A Palaeographer's View
THE SELECTED WRITINGS
OF JULIAN BROWN
EDITED BY
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with a Preface
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HARVEY MILLER PUBLISHERS
Editors' Introduction to Part One

It is fitting that 'Latin Palaeography since Traube' should be the first paper in this selection, for it originated as Julian Brown's inaugural lecture as Professor of Palaeography in the University of London, given at King's College on the 22nd November 1962. At one and the same time this paper provides a history of palaeography and an examination of its role. Here Julian Brown shares with his audience his delight in the subject's curious origins, as a tool developed in the late seventeenth century for use in the dispute surrounding the authenticity of early land grants made to important ecclesiastical centres, just as he shared it with generations of students. He also highlights how, even in the work of the earliest palaeographers, discoveries and advances are made through collaborative efforts. Fresh from his collaboration on the second volume of the Codex Lindisfarneensis facsimile, he was well aware of the value of 'duets and trios', and he was to work again as the palaeographic anchorman in other introductions to important facsimile volumes. In his ability to work with so many scholars from disparate fields Brown followed worthily in the path of his predecessor in the chair, Francis Wormald, whose contribution to the subject he was to examine in an obituary for the British Academy (1976). This, and his discussion of E. A. Lowe's work (1977), are comparable with the Traube paper, but have been excluded reluctantly because of the inevitable duplication of materials surveyed.

People who heard Brown give his inaugural lecture speak of their immediate recognition of the importance of the synthesis presented, and it was published both in the following year and again over a decade later (1976). Identifying as problematic the origin of the letter forms of Roman, Caroline and Gothic cursive minuscule, he emphasizes the dangers of keeping separate the investigation of 'diplomatic'. Equally he points out that the subject does not end with the Renaissance. He argues that a primary contribution of palaeography to our understanding of the thoughts and behaviour of the past lies in dating and localizing manuscripts whose internal relationships with each other have been established by textual criticism, and he affirms his commitment to what the
books under examination actually contain. Although it may seem that scribes with many different scripts are chasing 'too few exemplars', he notes the need for full and detailed listings of manuscripts according to the styles of script in use.

Given the occasion for which the Traube paper was written, it appropriately includes some consideration of the role of the palaeographer in university training. Julian Brown cannot then have known that students would be sent to him from many different disciplines, and not just from the University of London. At his lectures and classes they were to collect his prized hand-outs, finding-lists for illustrations of scripts, invaluable formalizations of ways in which scripts may be distinguished and bibliographies. Most of all, they absorbed some of his skill in looking and seeing, a skill he attributes largely to the influence of Jocobsthal's constant injunction to him as an undergraduate 'Now: tell me what you see'.

In the second of the papers in this section, not previously published, Julian Brown, by chance at Christ Church again some forty years on, looks back over his own training and examines some of the major changes in viewing the subject that emerged during his own working life. Despite its not having been worked up as a formal publication, the paper is an important statement of the constant concern Brown had for improvement in the analysis of scripts. Here he voices his worries about the dominance of a binary system in terms of majuscule and minuscule script, preferring instead as basic descriptive poles the terms 'textualis' and 'cursive'. The informal tone of this paper brings to mind sharply the tone of Julian Brown's lectures, which were so essential as part of his contribution to the subject.

The third item in this section, entitled 'Aspects of Palaeography', has been put together from a variety of sources: encyclopaedia entries and unpublished lecture notes. Together, this material provides an excellent overview of many aspects of palaeography and illustrates the breadth of information available to all those lucky enough to have attended Julian Brown's lectures and classes.

Original sources of the papers included in Part One:


2. 'Names of Scripts - a Plea to all Medievalists.' Opening Address to the Oxford International Symposium on the 'Role of the Book in Medieval Culture', held at Christ Church, Oxford, 26 September to 1 October, 1982. The proceedings of this symposium were published without Julian Brown's informal opening remarks and were edited by Peter Ganz, The Role of the Book in Medieval Culture: proceedings of the Oxford International Symposium 26 September - 1 October 1982. Bibliologia 3-4, (2 vols., Turnhout, 1986). The Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (D. A. D.) were involved in sponsoring the event.

3. 'Aspects of Palaeography,'

I. 'What is Palaeography?', from unpublished lecture notes.


Towards the end of the tenth century the master of the abbey schools at St Gallen, Ekkehard I, had a neat way of dealing with his dullest pupils: he trained them to work in the scriptorium. *Et quos ad literarum studia tardiores vidisset, ad scribendum occupaverat et lineandum.* At the beginning of this century historians in general looked at those who studied medieval books with something of the sorrow that Ekkehard felt when he looked at the geese who were only fit to write them. Palaeographers, like scribes, were useful; indeed, they were allowed to call their subject a *Hilfswissenschaft,* but not much was expected of them, and if they contributed to the progress of history and philology, it was only as the tools of better men. In 1899 a critic said of palaeography as then practised: ‘historischer Sinn ist — so seltan es auch klingt — in einer der historischen Hilfswissenschaften noch nicht zu Hause’. The man who brought this savage charge of want of historical sense just where one would most expect to find it, in a discipline which served the needs of historians, would have been pleased to see the foundation by the University of London of a Chair of Palaeography in 1949; he would have been pleased again, eleven years later, to see the first occupant of that chair, Francis Wormald, chosen to be Director of the Institute of Historical Research. Both events are landmarks in the history of palaeography and both are ultimately due to the influence of Ludwig Traube himself, for that was the critic’s name. Both by his writings and by his appointment at the Institute, which has been a source of particular pride and pleasure to all palaeographers, Francis Wormald has demonstrated not only his own signal distinction of mind, and character, but the validity and vitality of the noble ideal of palaeography conceived by Traube, the master whom he respects so deeply and understands so well.

