

Transcription Exercise: Assignment 5.

I have chosen Transcription Text 1. The transcription proper and the original text are below at the end of this commentary.¹ I have created a table to preserve the order of the text. I have 'numbered' the Roman numerals and text in the left hand margin of the page as lines A -F. The text proper presents in 26 lines. As the first line is somewhat compromised by missing the tops of letters and appears to be at the end of a previous passage I have assigned it '0' in the transcription table. The next line starts with an elaborate capital 'F' indicating the start of a passage. This is line 1. Each of the remaining lines in the main body of the text are numbered 2 - 26. There is a 27th line but so severely truncated as to be illegible. Therefore I have not considered it here. In referring to the text I will use these numbers when necessary. Tentative translations of the Latin are also offered when useful.

The text bears a wide column on the left. This contains some Roman numerals at the top which initially appear to indicate a range of content. St Jerome has numbered homilies on the Psalms etc. and they may refer to something along those lines.² They also might refer to page numbers. However, pagination was practically unknown in the Middle Ages and scribes/readers relied on catchwords repeated at the bottom and top of pages.³ In the centre of the margin is a rubricated text which appears to give a description of the main text itself. We can conclude that the text above and below the given sample is missing. This is a pity as a full page may have had headings and footers which would have given clues to the overall context of the text. Also any truncations etc. that are peculiar to the scribe would be picked up by having the initial pages of the MS. For example, he may have used '*Sapientia*' in full at the beginning and then shortened it to '*Sap*' because of its frequency in the text. If the smudge at the very bottom left hand corner is due to fingers turning the page this could mean that there are only a couple of lines missing at the end of the sample.

The medium has been scored with vertical and horizontal lines to aid the scribe. These are most apparent in the bottom left corner of the page. It was probably the scribe himself who did this as they typically prepared their own materials. The scoring suggests that the medium is parchment, or even vellum as this - albeit a small sample - is fault free, save for three dots in the area in the left hand column below the Roman numerals and the 'title' of the piece. Paper was known in Europe at this time but considered neither fine nor durable enough for MSS.⁴

The text is in Latin and exhibits a typical convention of cutting words off at the end of a line randomly and continuing them on the next line. An example of this occurs at line 17 where '*argentum*' (silver) is split so that we only have 'ar', and 'gentum' begins line 18. A later reader has helped out by providing linking 'hyphens' for these words. S/he was conscientious enough to ensure a red 'hyphen' at line 5 where we have rubricated text. Occasionally hyphens (or a 'narrow diagonal slash' as they are described on Medieval Writing website) appear above the letter 'i'.⁵ This is done to avoid confusion. For example they appear in Line 6 to indicate the double 'i' in the alternative 3rd person Perfect Indicative of *Transíre*, i.e. *transiit* instead of *transivit*. Another example is at the end of Line 14 where one could easily mistake '*lima*' as '*luna*'. Medieval Writing seems to suggest that the original scribe entered these⁶.

1 The Bibliography is at the very end of this document.

2 The Homilies of St Jerome, trans. Sister Marie Liguori Ewald, I.H.M., (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964).

3 Trinity College Library, Cambridge, Catchwords, <https://trinitycollegelibrarycambridge.wordpress.com/2015/04/17/catchwords/>, 17 April 2015, [Accessed 11 January 2025].

4 Janet Backhouse, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1979) p.8.

5 Medieval Writing, Gothic Textura - Small, <https://medievalwritings.atilto.com.au/writing.htm>, 20 February 2016, [Accessed 2 January 2025].

6 *ibid.*

Rubrication occurs in the numerals of the top left-hand corner; CXXXVIII and the 'S' below. And again in the capital 'Cs' immediately below. The 'title' of the piece; '*Concordantie*⁷ *quod verbum debet esse morosum*' (Agreement as to what word should be capricious/wayward) is in red. Arbitrarily the 'f' in 'festinatio' in line 13 is also tinged with red. This could indicate a minor heading, especially as it echoes the above thus; '*festinatio verbi debet esse morosa...*' The words at the ends of lines 1-6 are rubricated in a descendant gradient. These rubricated letters form a single sentence independent of the main – black – text around them, i.e. from Line 1, '*festinatio vel velocitas...*' (haste or speed) to Line 6, '*in malo*' (in evil). The sense of these is 'haste or speed in a way it is good, in a different (way) it is bad'. There seems to be no obvious reason why it is here as it reads as an explication of the main 'title' and had it been placed beneath it that would have saved space which was always an important point as parchment was expensive. This rubricated text could be a segment of writing adjacent to another on the same page as the writing often occurred in columns (See below) where the rubrication is continued with some obvious purport. Or indeed the same could be said of a facing page.



