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L-145: Medieval Manuscript Fragments: Cataloging & Discoverability
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1) *Were the pre-course reading assignments useful? Are there any readings that you would like to see added or removed in future years?*

1. The pre-course readings were immensely helpful in providing context and framing the thematic contours of the course. They struck a thoughtful balance between accessibility and depth, offering both foundational insight and avenues for further inquiry. I found them engaging and intellectually stimulating. I wouldn't remove any!
2. I found all of the pre-course readings helpful, and I wouldn't mind seeing some things related to Latin paleography added to the pre-work.
3. All the readings are very helpful for context. This was my first RBS class, and I didn't know what to expect. You won't be quizzed. The readings were very helpful for context (highly recommended but optional).
4. Pre-course readings were useful and appropriate.
5. Yes, the pre-readings were informative and a general introduction to what the week would cover. However, what would have been helpful was more pre-information about paleography.
6. The course workbook and teaching materials were thoughtfully curated and served as excellent frameworks for both in-class engagement and independent exploration. The handouts and slides were not only clear and accessible but also intellectually rich; I can already see myself returning to them frequently as reference points. The materials struck a rare balance between being rigorous and user-friendly, which made them especially effective.
7. The pre-course readings / homework readings for the first days were very useful and well chosen. I was glad I did the first two homework readings before arriving, as they took me a while; I'm not sure I'd have managed to get through them all in the evenings here.
8. The pre-course readings were thorough and perfectly prepared me for the course content. I appreciated that the readings were provided well in advance, so that I had the opportunity to do a read-through a couple of months ago and then review the material closer to the time of the course. I would appreciate a list of "For further reading" suggestions.

2) *What are your thoughts on the course workbook and/or other teaching materials distributed during class? Was the content appropriate and useful? Will it continue to be useful for you after the course?*

1. The course workbook and teaching materials were thoughtfully curated and served as excellent frameworks for both in-class engagement and independent exploration. The handouts and slides were very clear and accessible—I can already

see myself returning to them frequently as reference points and guides. The materials struck a rare balance between being rigorous and user-friendly, which made them especially effective.

2. The slides and handouts are going to be such a useful tool as I take this work back to my home institution. I wish that some of the slides with just images had presenter notes or any kind of tags throughout to highlight what we were to look for or to note, since some of that information can easily get divorced from the context/content in the note-taking processes. That being said, if one takes notes that reference particular slides specifically, that problem is then a nonissue.
3. The first two days of the week had homework, but it was low key. Super helpful. Basically, what was learned in class it put to practical use in the homework. LFD did a fabulous job preparing us for the homework.
4. Teaching materials included hands-on work with medieval manuscript fragments.
5. Oh yes! I downloaded many of these and plan to print them to consult for years to come!
6. The course workbook and teaching materials were thoughtfully curated and served as excellent frameworks for both in-class engagement and independent exploration. The handouts and slides were both clear and accessible—I can already see myself returning to them frequently as reference points. The materials struck a rare balance between being rigorous and user-friendly, which made them especially effective. I also thought that being able to use a whiteboard, paper handouts, and a screen made the entire experience engaging —I was able to focus for longer periods of time!
7. The materials in our drive were very helpful and I will definitely keep coming back to them as I continue working. Having the shared drive with all the materials in it was the perfect way for LFD to share materials with us and for us to share our materials with the rest of the class.
8. The additional course materials were helpful and supported our learning. I will continue to use them, especially the online resources accessed through LFD's blog.

3) *Which aspects of the course were most intriguing and relevant for you as an individual? Did you walk away with any new insights, ideas, or project plans?*

1. {no response}
2. I had considered the ethics of the provenance of these kinds of materials, but I am now armed with the right kinds of questions to ask and greater knowledge about the world of manuscript dealing. Other intriguing aspects of the course include the magic of seeing LFD expertly (and rapidly!) identify a script and likely geographical source of a fragment, and the act of teasing out the afterlife (or lives) of that piece.
3. The most intriguing aspect was learning the key paleographical features of a manuscript in order to infer its date, location, script, &c. For those without a medieval studies background this was invaluable.

