



MANUSCRIPTS

MANUSCRIPTS

PALEOGRAPHY

The Study of Manuscripts

MANUSCRIPTS

SURFACES:

PAPYRUS

VELLUM

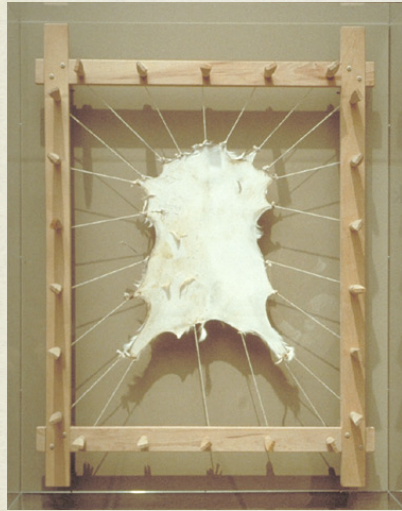
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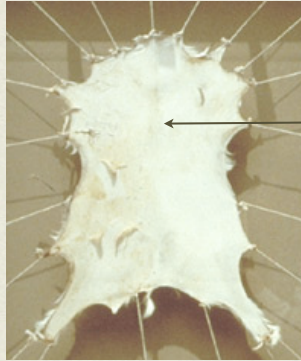
Papyrus

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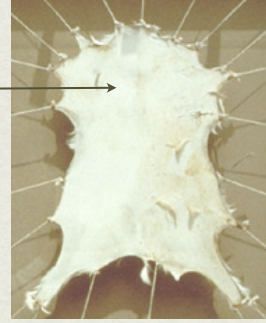
- Medieval manuscripts were written on specially treated animal skins, called vellum
- Vellum = *vitulus* (“calf”)
- Vellum calves were usually 3-4 months old
- Uterine calves preferred for fine manuscripts
- Paper did not become common in Europe until around 1450.



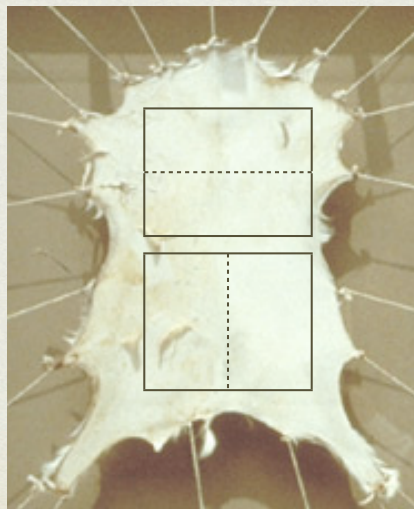
- Hides were soaked in a lime solution to loosen the fur, which was then removed.
- The skin was then stretched, and while still wet it was scraped with a curved blade. As the skin dried, the parchment maker adjusted the tension so that the skin remained taut.
- Scraping and stretching was repeated until the desired thinness had been achieved.



Skins had
Hair side
&
Flesh side



In large manuscripts the hide was cut so the spine of the calf ran through the middle of the page, or down the spine.



The *Book of Kells*
(c. 800) used the
hides of **185 calves**
culled from a herd
of over
1200 animals.

Pages are 12.6 inches
by 9.25 inches





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MEDIA

BLACK INK from CARBON

RED INK (*ruber*) from RED LEAD (*minium*)



Red Lead



Black Carbon

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PICTURES

Pictures in manuscripts from Antiquity
drawn in **red**, and called “miniatures”
from the lead *minium*