The capital 'F' at the commencement of the passage is extravagantly elongated in green ink. Red curlicues are decorated about it and these – like the F itself – are reminiscent of bishops' crooks. Indeed the motif between the two vertical lines of the F could be interpreted as a crude hand holding a crook. Arguably, the F itself could be seen as a crozier, a point that is enhanced by the fact that both horizontal lines of the F are enclosed in a 'superfluous' thin green vertical line on the right. (See below for an example of a corresponding crozier.) This would initially indicate that the work is of a religious nature. The opening words at the very top of the page (Line 0) '*Amen dico vobis...*' (I truly say to you...) is from the gospel of Matthew so would confirm this.⁸ The most expensive ink - blue from lapis lazuli obtained in Afghanistan - is absent, perhaps showing that this is not a work of the first quality or that we are not viewing a 'primary' page.⁹ There does seem to be the potential to add more colour to this capital letter had the scribe the means to do so.

A leaf from the Beauvais Missal Northern France, late 13th or early 14th c.¹⁰



The script is a form of Gothic. It seems a little 'loose' to be later than the 14th century by which time the lettering has become tighter, downward strokes cluster and spacing is compressed. Having said that it is tighter than Rotunda.¹¹ I would suggest that this is Gothic textura. We have some characteristics of the script here: the shortened 't' (See line 1 '*velocitas*') and an 'e' where the horizontal stroke is at an angle going up to the right and stretches beyond the curve of the letter (See line 4 '*De*'). This stroke is also very obvious with the capital 'E' beginning line 7. The 'g' in '*Surge*' in Line 7 is also characteristic of Gothic Textura. Yet another example is the striking capital 'H' in '*Hinc*' in line 25.

Crosier of Archbishop Heinrich of Finstingen 1260-1286.¹²

⁷ Logeion gives '*Concordantia*' only, i.e. not ending 'ie' as here. See <https://logeion.uchicago.edu/concordantia>.

⁸ Matthew 6.5.

⁹ Janet Backhouse, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1979) p.8.

¹⁰ Christie's, *Script and Illumination: leaves from Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 3 December 2015, <https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/script-illumination-leaves-medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/leaf-beauvais-missal-northern-france-late-13th-early-14th-c-14/22921>, [Accessed 11 January 2025].

¹¹ Medieval Writing, <https://medievalwritings.atilto.com.au/writing.htm>, [Accessed 2 January 2025]

¹² Crosier, <https://www.1066.co.nz/Mosaic%20DVD/text/objects/Crosier.htm>, [Accessed 11 January 2025]

The Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) lists the following as marking the transition from Carolingian to Gothic Textualis;¹³

- Uncial **d** — the rounded form with stem leaning over to the left — re-emerges and is used in variation with upright **d**.
- Uncial (round) **s** — our normal form of the letter — is reintroduced at word-end only, where it alternates with tall **s**.
- The upright stroke of **t** begins to peek ever so slightly above its crossbar.
- The hasta of **e** begins to slope upward and to the right.
- Following **o**, **r** comes to have a 2-shaped form. The **or** ligature in this shape is the normal form of that letter sequence in Textualis.
- The bow of **h** bends around and finishes with a hair-stroke pointing down and to the left. By the end of the 12th century, the end of that stroke descends below the baseline.¹⁴

And all of these features appear repeatedly throughout this text. Examples;

- Rounded **d** in line 4 '*different*'.
- Straight **d** line 7 '*dictum*'.
- Round **s** in line 6 '*populus*'.
- Tall **s**, **t** and **e** in line 1 '*Festinatio*'.
- 2-shaped **r**, end of line 10 '*eorum*'.
- **h** with hair-stroke in line 25 '*huius*'.