4. I really enjoyed and benefitted from the variety of backgrounds among the participants in the course. People brought different skill sets and points of view to the course that enriched my experience.
5. Yes, I feel more adept to do my job moving forward after the information presented this week. The hints, tips, and tricks to dating leaves or fragments of leaves based on changes in script, decorations to letters, or in borders was most helpful.
6. I've gained far more than I ever imagined possible in just five days. The paleography sessions were particularly captivating—deciphering unfamiliar scripts felt like unraveling a historical mystery through rare books. I also deeply appreciated the ethical debates, which added an important dimension to our understanding of manuscript circulation and preservation. I think most importantly, while I leave with these outstanding skills, I'm leaving with a transformed way of seeing and interacting with manuscripts. I'm excited to apply what I've learned to my local context and hope to contribute to platforms like Fragmentarium in the future. Another valuable part of the course was interacting with such experts in various fields—each of whom bring their own perspectives and skills. Forming this community has enriched the experience and made it so memorable! I loved learning and growing together! :)
7. The part of the class that I came in knowing least (= nothing) about, and wanting most to understand, was cataloguing. I'm not a librarian, so I had almost no knowledge of how it worked, or how I could share fragments and reconstructions of manuscripts online. I learned so much and really appreciated being in a class with helpful and gracious people who knew much more about it than I do; I feel like I learned much more about cataloguing fragments than I expected to. I came in having worked with manuscript fragments a bit and increased my knowledge (and interest) so much in a single week. Truly I would not have thought it possible.
8. The importance of author names and titles of authority stood out for me. As a researcher, it is frustrating trying to remember the myriad ways a single author's name may appear in various databases, not to mention titles. Using VIAF to establish consistency was an especially valuable takeaway.

4) *Did the instructors help you to acquire all the skills and information promised in the course description? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn?*

1. {no response}
2. I learned all that I hoped to learn and so much more. I didn't expect to have such expert and generous classmates, and we had a stellar experience in this course.
3. YES! LFD was a fantastic instructor. I learned more than I hoped to learn.
4. The instructor was superbly skilled and knowledgeable, but also encouraging and helpful. She crafted a course that was challenging and fun at the same time.
5. Yes, I believe so. I'm looking forward to typing up and organizing my notes to better know where more knowledge is needed to better analyze fragments.
6. Yes! Our instructor had the amazing ability to simplify all the content without losing its nuance! She has been by far the most amazing teacher I've had! I'm walking away with so much more than I had even fathomed learning.

7. The instructor was amazing; I learned much more than I had thought was possible. (And enjoyed it much more than I had expected, as well.)
8. LFD did an amazing job in presenting the breadth of knowledge required to address fragments. Every topic—paleography, codicology, the history of fragmentation MARC records, interaction with actual fragments—was covered. Clearly, there is much more information to learn, but we only had a week, after all. This could be a year-long course.

5) *How do you plan to use the skills and knowledge acquired during your time here?*

