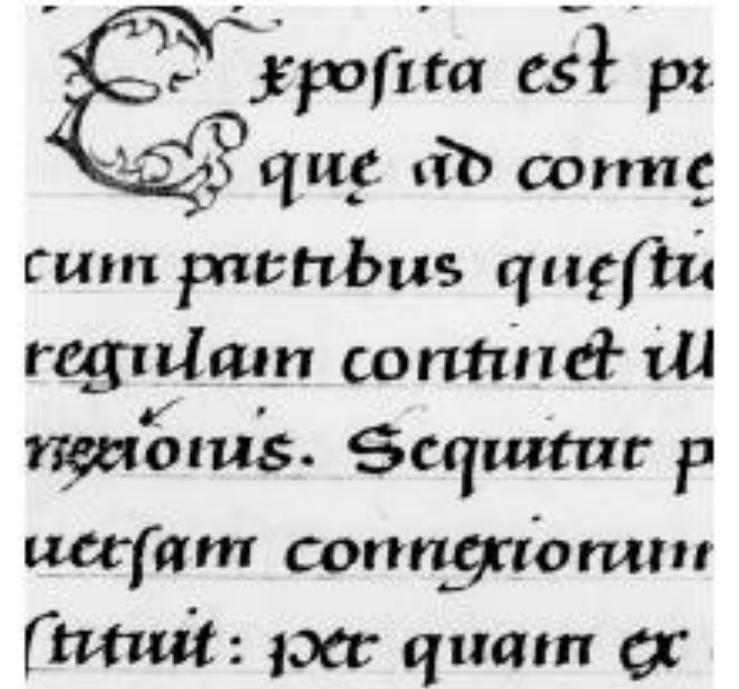
## Libraria/media



Unz cheualier  
Agadiffer en es  
il fu aduertiz de ce il c  
pont et lui arme et n  
achal yssi de la ville e  
ragiere telement que  
reuler et perdre le ch  
estoit tant preu et ad

Ars., ms. 3483, fol. 51v

## Formata



Exposita est pr  
que ad conne  
cum partibus questu  
regulam continet ill  
nerioris. Sequitur p  
uersam connexionum  
stituit: per quam ex

BNF, lat. 6659, fol. 13v

# BUT! NONE OF THIS IS SET IN STONE

---

To present it like this, it seems so easy!

Yet, the reality is that, even if the manuscript is in good repair/readable and not torn, stained, bug-eaten... it still might be somewhat difficult (to impossible) to make out what is written.