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TOOLS

REED PENS
QUILL PENS

PEN KNIFE
SCRAPPERS



Reeds and a Reed Pen

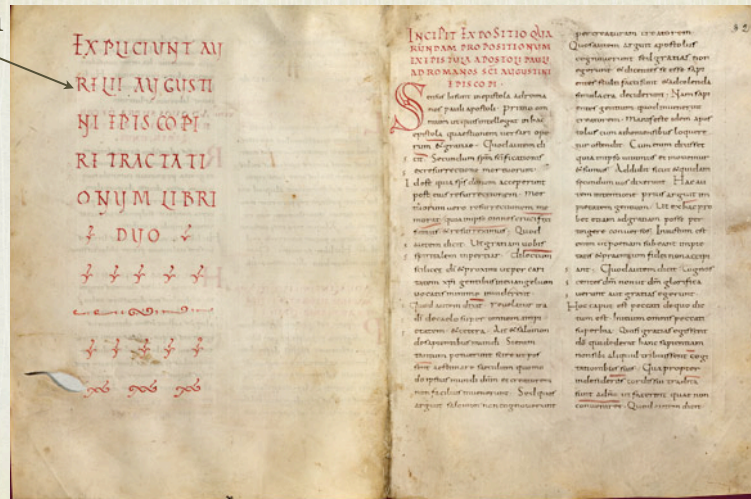


Quill Pens

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Rubrication

Saint Augustine,
Commentary,
ninth century



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PICTURES

Pictures painted in color with gold/silver decorations are called

ILLUMINATIONS

(*lumen* = light)



Medieval illumination of a Scribe

Illuminated
Capital



St. Albans Psalter, c. 1135, Psalm 79

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PEOPLE

LECTOR	
SCRIBE	
RUBRICATOR	
MINATOR	
ILLUMINATOR	
CORRECTOR	

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PEOPLE

LECTOR	Dictates texts
SCRIBE	Writes texts
RUBRICATOR	Writes texts in RED
MINATOR	Paints pictures in RED
ILLUMINATOR	Paints pictures in COLOR
CORRECTOR	Corrects

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FORMS

ROLLS (*volumen*, or “volumes”)
associated with papyrus

CODEX

MANUSCRIPTS

ROLL (volumen)



4 V. V. DER
ER WAR DER
UDISCHEN
ICHTER ROMS
UNTER DER DEVISE
DER REPUBLIK
REN DAUERHAFTE
ONARCHIE IN

DIE IN EINE
IDE FRIEDENSZEIT
ER DEM BEGRIFF DER
ART.

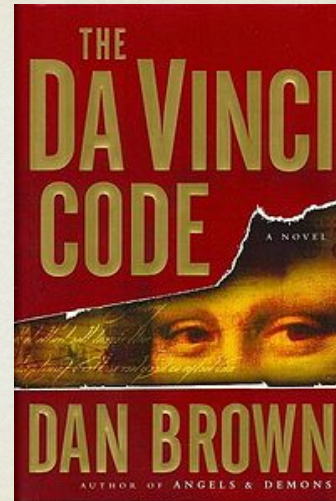
TUS NUR EIN TITEL MIT
HABENE, DER VOM
STEGREICHEN GAIUS

ALS D
CAES
SICHT
WEST
CAES
ER SI

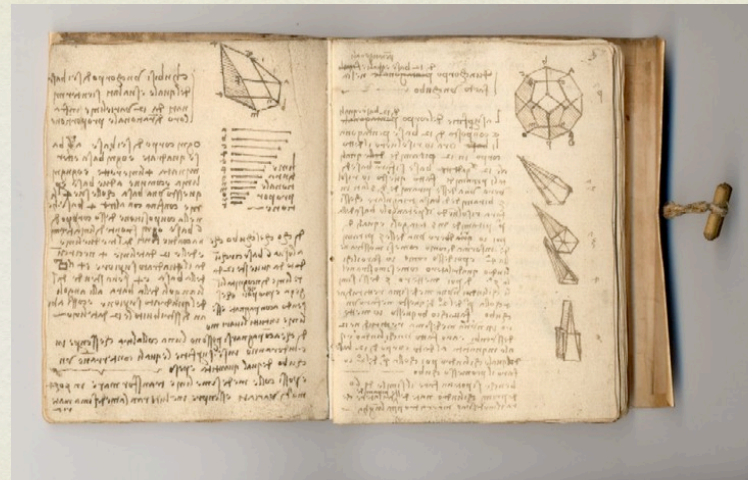
VON
ADO
SHN
WA
EAM
MA
WA

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CODEX (pl. codices)



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Da Vinci Codex ('book')

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CODEX =

collection of **leaves** (sheets)
that are **folded** (foliated)