1. {no response}
2. I intend to re-digitize (adding a color bar/ruler, especially), examine, research, and re-catalog all of our manuscript fragments collection, and I intend to initiate a binding survey project in Special Collections at my home institution. With that information, I will suggest a new classification system for our manuscript fragments. I also intend to begin entering our manuscript fragment holdings into Fragmentarium.
3. I am a metadata librarian and plan to use these skills to enrich my institution's digital library of manuscripts, clean it up and make it consistent across the collection.
4. I will apply my experiences from the course directly to my professional work.
5. I plan to use the knowledge and skills gained this week to better catalog the leaves/fragments in my institution.
6. The skills and knowledge I've acquired, especially in paleography, codicology, and fragment analysis—have fundamentally reshaped the way I approach historical material. I plan to apply these frameworks to my local archival context, working with regional manuscripts to better understand their construction, reuse, and circulation. I also hope to contribute to ongoing digitization efforts, perhaps through platforms like Fragmentarium, and use these methodologies to create more accessible and ethically grounded manuscript narratives in my own research and outreach work. I also plan on working at the archives and special collections in whichever college I land up in for my undergraduate education! I hope to further this passion and grasp as much knowledge as I can.
7. I plan to continue to work on manuscript fragments in my institution's collection, and to work with my institution to make the manuscripts we have more discoverable. Being in a course that was so well planned and well taught, where we were encouraged to work together so productively, also gave me ideas and inspiration for my own teaching in the coming year.
8. I will—to the best of my ability—continue to identify, describe, and publish fragments that come my way. The connections we made during the course will be valuable going forward to network with others who are also working with fragments, and I look forward to opportunities to support each other in our efforts.

6) *Who might benefit the most from taking this RBS course?*

1. {no response}
2. Librarians working in Special Collections. cataloging/conservation/curation/acquisitions, instructors, medievalists, paleographers, art historians, and book collectors.
3. Anyone interested! LFD is a gifted teacher and makes picking up the key concepts effortless.
4. Anyone interested in medieval manuscripts, especially manuscript fragments, including scholars, teachers, librarians, collectors and dealers.
5. Library staff tasked with medieval manuscripts or fragments, whether curatorial, cataloging, or displaying. I liked that this class touched on everything from identifying to handling, to cataloging. The information presented was well-rounded to touch on all pertinent aspects of interacting with these materials that a librarian would need to have—especially for those who do not have a background in medieval studies. However, because of the well-rounded nature of this class, it is also helpful to professors and students of medieval studies who have an interest in bibliography and want to learn aspects of the Middle Ages that may or may not be part of their usual course work. Private collectors and book dealers would also do well to take this class. In summary, if you have an interest in the Middle Ages and bibliography of that time period, this is the class for you!
6. This course would be especially beneficial for anyone with an interest in the material history of the book, whether scholars, librarians, curators, or emerging researchers. It's also ideal for students who may not yet have formal training but are eager to engage directly with primary sources. Anyone who finds joy in working hands-on with medieval materials, deciphering scripts, and unpacking the layered life of a manuscript would thrive here. The course nurtures both close observation and big-picture thinking, making it invaluable for those who want to not just read manuscripts, but truly understand and interpret them as historical and cultural artifacts.
7. I think this course would benefit anyone who wants to develop their skill at working with manuscript fragments. The course description said it was primarily for librarians and cataloguers, but almost half of our class were not professional librarians, and I'd hate to think that non-librarians would be put off from taking the course. (I was a bit put off myself, and I'm so glad I signed up).
8. Any institutional librarian, collector, or book dealer who has had fragments cross their paths. What surprises me is that fragments lurking in the shelves of special collections are not being given the attention they deserve. This is a field where important discoveries are likely to be made.

7) *If applicable, what were the most original, powerful, or otherwise noteworthy educational moments in the course? Were there any "aha!" moments you'd like to share?*

1. {no response}

2. We learned really memorable ways of identifying rinceaux and other features of manuscripts, and we learned a lot about the sordid history of biblioclasm and book trade. Some especially fun “aha!” moments included us realizing that a fragment was likely reused not once but twice in binding, and fitting the pieces together to see it all snap into place (figuratively) was really fantastic.
3. The history of styles plus the demonstrations. Looking at the manuscripts was the highlight of the course. Not just because the fragments are pretty (they are!), but more so for Davis and other members of the class to point at key features to look for. So helpful!
4. We had ‘aha’ moments every day. I think the best assignment was the “speed dating” challenge to identify and describe fragments on the fly.
5. There were several: don't assume blue is blue, it could be blue-green; d's and g's change shape over time; the Renaissance wasn't as original as we are taught as they were big on recycling ideas from earlier times; medieval monks invented the index; and harping as one more meaning than I knew before, and now I want an Italian leaf for our collection. :)
6. One of the most powerful moments for me was working with the St. Augustine and ‘mystery’ fragments. As I navigated the scripts, I experienced a genuine ‘aha!’ moment, everything I had learned throughout the course began to click into place. Being able to actively apply paleographic and codicological knowledge to decipher the fragments felt incredibly rewarding.
7. The time to practice new skills in class (speed-dating, working with Mirador) was very important for me; I need to practice new things to make them stick.
8. For me, I was struck by the diversity of my classmates. A high school student, retired educator, experienced book scholar, institutional librarians—all working towards the same goal of giving fragments their due!