The text is a series of Christian aphorisms or maxims on the subject of haste/speed. The formula is to cite an issue thus; '*De...concerning/in relation to said subject*' (e.g. line 3). And then a quote from the Bible follows appropriately. Thus we have quotes from Exodus in line 5,¹⁵ Joshua in line 6,¹⁶ the Apocalypse in Line 7,¹⁷ Proverbs in Line 8,¹⁸ Romans in 10,¹⁹ Psalms in 12,²⁰ Ecclesiastes in 15,²¹ Psalms in 19,²² Epistles Line 20,²³ Wisdom in 22,²⁴ and Epistles again in Line 23.²⁵

13 Another term for 'Textura'.

14 Hill Library and Manuscript Museum (HMML), Overview - Gothic Textualis, <https://hmmlschool.org/latin-gothic/>, [Accessed 9 January 2025].

15 Exodus 12.11.

16 Joshua 4.10.

17 Apocalypse 22.6.

18 Proverbs 1.16 and/or 5.5. The text gives Sapientia (Wisdom) but the text as quoted here seems to be a conflation of two from Proverbs. Isaiah 59.7 is also possible.

19 Romans 3:15. NB the idea of feet shedding blood has many references so some version may exist in Psalms but Romans has this quote directly as given here.

20 Psalms 77.33. in the Latin Vulgate.

21 Ecclesiasticus 28:28. The Book of Ecclesiasticus / Sirach that was removed from the Bible.

22 Psalms 140.3. in the Latin Vulgate.

23 James 1.19.

24 Attributed to the Wisdom of Solomon in the text but I could not find this as it is quoted here though variants exist, such as '*In ore fatuorum cor illorum, et in corde sapientium os illorum.*' Ecclesiastes 21.29 in the Latin Vulgate.

25 James 1.26.

A typical 'maxim' occurs at lines 22 - 23. '*Cor stultorum in ore eorum et os sapientium in corde ipsorum.*' 'The heart/feelings of the foolish (is/are) in their mouth and the mouth of the wise (is) in their heart.' At some points in the text the quotes have been slightly altered. Bible Gateway, for examples, gives the above as; '*In ore fatuorum cor illorum, et in corde sapientium os illorum.*'²⁶ Repeated referencing through religious works in an age that relied heavily on memory may have lead to these alterations. However, it is worth noting here also that St Jerome, for example, produced 3 different translations of the Psalms so the scribe in this case may have had access to alternative translations in relation to other books of the Bible.²⁷

Based on the above I would suggest that this is a short text from a religious work like a psalter (least likely as this comprised primarily the 150 psalms, though other devotional texts were included) or breviary, or most likely a Book of Hours which could have quite a diverse range of contents²⁸. The latter was more in the nature of a personal compendium whereas both the former with their psalms, canticles, antiphons and prayers for the Divine Office etc. were for more formal use within the monastery. The current text is more in the nature of a homily/sermon which may indicate personal use.

'[T]he precise selection of material for inclusion in Books of Hours varied from book to book, often reflecting the devotional choices of those who had commissioned them.'²⁹

However, knowing the dimensions would help confirm whether this book was a personal, portable item or a book for public use. Some of these Books of hours can be extremely small (See below). The earliest known Book of Hours is from 1240.³⁰ Due to that and the text being in Gothic textura I would conclude that this is a MS from the 13th century.



The Virgin Mary speaks with the angel Gabriel in this illumination from the Edith Book of Hours³¹

26 Bible Gateway, Ecclesiasticus, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiasticus%2021%3A29-31&version=VULGATE;NIV>, [Accessed 10 January 2025].

