

At Saint John's University in Minnesota, the presence of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) offers a unique opportunity for the classroom. Although we teach an intensive summer workshop on manuscript studies at HMML (sponsored by University of Minnesota, Center for Medieval Studies), this resource had been largely untapped for Latin or Greek courses. In spring 2009 I taught an advanced Latin class on Cicero, in which I was able to engage the students with manuscripts.

Among the thousands of manuscripts on microfilm at HMML, there are at least 150 significant codices of Cicero. In order to use HMML for the Latin course, first of all I had to choose texts which, on the one hand, could fulfill the students' needs for interesting reading and for advancement of language skills, and which, on the other hand, would have suitable manuscripts in the collection. In particular, the handwriting needed to be easy enough for undergraduates with no previous palaeographical training.

The first text we read was the first oration against Catiline. This old standard serves to introduce students to Cicero's full oratorical style. In the middle segment of the course, we read one of the *Colloquia* of Erasmus to develop the students' Latin skills and demonstrate the perennial value of studying Ciceronian Latin. Finally we read Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, for which there is a good selection of manuscripts in the HMML archives. The *Somnium* in particular works well to introduce students to how Cicero was used through the centuries.

Although actual work with manuscripts was saved for the *Somnium*, from the beginning of the course we discussed manuscript variants in editions, talking about significant textual variants versus variants of orthography etc. These discussions become opportunities to talk about grammar, meanings of words, varieties of Latinity, and the descriptive (versus prescriptive) nature of grammars and lexica. The students' natural curiosity led into some exploration of codicology and manuscript production.

For their final project, the students, working in pairs, chose manuscripts of the *Somnium* from a set of microfilms which I had pre-selected. They compared their manuscript with the Teubner critical edition, and they located textual variants, discussed which reading they would choose, and why. The teams presented the results of their explorations to the rest of the class and handed in "lab reports" based on a research template which I provided.

The use of manuscripts in the class brought a whole world into the students' consciousness that they had not even known existed. Even the process of reading the familiar text aloud to each other from the microfilm had a secret value – they were understanding the Latin without translating. One student also attended the intensive manuscript workshop at HMML in June. One of the goals of the workshop is to present graduate students with a possible model of research design, which the participants put into practice with a manuscript of their choice. Similarly in the Cicero course, these students not only had some practical experience with an individual manuscript, but they also came away with a conceptual framework for dealing with critical editions, which they can apply to any text.