8) *Are there any other ways in which the course could have been improved?*

1. {no response}
2. Aside from maybe more paleography in the pre-reading and more specific notes in the slides that include images from manuscripts (even just a post-it-like deal that directs us to the context of why this image is important for our study). We cover a ton of ground very quickly, so these touch points would be deeply appreciated.
3. It is so hard to think of some area where this course should be improved; it is fabulous already! Depending on the participants, maybe more about how to identify the location of fragments?
4. It was a really fine course and an immensely enjoyable experience, because of the instructor's expertise and positive attitude, as well as the team spirit of the participants in the course. Hard to think of a way it could have been better!
5. {no response}
6. It was fantastic! Perhaps if the field trip was longer, or if we got more assignments such as the mystery fragment! It would be really nice to practically apply our class knowledge and directly have feedback from our instructor!
7. I really thought it was perfect.

8. None.

9) *Do you feel that you got your money's worth? How likely are you to recommend this course to others? On a 1-10 scale, 1 would indicate that you disagree that you got your money's worth, 5 would indicate a neutral response, and 10 would indicate that you agree that you got your money's worth.*

1. {no response}
2. 10
3. 10
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10

10) *If your course made any (virtual) field trips outside of the classroom or had guest speakers, do you feel that they enhanced the course experience?*

1. {no response}
2. Yes! We got to see a lot of great manuscript fragments from SC, and it was great.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Yes, but more time looking at manuscripts in the UVA's SC would have been helpful, particularly examples of the types of leaves we would find in our collections or available for sale. It would also have been very helpful (if permitted) to lay the different examples of scripts side-by-side in order to see the changes within the different time periods instead of seeing one example at a time.
6. Yes!!!! It was a physical manifestation of everything we had learned in class, and we all worked on unpacking the manuscripts together. It was so wonderful.
7. Yes; the trip to SC to look at manuscript fragments was great. I liked having it on the last day, as it served as a good review of some of what we had covered.
8. I would have liked more time in UVA SC.

11) *Do you have any additional thoughts or advice for anyone considering taking this course in a future year?*

1. {no response}

2. 15/10, take this course. Prepare to be inundated with so much great information and be sure to take extensive notes. Remember that cataloging is cooperative, not competitive.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. Take copious notes.
6. {no response}
7. I would advise not to be put off because of a perceived lack of either experience working with manuscripts or working with metadata. Our class had a wide range of knowledge / experience and we worked together really well and learned from each other.
8. TAKE IT!

12) If you had to sum up your RBS experience with a single sentence, phrase, or haiku, what would you say?

1. {no response}
2. Fragmentology—finding wholeness from a piece of beauty, not waste.
3. {no response}
4. {no response}
5. As with RBS classes I've taken before, Medieval Manuscript Fragments proved to be highly educational with information hard to acquire through any other source except forced and much reading.
6. Everyone with a passion for the past should experience the RBS magic. RBS is a rare intellectual and communal experience, one that both equips you with the tools to decode the manuscript and invites you into a community where curiosity, care, and scholarship converge.
7. Truly one of the best weeks of my life; a joy to learn with this group of fellow students with an incredibly knowledgeable instructor who brought out the best in our group.
8. Give fragments some respect. For Pete's sake—haven't they been through enough already?