27 John Harthan, *Books of Hours*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) p.15.

28 John Harthan, *Books of Hours*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) p.15.

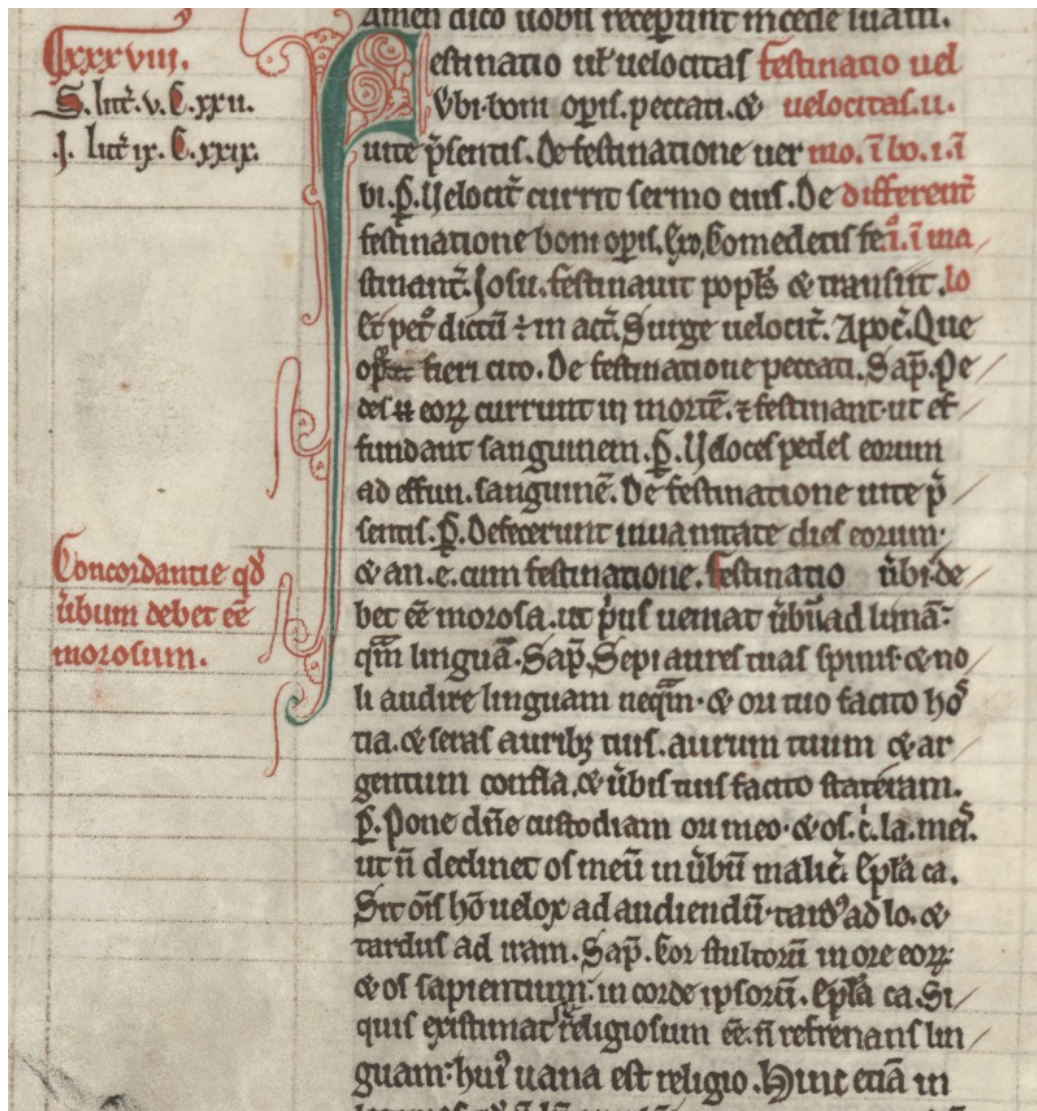
29 Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours, English People and their Prayers*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011) p.8.

30 Wikipedia Contributors, Books of Hours, 18 December 2024 (UTC 00:30). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_hours#:~:text=Although%20the%20most%20heavily%20illuminated,near%20Oxford%20in%20about%201240. [Accessed 10 January 2025].

31 Library of Congress Blogs, An 800-year-old (tiny) Book of Hours, 9 April 2024, <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/04/an-800-year-old-tiny-book-of-hours/> [Accessed 11 January 2025].