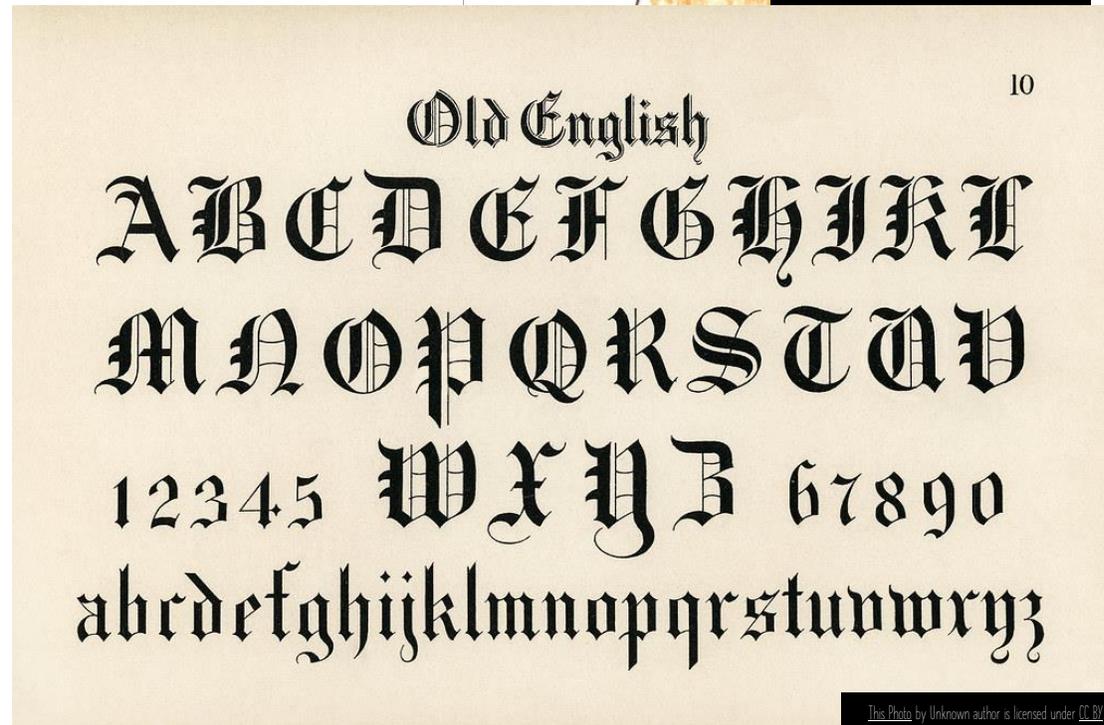
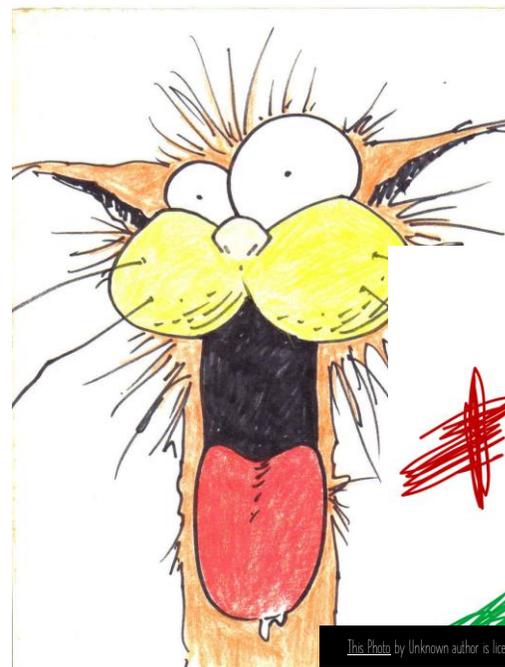
WHY DO THESE ALL LOOK  
SO DIFFERENT???



# FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS

---

- Script
- Scribe
- Hand



# TAXONOMY OF INFLUENCES: SCRIBE

SCRIBE as influence on the hand	
Cultural milieu	Education/literacy; Professional affiliation (i.e., secular or religious); Social class; Languages spoken; Geographic location
Ability and talent	Artistic ability; Cognitive ability; Experience; Training
Physical attributes	Coordination/finesse with a quill and eraser; Eyesight; Posture
Circumstances for writing	Desk/surface used; Intended audience; Hours worked in a day; Satiety; Physical comfort of space; Salary for professional work; Homelife

# TAXONOMY OF INFLUENCES: MANUSCRIPT

Circumstances for writing	Manuscript
Nature of the document written/copied	Religious, personal, legal, financial etc. information; Language choice (e.g., Latin, vernacular); Formality of the publication process; Tropes invoked/style adopted; Intention to distribute or maintain private, confidential
Mechanics adopted	Script (e.g., Gothic, secretary, cursive, bastarda, etc.)
Writing materials	Surface (e.g., vellum, paper, etc.); Ink; Quill
Circumstances for production	Personal or commission; Timeliness of the need/required speed of the work; Proof of authenticity/accuracy

# "OBJECTIVE" CRITERIA IN PALEOGRAPHY

---

- One of the earliest lists was by Jean Mallon who proposed seven points for analysis:
  1. Form, "the morphology of the letters."
  2. Pen angle (*l'angle d'écriture*) "in relation to the base line."
  3. Ductus, "the sequence and direction of a letter's different traces."
  4. Modulus, the proportions of the letters.
  5. Weight, "the difference in thickness between the hair lines and the shadow lines."
  6. Writing support.
  7. Internal characteristics, "the nature of the text."

