

CLST 360/HIST 367/ISIS 360/MEDREN 346 History of the Book (75 minutes)
Rubenstein Library, 1st floor classroom

Papyrology Module

Day 1: Introduction to Papyrology

10 minutes	Introduction to papyrology
10 minutes	Transcription demonstration
50 minutes	Student transcription workshop
5 minutes	Wrap up

Using a selection of Homeric papyri from Duke's collection, students will work in small groups to successfully transcribe a papyrus accurately enough to plug their transcriptions into the TLG's text search and thereby determine which ancient work each fragment attests.

Students will be briefly introduced to papyrology and the place of papyri in the history of the book, viewing P.Duk.inv. 176, PA4018.A2 1488 v.2, and P.Duk.inv. 4 on the document camera (10 minutes). The instructor will then display P.Duk.inv. 60 (*Odyssey* XI, lines 210-214) on the document camera and will use the papyrus to model proper and effective transcription practices (10 minutes). Students will be asked to divide into groups of 3-4 (this module can accommodate no more than 5 groups, total). Each group will be assigned a papyrus and will use the methods demonstrated by the instructor to transcribe as much of the papyrus as possible (50 minutes). The instructor will regularly check in with each group to answer questions and clarify errors. When the instructor has decided that a group has sufficiently transcribed the papyrus, s/he will demonstrate how the transcription of a literary papyrus can be entered into the TLG's text search to determine if text is part of the pre-existing corpus of Greek literature and, if so, which work it attests. Class will conclude with a brief discussion of the workshop and what each group learned from hands-on work with the ancient documents (5 minutes).

Driving questions:

- How does one decipher the marks of ink on these ancient, fragmented pieces of paper into intelligible words?
- How does one determine if a papyrus fragment is of a known literary text or of something else entirely?
- How does the history of the book progress from the papyrus book rolls of antiquity to the edited and bound print editions of the early modern and modern eras? What kind of work has enabled this progression?

Assigned reading:

- Memorize the Greek Alphabet

- The instructor is encouraged to provide a chart, of her/his preference, of the Greek alphabet written in various Hellenistic book hands so that students become accustomed to varied letter forms. Other useful resources include:
 - <https://www.ibiblio.org/koine/greek/lessons/alphabet.html>
 - <https://www.omniglot.com/writing/greek.htm>
- Paul Schubert, Ch. 9: “Editing A Papyrus” in Bagnall, Roger S., ed. *The Oxford handbook of papyrology*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Homer’s *Odyssey*, Bk. XI
 - Recommended edition: Wilson, Emily, tr. *The Odyssey*. WW Norton & Company, 2017.

Guidelines for the instructor:

Introduction:

Display P.Duk.inv. 176, a fragment of *Odyssey* IX, for the class on the document camera, drawing attention to the repeated occurrence of the sequence of letters “κ υ κ λ ω ψ”. Prompt students to guess which text they may be looking at; the class will likely be able to put forth a correct guess. Display, alongside this papyrus, PA4018.A2 1488 v.2, an early printed book of the *Odyssey*, in order to encourage the students to consider how a work of literature is transmitted from an ancient scroll to an early edited and printed edition to the modern print edition of *Odyssey* they have read in preparation for class. Next, use the document camera to show the class P.Duk.inv. 4, drawing attention to the writing in the left margin, which is annotation signaling the beginning and end of the Homeric simile. Use this document and its marginal annotation to encourage students to think about the centuries of ancient readers who engaged with this papyrus and other such texts.

Transcription demonstration:

P.Duk.inv. 60 has been selected for this exercise because it is relatively short and can therefore be transcribed within the 10 minutes allotted for this demonstration, and because it is written in an exceptionally neat, scribal book hand which even those who have never before worked with an ancient text are capable of reading. After the instructor has modeled how to transcribe the first 2-3 lines of this papyrus, s/he should encourage the class, as a group, to assist with the transcription by calling out their suggestions, open-forum. Instructors should be sure to cover:

- how to discern a scribe’s “ductus” (i.e. how s/he forms each letter).
- what to do when a letter is difficult to read.
- what to do if a piece of the document has been damaged or torn off and is lost.
- how to note all of this data in one’s transcription (using the Leiden Conventions).

Workshop:

- Group 1—P.Duk.inv. 59
 - *Iliad* VIII, 3-12

- This papyrus is slightly shorter than the rest and the writing is relatively clear, making this a good assignment for a group with less experience in ancient Greek.
- The rounded hand includes serifs on each letter, however, which will at first make the characters appear unfamiliar to students. This group will likely need some assistance identifying these unfamiliar letter forms.
- Group 2—P.Duk.inv. 767
 - *Odyssey* XVII, 180-193
 - While the papyrus itself is fragmented and therefore initially intimidating to a student new to transcription, the text is written in a fairly neat Severe Style book hand. Students are generally able to transcribe the majority of the papyrus without great difficulty, often finishing before the rest of the groups. This is, therefore, another good papyrus to assign to a group less confident in their transcription ability and less comfortable with ancient Greek.
- Group 3—P.Duk.inv. 971 V
 - *Iliad* I, 528-540
 - The writing on this fragment is relatively clear, not as faded as the text on many of the other selections.
 - Damage to the text makes several characters difficult to read, and students will likely need assistance clarifying their transcriptions at these points.
 - This is a good assignment for a group less experienced with ancient Greek but still interested in the challenge of transcribing a damaged text.
- Group 4—P.Duk.inv. 970
 - *Iliad* I, 127-138
 - The text is not particularly fragmented but a number of lines have been damaged and the writing is slightly faded.
 - Previous groups of students have had some difficulty successfully transcribing this text, and so it is best for the instructor to familiarize her/himself well with papyrus and to check in frequently with the group which has been assigned to the document.
- Group 5—P.Duk.inv. 768 R
 - *Odyssey* I, 289-302
 - The text on this papyrus is faded and written in a small, compressed hand.
 - This papyrus should be reserved for a group with more experience in ancient Greek, more confidence in their ability to work with an ancient document, and an eagerness for a challenge.

