

Palaeography

DIGITAL HUMANITIES FOR MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES

1. Introduction to Palaeography

conf. dr. Mihai MAGA

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca
Master in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

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1 What is the palaeography?

- Usefulness of palaeography
- Goals of the palaeography
- Textual criticism

2 History of palaeography

3 Instruments

Homework9

Palaeography = the study of ancient and historical handwriting

←^{GR.} παλαιός (old) + γράφειν (to write)

The palaeography is different from:

- codicology (the material study of handwritten ancient books)
- study of textual content (history of ideas, philosophy, literature, history of science etc.)

Codicology	Palaeography	History of thought
the book as a material object	the book as writing	the book as a support for ideas
describes the object physically: dimensions, material, binding, material dating, owners etc.	interprets the handwriting: letter shapes, abbreviations, annotations, punctuation, writing hands etc.	interprets the sense of the text: meaning of words, fundamental ideas, authors, traditions of thought etc.
recovers the history of the object	recovers the text	recovers the meaning

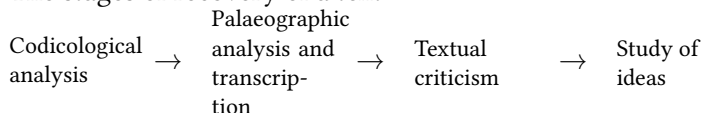
- nowadays we cannot read directly from medieval manuscripts
 - the historical transformations of the modernity caused the breaking away from the medieval way of thinking and writing
- we need a science in order to recover the medieval texts
 - the purpose of restoring the texts is a historically subjective one: translation, analysis, interpretation, restitution in detail of some historical evolutions
 - this science must correspond to the current scientific demands
- palaeography is a study by itself
 - the learning and practice of palaeography demand an effort and a time which is distinct from other forms of textual study
 - the reconstitution of texts is sometimes an authorial interpretative act, therefore the notions of palaeography are useful for the other specialists who need to verify the interpretations and the sources
- palaeography is not an autonomous science
 - the palaeographer needs knowledge in history, ancient languages (Latin), philology, philosophy and in the particular field to which the text belongs

- dating the manuscripts by identifying the handwriting style
 - determination of the authenticity of writing
 - attribution of the manuscripts based on writing hands
 - investigation of writing as an intellectual tradition
 - restoration of the texts in currently acceptable forms
 - examination of subsequent modifications and additions
- ➡ an archaeology of handwriting

Textual criticism = the study of textual variants in ancient writings and the scholarly reconstitution of the texts in the form of critical editions

- seen sometimes as a part of palaeography, other times as an autonomous discipline

The stages of recovery of a text:










- in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
 - early attempts of older manuscripts study for determining the authenticity or for collating the text
 - 👉 Example: *The Bible*, *Donatio Constantini* etc.
- Jean MABILLON (1632–1707) *De re diplomatica* (1681)
 - founder of palaeography and diplomatics
- Bernard DE MONTFAUCON (1655–1741) *Palaeographia graeca* (1708)
 - inventor of the term *palaeography*
- 19th c.
 - major contributions to the palaeography (Wilhelm WATTENBACH, Léopold DELISLE, Ludwig TRAUBE)
 - evolutions in textual criticism (Karl LACHMANN)
- 20th–21st c.
 - usage of computing technology in preservation and recovery of the texts

- 1 Access to the manuscripts
 - libraries and repositories
 - online collections and reproductions
- 2 Examination of the manuscripts
 - physical instruments
 - electronic instruments
- 3 Interpretation of the handwriting
 - abbreviation dictionaries¹ and books on the medieval writing
 - existing editions
- 4 Transcription of the manuscripts
 - classical procedures
 - digital instruments

¹Adriano CAPPELLI, *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane* or Breviter (<https://dhcluj.ro/breviter/>)

Reading suggestions:

-  Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989
-  *A Palaeographer's View: The Selected Writings of Julian Brown*, ed. J. BATELY, M.P. BROWN, J. ROBERTS, London: Harvey Miller, 1993
-  M. B. PARKES, *Pause and effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*, Aldershot: Scolar, 1992
-  Marcel COHEN, *La grande invention de l'écriture et son évolution*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale et Librairie Klincksieck, 1958
-  James G. FÉVRIER, *Histoire de l'écriture*, Paris: Payot, 1959
-  M. L. WEST, *Textual Criticism & Editorial Technique*, Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1973
-  Ioana COSTA, *Papirus, pergament, hartie. Începuturile cărții*, București: Humanitas, 2011