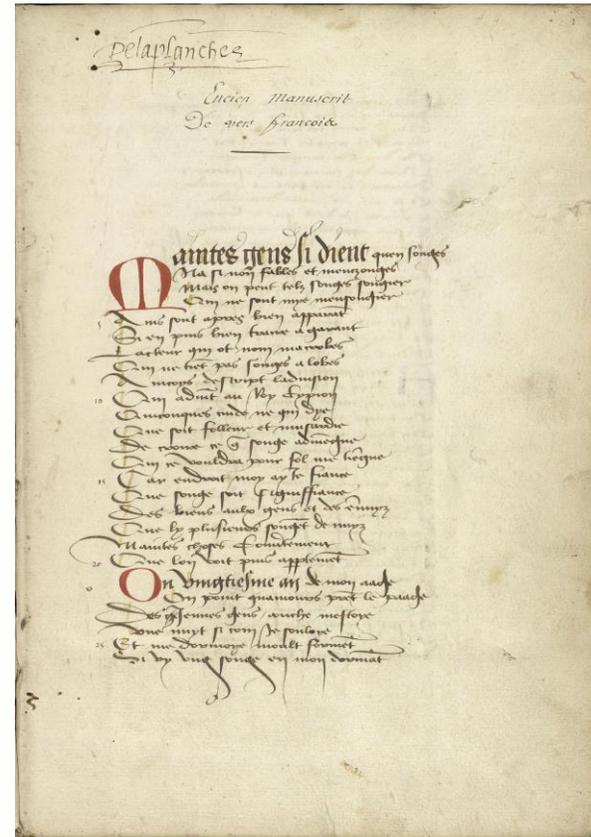
Many other lists exist - some for identifying modern forgeries, others just putting forth their own ideas, all of which, nonetheless, are not in any way objective; these are all, when measured, subjective! Even paleographers don't always agree!

## Analyse paléographique : relevé alphabétique

Réf. : ..... Lieu-date-scribe : ..... Type doc. : .....

Lettre	Majuscule	Initiale	Médiane	Finale	lettre + abrég.	lettre + lettre
A					a+tilde a(utr)e...	ar
B					b+tilde	
C					c+tilde c(r)i	co ct
D					d final plongeant	
E					e+tilde e+ur e(utr)e	
F					f+boucle (?)	ff fo
G					g+tilde	
H					h+tilde	
I					i+tilde	

# ROMAN DE LA ROSE - WHICH IS THE OLDEST VERSION?





**Q**ui ne tint pas songes a lobes

**Q**ui descrist la uision

**Q**uil auint au roi scipion

**Q**ui conques cuit ne q̄q̄ die

**Q**ue soit folece ⁊ musardie

**Q**e adue ce q̄ songe au iēgne

**Q**ui se uoudra pour fol mē tēgne

**Q**ar endroit moi au ie fiāce

**Q**ue songe est senefiance

**Q**es biens aus gēz ⁊ des enuiz

**Q**ue li plusieurs songēt de nuiz

**Q**aintes choses couuertement

**Q**ue len uoit piūs apertement

**V**intiesme an de mon aage

**T**out cōmours mēt le vaage

**C**o mence le Roumanz

# SUMMARY OF SOME CHALLENGES TO PALEOGRAPHY

---

Scripts	Interchangeable use of letters (e.g., "i" and "y" in Old French and Middle French); Scripts using the same combination of strokes for different letters (e.g., confusion between "s" and "f"); Inconsistent abbreviations
Hands (i.e., writing of a single scribe)	Pen strokes, directional motion, pen lifts; Inconsistent formation of characters, abbreviations; Non-standard spelling; Non-standard grammar; Inconsistent flourishes; Mistakes -- Human error; "Susceptibility to tiredness, illness and stress"
Material defects	Missing, ripped/torn, folded, holes; Bindings or seals that obscure texts; Scratches/erasures that damage the page; Ink that is too dark or not dark enough

# DID YOU THINK YOU'D LEAVE TODAY KNOWING HOW TO DO PALEOGRAPHY?

---

- Sorry.
- I thought I'd leave at the end of summer feeling very confident... I still don't.