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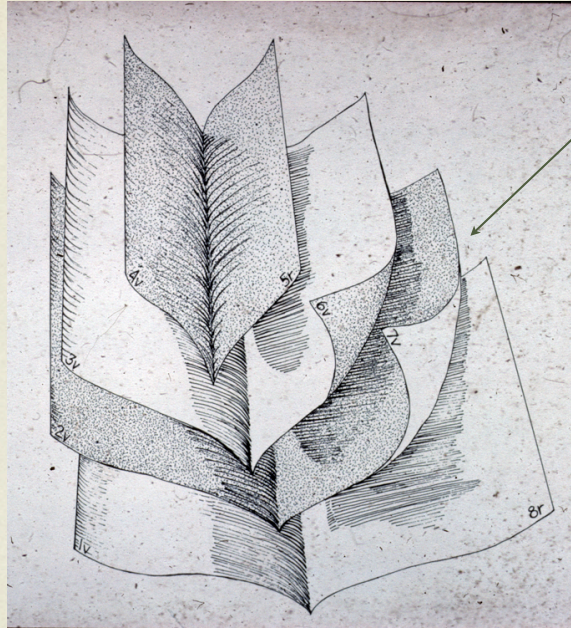
1 sheet =
2 leaves / 4 pages

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4 sheets together
(or 8 leaves/16 pages) =

QUIRE

(*quaternio* “set of 4”)



Notice that the vellum is gathered so that the flesh or hair side is always facing a matching side

A quire

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A leaf (*folium*) has a
front (**recto** “right”) & a
back (**verso** “turned”)

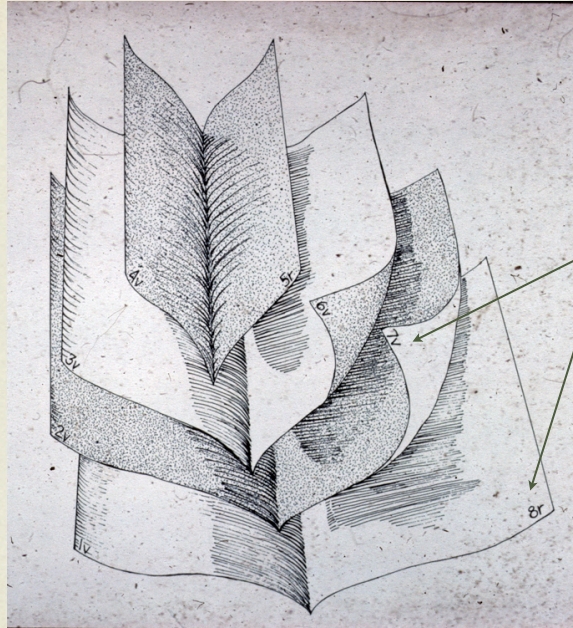
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Each **leaf** (physical page)
has **2 pages** (a recto and a verso)

MANUSCRIPTS

Each **leaf** (physical page)
has **2 pages** (a recto and a verso)

1r and **1v**



Notice the numbering of the pages

A quire

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PALIMPSESTS

(*palimpsestus* “scraped again”)

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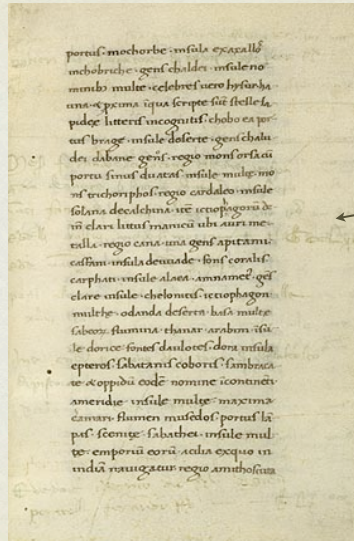
Scriptio Inferior

(“underwriting”)

can re-appear after time

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Pliny the Elder,
Natural History,
fifteenth century

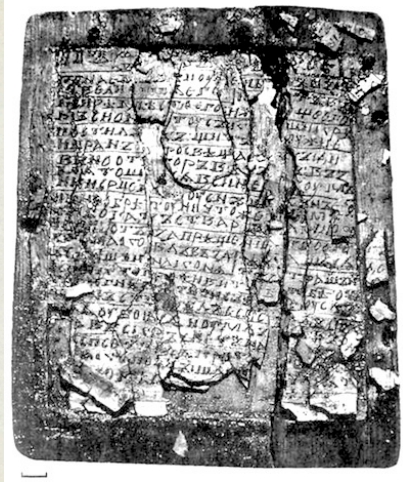


Traces of scraped text

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Hyper-palimpsest

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Novgorod Codex (Palimpsest)