Note: text searching in the TLG can be an inexact science, and in preparation for class instructors should test-run the process, searching the TLG using their own transcriptions. This will allow the instructors to more effectively guide students through the process.

Wrap up:

The instructor should prompt students to share the difficulties each may have had reading an archaic hand, a non-Latin alphabet, and badly damaged document. Students should

also be encouraged to share what aspects of the transcription process they found most interesting, surprising, or informative.

Day 2: Scribal Practicum

10 minutes	Introduction to scribal practices
60 minutes	Scribal Practicum
5 minutes	Wrap up

After being introduced to the practices and tools used by ancient scribes, students will engage with ancient technologies and will practice writing on papyrus book rolls with a reed pen and carbon ink, both copying Greek texts and recording dictated speech.

Students will view a brief slideshow exhibiting ancient artwork and surviving ancient tools which have helped scholars determine how ancient scribes conducted their craft and what kinds of instruments they used (10 minutes). The class will then divide evenly into two groups. One group will begin the practicum by writing, with reed pen and ink, on smaller pieces of papyrus placed on their laps and knees. They will attempt to follow the ductus which they have learned from Criore as accurately as possible, doing their best to meet scribal standards of neatness and regularity. This group will also practice erasing their papyri using pumice or sea sponges and water. The second group will begin by working with the book rolls. Each member of this group will split into pairs. One person will dictate from a book, provided to the students, while the other person writes on the book roll, with reed pen and ink, by wrapping themselves in a scribal skirt, spreading a book roll across their lap, and using surface created by the taut fabric as a makeshift writing desk. After 15 minutes the members of these pairs will switch roles. After 30 minutes, the two groups will switch activities, allowing everyone to try their hand at every scribal role (60 minutes). The practicum will conclude with a brief discussion of each workshop within the practicum, considering any difficulties the technologies used present and any insights achieved by engaging, hands-on, with these tools and scribal practices (5 minutes).

Driving questions:

- How was a papyrus plant—a type of river reed—turned into a ten-foot long scroll?
- How is one supposed to write on a scroll?
- What are “tools of the trade” for an ancient Greek scribe?

Assigned reading:

- Memorize and practice the ductus for the Greek letters as given by the charts on p.107-111 in Criore, Raffaella. *Writing, teachers, and students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*. Vol. 36. American Studies in Papyrology, 1996.
- Adam Bülow-Jacobsen, Ch. 1: “Writing Materials in the Ancient World” in Bagnall, Roger S., ed. *The Oxford handbook of papyrology*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Guidelines for the instructor:

Introduction to scribal practices:

The instructor will introduce students to Greco-Roman (and Egyptian) practices for reading and writing, focusing on methods for writing papyrus book rolls. This is accomplished most effectively using visual aids: a number of surviving artifacts provide images of ancient scribes and their tools. The instructor should touch upon the use of:

- scribal skirts—writing surface
- reed pens—writing instrument
- bone rolls—to create flush joints when attaching two pieces of papyrus together
- dividers/calipers—to evenly space columns
- scapulae—for spreading wax and erasing wax tablets
- styli—for inscribing wax tablets
- block plane—for carving out wax tablets from a slab of wood

Recommended images include:

- Seated scribe from Saqqara in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo, Pl. 93 in Avrin, Leila. *Scribes, script, and books: the book arts from antiquity to the Renaissance*. American Library Association, 1991.
- Funerary monument of Q. Aemilius Rufus from Salona, fig. 8.1. in Eckardt, H. *Writing and power in the Roman world: literacies and material culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Relief in Musées de Strasbourg, fig. 8.4 in Eckardt, 2018.
- Monument from Maria Saal, Austria, fig. 3.2 in Eckardt, 2018.

Practicum:

Before the practicum, all tables and all areas of the floor which will be used for writing should be covered with some sort of protective covering—plastic picnic tablecloths work well. Students should be informed at the end of the previous class to wearing clothes they do not mind staining with ink, as this is a real possibility. Before the class, the instructor should create at least 5 papyrus book rolls for use in the practicum and about 20 smaller sheets of papyrus. Appropriate numbers will vary depending on class size. Book rolls are created by attaching 8-10 sheets of modern papyrus together, lengthwise, with craft glue. The righthand side of each sheet should cover the lefthand side of the subsequent sheet overlapping by about 1 inch. In sum, a list of supplies required for this practicum, when conducting it with twenty students, includes:

- 50 sheets of modern papyrus (40 used for book rolls, 10 cut in half for smaller letters)
- 15 reed pens
- ~4 fl oz of black India ink
- 15 small containers, used as ink wells (paint wells or tray palettes work well)
- ~4 fl oz of craft glue
- 4 plastic (picnic tablecloth) covers
- 5 “scribal skirts” (twin bedsheets work well)
- 1 piece of pumice

- 1 sea sponge
- 1 small basin for sponge water
- 10 (preferably well-worn) Greek editions (of any texts), to be used for copying
- 5 (preferably well-worn) books in English (of any texts), to be used for dictating

Wrap up:

The instructor should prompt students to share the difficulties each may have had writing with unfamiliar materials in an unfamiliar manner. Students should consider, in light of their experience in this practicum, the degree of skill and talent required to be a good scribe in the ancient world. Ask: was it enough to be literate, or does it seem as though scribal training required an even more specialized skillset?