# HOW CAN YOU STUDY PALEOGRAPHY?

---

- The Folger Shakespeare Library is running Practical Paleography sessions for aspiring paleographers wishing to learn collaboratively and in real-time about paleography. [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Practical\\_Paleography](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Practical_Paleography)
- Another example of an initiative, this one self-paced, is the tutorial for Bess of Hardwick's Letters, a collection of 12 early modern letters that have been scanned. <https://www.bessofhardwick.org/>
  - An online tutorial is provided (<https://www.bessofhardwick.org/background.jsp?id=231>) as well as links to four additional tutorials, each of which also makes use of scanned resources.
    - English Handwriting: An Online Course (University of Cambridge): <http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/handwriting/>;
    - Scottish Handwriting: Online Tuition in the Palaeography of Scottish Documents (The National Records of Scotland): <http://www.scottishhandwriting.com/>;
    - Palaeography: Reading Old Handwriting 1500–1800, A Practical Online Tutorial (UK National Archives): <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography>;
    - Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection: <http://luna.folger.edu/>
- Many libraries and digital libraries also make online resources available, which ultimately serves to support increasingly sophisticated uses of their own digital library collections, e.g., [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/List\\_of\\_online\\_resources\\_for\\_early\\_modern\\_English\\_paleography](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/List_of_online_resources_for_early_modern_English_paleography)

# WHAT SHOULD ARCHIVISTS KEEP IN MIND ABOUT PALEOGRAPHY?

Paleographers are interested in the manuscript as a primary source document

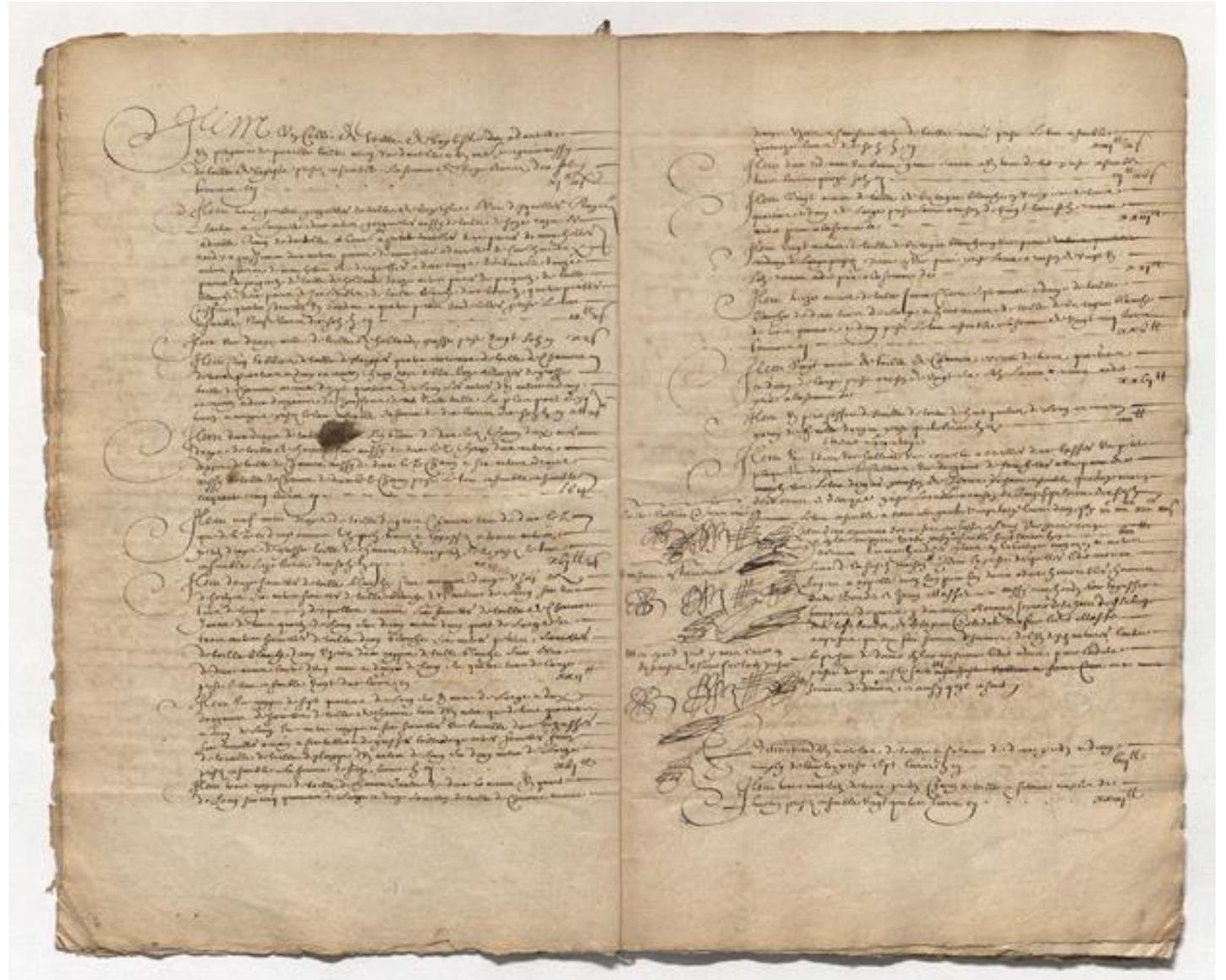
- Scans are great! But not the same thing.
- Story of letters during the plague is sometimes told through one's nose...