Space precludes further discussion of the text. One point worth noting is that the 'c' and 't' are very similar in this script. Thus I have opted for *peccando* rather than *petendo* in line 7 & 11, and '*vice proferitis*' (you have produced in turn/by change) rather than '*vite proferitis*' (you have brought forth from the vine) which seems incongruous in the context.

Line No.	Transcription
A	138.
B	S. Int[ra] 5.100. 22.
C	.J. lu[...] 9.100. 29.
D	Concordantie q[uo]d
E	v[er]bum debet e[ss]e
F	morosum.
0	Amen dico vobis recep[er]unt m[er]cede[m] suam.
1	Festinatio [vel] velocitas festinatio vel
2	verbi boni op[er]is peccati, et velocitas u[t]
3	vice p[ro]feritis. De festinatione ver mo[do] i[n] bo[no] [id est] i[n]
4	bi P[salmi]. Velocit[er] currit sermo eius. De different[iam]
5	festinatione boni op[er]is. Exo[dus]. Comeditis fe [id est] i[n] ma
6	stant[er]. Jos[h]u[a]. festinavit pop[u]l[u]s et transiit, lo
7	Et pec[cando] dictu[m] est in act[um]. Surge velocit[er]. Apoc[alypsis]. Que
8	op[ort]et fieri cito. De festinatione peccati. Sap[ientia] Pe
9	des e[n]i[m] eor[um] currunt in morte[m] et festinant, ut ef
10	fundant sanguine[m]. P[salmi]. Veloces pedes eorum
11	ad effun[dendum] sanguine[m]. De festinatione vice p[ro]
12	feritis. P[salmi]. Defecerunt invanitate dies eorum,
13	et an[ni] e[orum] cum festinatione. Festinatio v[er]bi de
14	bet e[ss]e morosa, ut p[ri]us veniat v[er]bum ad lima[m]
15	q[ua]m lingua[m]. Sap[ientia]. Sepi aures tuas spinis, et no
16	li audire linguam neq[ua]m, et ori tuo facito hos
17	tia, et seras aurib[us] tuis. aurum tuum et ar
18	gentum confla, et verbis tuis facito stateram.
19	P[salmi]. Pone domine custodiam ori meo, et os[tium] c[ircumstantiae] la[biis] meis,
20	ut n[on] declinet os meu[m] in verbu[m] malit[iae]. Ep[istol]a ca[nonica].
21	Sit o[mn]is ho[mo] velox ad audiendum, tardus ad lo[quendum], et
22	tardus ad iram. Sap[ientia]. Cor stultoru[m] in ore eoru[m],
23	et os sapientium, in corde ipsoru[m]. Ep[isto]a ca[nonica]. Si
24	quis existimat[ur] religiosum e[ss]e, n[on] refrenans lin
25	guam hui[us] vana est religio. Hinc etia[m] in



Bibliography.

1. Backhouse, Janet, *The Illuminated Manuscript*, (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1979).
2. Bible Gateway, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search/>
3. *The Bible with the Apocrypha*, (London: The Folio Society, 2008).
4. Christie's, *Script and Illumination: leaves from Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 3 December 2015, <https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/script-illumination-leaves-medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/leaf-beauvais-missal-northern-france-late-13th-early-14th-c-14/22921>.
5. Crosier, <https://www.1066.co.nz/Mosaic%20DVD/text/objects/Crosier.htm>.
6. Duffy, Eamon, *Marking the Hours, English People and their Prayers*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011).
7. Harthan John, *Books of Hours*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).
8. Hill Library and Manuscript Museum (HMML), *Overview - Gothic Textualis*, <https://hmmlschool.org/latin-gothic/>
9. *The Homilies of St Jerome*, trans. Sister Marie Liguori Ewald, I.H.M., (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964).
10. Library of Congress Blogs, *An 800-year-old (tiny) Book of Hours*, 9 April 2024, <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/04/an-800-year-old-tiny-book-of-hours/>

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12. Medieval Writing, *Gothic Textura - Small*,
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13. Trinity College Library, Cambridge, *Catchwords*,
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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_hours#:~:text=Although%20the%20most%20heavily%20illuminated,near%20Oxford%20in%20about%201240.