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COPYING

By Eye
By Dictation

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POST-SCRIBAL ADDITIONS

Scholia (notes and commentary in margins)

Glosses (word and terms)

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SCRIBAL ERRORS

Accidental Errors

Errors of sight

- Ablepsy (“blindness”)
- Dittography (writing something twice)
- Haplography (writing something only once)
- Skipping

Errors of Memory

- Trying to remember groups of words
- Changing order of words
- Substituting words
- Omissions or additions

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UNAVOIDABLE ERRORS

Damage to manuscript causing *lacunae* (gaps)

Disordering due to loss of leaves, rebinding,
putting omissions in a different place,
inserting passages in wrong place

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INTENTIONAL ERRORS

Plagiarism (passing off non-authentic as authentic)

Ignorance: scribe copying something he doesn't understand

Censoring

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DAMAGE TO MANUSCRIPT

FIRE
INSECTS
MUTILATION

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BEOWULF

Anonymous work of Anglo-Saxon literature

Written 700-1000 AD

Adopted into the canon of English literature

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Beowulf survives in a single copy, the NOWELL
MANUSCRIPT, written about 1000

Bound together with other works in the
seventeenth century in a codex now known as
COTTON VITELLIUS A XV

Manuscript heavily **damaged by fire in 1731**, with
no restoration attempted until the nineteenth
century by which time many parts were irreparably
damaged

HWÆT WE GARDE

na in geardagum þeodcýninga
þrym ge frunon hu ða æþelingas ellen
fremedon. oft scyld sceling sceapena
þreatum monegum mægþum meodo setla
of teah egsode eorlas syddan ærest wear[d]
fea sceaft funden he þæs frofre geba[d]
weox under wolcnum weordmyndum þah
odþæt him æghwylc þara ymb sittendra
ofer hronrade hynran scolde gomban
gyldan þæt wæs god cýning. ðam eafeara wæs
æfter cenned geong in geardum þone god
sende folce to frofre fyrendearfe on
geat þe hie ær drugon aldorlease lange
hwile him þæs liffrea wuldres wealdend
woroldare forgeaf **beowulf** wæs breme
blæd wide sprang scyldes eafera scede

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blæd wide sprang scyldes eafera scede

HWÆT TE LARDE
na mæcra dazum. heod cymmsa
hym se framon huda æbelingas elles
fre medon. of seold sceppas sceapen
hreatum monegū mæsum meodo secla
of teah esode eorl syddan aqere pæp
fea sceap funden he hæf frofne seba
pæx undæ polenum pæp id myndum halu
od þ him æghyle þara ymb sit tenna
of æ hron pade hyran seolde somban
sylan þæt god cymms. dan æfna paf
æf æ cenned swong mæcra dazum þone god
sende folce tofroppe fymon dæpfe on
zæc þæt æ dæwgon aldo. lunge
hpile him hæf lif fæa pul dæc pæ lder d
pæwold ære for zæc. beowulf. pæ hæn e
bled pæde sþrang sevd dæcra fæa

Fire damage

First page of *Beowulf*

"Beowulf"

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INSECT DAMAGE



Termite damage

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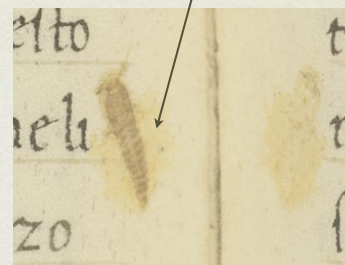
Bookworms (*Bostrichidae*)

Bookworm destruction



Juvenal. *Satires*, last quarter of the
fifteenth century.

Imprint of crushed bookworm



Meditatione de la Passione,
fifteenth century.

MANUSCRIPTS

MUTILATION

Cut up
parchment
manuscript used
for bookbinding



Bible fragments, ninth century