High quality scans are surrogates - they are not the "real thing"

- Scans can be incredibly useful, not only for learning paleography, but also for studying manuscripts...

# DIGITAL ARCHIVES VALUE ADDED

- Digital libraries specializing in manuscripts have made a number of advances, with an example being the French National Archives which allows for images of manuscripts to be manipulated through zooming in and out, color correction of images, etc.
  - By adding filters to a high-quality image of a page, for example, a paleographer has the potential to interact in novel ways with a manuscript that transcend what is available to the human eye.
- image: [https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/Fran\\_IR\\_041631/c1p6wbgvio8b--ntc6y4m7i6xu/Fran\\_0159\\_05515\\_L](https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/Fran_IR_041631/c1p6wbgvio8b--ntc6y4m7i6xu/Fran_0159_05515_L)
- finding aid entry: [https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/rechercheconsultation/consultation/ir/consultationIR.action?irId=FRAN\\_IR\\_041631&uId=c1p6wbgvio8b--ntc6y4m7i6xu&details=true&gotoArchivesNums=false&auSeinIR=true&formCaller=GENERALISTE&fullText=meubles](https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/rechercheconsultation/consultation/ir/consultationIR.action?irId=FRAN_IR_041631&uId=c1p6wbgvio8b--ntc6y4m7i6xu&details=true&gotoArchivesNums=false&auSeinIR=true&formCaller=GENERALISTE&fullText=meubles)



# INNOVATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARIES SUPPORTING MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

---

- Christine de Pizan Digital Scriptorium: <https://dlmm.library.jhu.edu/en/christine-de-pizan-digital-scriptorium/>
- DigiPal: <http://www.digipal.eu/>
  - "DigiPal is a new resource for the study of medieval handwriting, particularly that produced in England during the years 1000-1100, the time of Æthelred, Cnut and William the Conqueror. It is designed to allow you to see samples of handwriting from the period and to compare them with each other quickly and easily."
- The Quill Project: <https://www.quillproject.net/quill>
  - Provides a platform for diplomatics documents (in this case, relating to the negotiations surrounding the U.S. Constitution) that permits the reconstitution of context through temporal means by end-users.

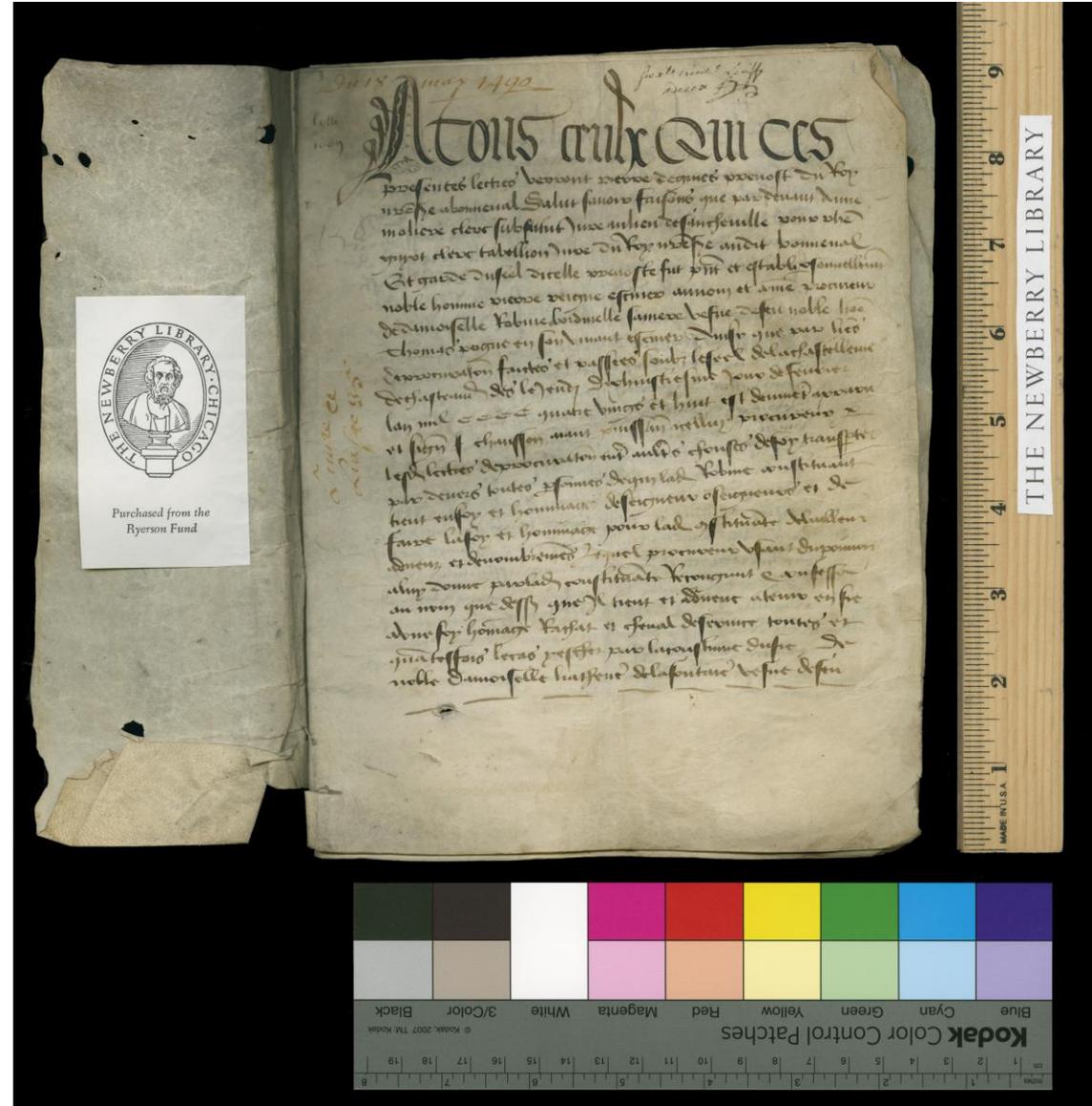
# ADVANCES IN "DIGITAL PALEOGRAPHY": IIIF AND IIIF VIEWERS

---

- The International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) standard is an emerging standard that permits libraries around the world to expose their digital library contents in a way that is consumable by researchers with IIIF viewers.
  - These viewers enable detailed work comparing manuscripts from a single interface.
  - Once the IIIF images have been identified through a participating institution, the content's manifest can be loaded into one of the open source IIIF viewers for analysis.
  - IIIF content and viewers permit a virtual bringing together of manuscript pages; for example, pages of a medieval codex that were separated and sold to libraries around the world, if scanned and made available using IIIF technologies, can be reassembled by the researcher into a virtual (in the purest sense of the term) codex, yielding a digital surrogate that replicates how the materials originally would have appeared.
  - Such initiatives obviously save the time of scholars, but also unquestionably provide access to surrogates of resources that simply is not possible physically.

# IIIF VIEWER

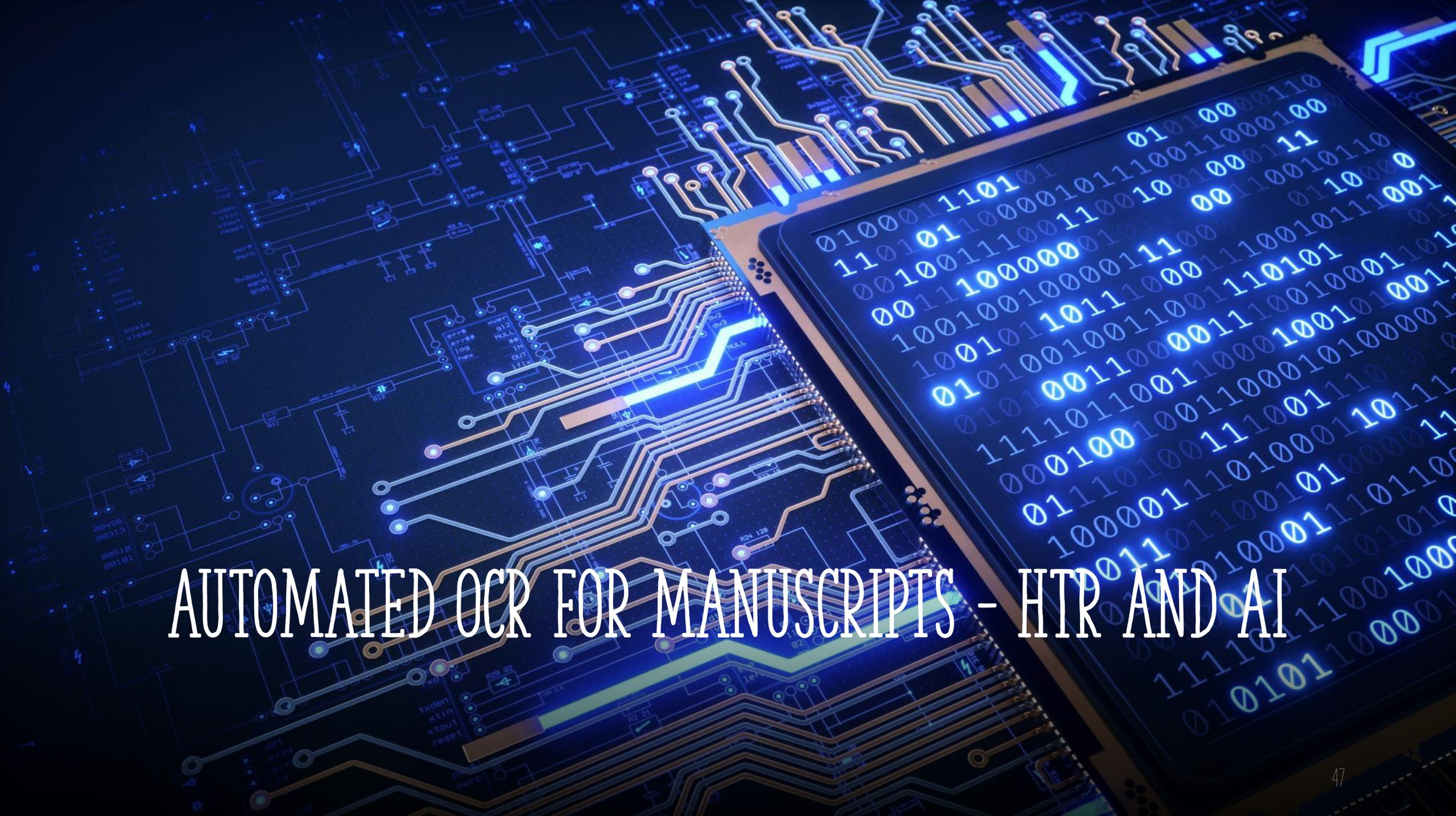
- This image of a IIIF Viewer shows a manuscript page from the Newberry Library in Chicago, IL, USA through the IIIF viewer from the University of Toronto. additional pages can be added by the user).
- <https://iiif.library.utoronto.ca/image/v2/paleography:1186/full/full/0/default.jpg>



# ADVANCES IN "DIGITAL PALEOGRAPHY": TEI INITIATIVES

---

- Specifically, TEI for Manuscript Description (TEI\_ms) allows for information about manuscripts to be recorded in XML and made searchable through digital library interfaces.
- Elements that can be captured in TEI using complex version of the msdescription module include elements such as watermarks, stamps, signatures, heraldry such as heraldic arms or mottos, rubrics (i.e., a special, often ornate heading found in European manuscripts and created by the rubricator), and elements of the physical description including information about how the text is laid out on the page, about marginalia, and about bindings, seals, and accompanying materials.
- Examples of TEI projects for handwritten manuscripts:
  - The (downloadable) corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/>
  - Dromio: Folger Transcription Platform: [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Dromio:\\_Folger\\_Transcription\\_Platform](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Dromio:_Folger_Transcription_Platform)
    - Including instructions for crowdsourcing the TEI!!



# AUTOMATED OCR FOR MANUSCRIPTS - HTR AND AI

# THOSE DICTIONARIES I MENTIONED EARLIER

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Middle English Compendium. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the 'M LIBRARY' logo and the text 'Middle English Compendium'. Below the header, there are three navigation links: 'Dictionary', 'Bibliography', and 'Quotations'. The main content area features a large, blurred background image of a medieval manuscript page. Overlaid on this image is the title 'Middle English Dictionary' in a large, white, serif font. Below the title is a descriptive paragraph: 'The world's largest searchable database of Middle English lexicon and usage for the period 1100-1500. An invaluable resource for lexicographers, language scholars, and all scholars in medieval studies.' Underneath this text is a link that says 'Read more about the dictionary'. A search bar is positioned below the text, containing a dropdown menu with 'Headword (with alternate spellings)', a text input field with 'Search...', a keyboard icon, and a blue 'Search' button with a magnifying glass icon. At the bottom of the search bar, there is a small caption: 'Image: The Ellesmer Manuscripts of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, c. 1400-1405. Shown is the introduction to "The Knight's Tale." Available online at the Huntington Library.' Below the search bar, the page is divided into three columns. The first column is titled 'How to get started' and contains the text: 'If you want to do more than just look up a word, learn about Dictionary, Bibliography, and Quotation Searches.' followed by a link 'Getting started'. The second column is titled 'More ways to search' and contains the text: 'You can change the scope of your search through the use of boolean and proximity operators and wildcard characters.' followed by a link 'Learn about extended search options'. The third column is titled 'History of the MED' and contains the text: 'Almost 90 years in the making, the MED will always be a team effort and a work in progress.' followed by a link 'Read more about the MED's history'.

**M LIBRARY** | Middle English Compendium

[Dictionary](#) | [Bibliography](#) | [Quotations](#)

## Middle English Dictionary

The world's largest searchable database of Middle English lexicon and usage for the period 1100-1500. An invaluable resource for lexicographers, language scholars, and all scholars in medieval studies.

[Read more about the dictionary](#)

Headword (with alternate spellings) Search... Search

Image: The Ellesmer Manuscripts of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, c. 1400-1405. Shown is the introduction to "The Knight's Tale." Available online at the Huntington Library.

### How to get started

If you want to do more than just look up a word, learn about Dictionary, Bibliography, and Quotation Searches.

[Getting started](#)

### More ways to search

You can change the scope of your search through the use of boolean and proximity operators and wildcard characters.

[Learn about extended search options](#)

### History of the MED

Almost 90 years in the making, the MED will always be a team effort and a work in progress.

[Read more about the MED's history](#)



This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Paleography is complex; it is an art and a science and a bit of it can be subjective
- Archivists can support paleography through care of physical documents, but also through digitization projects
- Digital paleography is like other areas of the digital humanities - yes, we can find computer scientists in the space, but also humanists doing work to advance their fields
  - Increasingly, all paleographers make use of both physical and digital versions of manuscripts
  - Even if the physical item is the "primary source document" manipulating digital surrogates allows for novel approaches to understanding the documents



THANK YOU! ANY QUESTIONS?

---