In my first years at the British Museum I often had to break the news of Francis Wormald’s departure for King’s College to scholars who had come from all over the world to visit him. That taught me the force of the words: ‘his face fell’. Their faces always,
literally and touchingly, fell; but it was good to see them brighten again when they heard about the No. 77 'bus.

I soon came to understand their feelings, and later I was very proud to join the international army of authors whose privilege it has been to thank him in prefaces and footnotes for his encouragement and advice: his generosity is equal to his learning. I believe that the distinguished Continental art-historians who came to live and work here during the 1930s might have influenced us less deeply if they had not found, in a young Assistant Keeper at the British Museum, a friend to understand their aims, argue with them, learn from them, and introduce them to our native antiquities. As a palaeographer he is the heir to two great English traditions, both of which are at home in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum: the tradition of a catholic interest in the books and documents of all periods and all countries which inspired the managers of the Palaeographical and New Palaeographical Societies, from Bond and Maunde Thompson to Gilson; and the tradition of connoisseurship in illuminated manuscripts founded by Warner, James, Cockerell and Eric Millar. To these two traditions he has added something of his own, which would have won the particular admiration of Traube; he is always acutely sensitive to the relevance of manuscripts to the whole body of antiquities and to wider movements in the course of civilization. My own favourites among his work are his papers on the stylistic legacy bequeathed by the Anglo-Saxons to later English illuminators, and on illustrated lives of the Saints; they reveal a deep and imaginative understanding of medieval life as a whole.  

I

IN THIS LECTURE I shall invite you to consider what Traube's ideal of palaeography was; what kind of progress has been made since his death in 1907; and the value of palaeographical training in the education of historians and philologists.  

Traube did two things for palaeography. First, he gave it sound methods of inquiry. Tame as it may seem now, his determination to base his conclusions on all the material, not merely on what was available locally, was something new. He saw that, if Mabillon had visited Italy before instead of after writing the De re diplomatica, he might never have supposed that the so-called 'National' hands of Italy, Gaul, Spain, and the British Isles were independent inventions of the barbarian nations, and not the descendants of scriptura romana, which he knew best in its capital, uncial, and half-uncial varieties. It was the delicious shock of finding the ancient manuscripts of the Chapter Library of Verona hidden away on top of the presses that forced upon Scipione Maffei the true and fruitful concept of a single Roman script differentiated, in its evolution from a single starting-point, into majuscule, minuscule, and cursive varieties.  

With the lesson of Mabillon and Maffei in mind, Traube gave a fundamental place to making comprehensive lists of manuscripts in the early hands that interested him. None was published in his lifetime, although his list of manuscripts in capitals and uncials was published posthumously, but they were the basis of his own work on abbreviations, and of much of the best palaeographical research that has been done since his death. More spectacular than his lists was Traube's discovery of the palaeographical importance of abbreviations. Before his day abbreviations had been collected merely as an aid to reading, with no record of their source, so that textual critics who used the current dictionaries were apt to explain mistaken readings in early medieval manuscripts in terms of late medieval forms of abbreviation which cannot have occurred in their exemplars. Traube's collection of abbreviations from the widest possible range of Late Antique and Early Medieval manuscripts not only put a stop to all that; incomparably more important, it furnished him with a new and powerful means of dating and localizing the manuscripts themselves. Nomina Sacra, the book he wrote, in what he knew to be the last two years of his life, as a record of his own work on abbreviations, marks the greatest single advance in technique that has been made since the discipline of palaeography was founded.  

A third fundamental element in Traube's teaching was his insistence on the virtue of Mabillon's rule — non ex sola scriptura, neque ex uno characterismo sed ex omnibus simul ... pronuntiandum; in other words, neither script, nor any other single aspect of a book, is an adequate basis for judgement. Palaeography had been neglecting it, whereas diplomatic had applied it ever since it was first propounded, and with happy results. Like other German palaeographers before and since, Traube referred to the physical features of manuscript books other than script and abbreviations, and to their individual histories, and the history of libraries, under the heading of 'Handschriftenkunde'; but he made it clear that the study of these other matters was inseparable from the study of
may, therefore, have been only temporary. Palaeography has helped archaeology by bringing the Echternach Gospels to heel; it was made neither in Ireland nor on the Continent, and is neither a generation older nor a generation younger than the Durham Gospels. All four positions have been adopted at one time or another by archaeologists who did not know that the Durham and Echternach Gospels were written by the same man. Archaeology has helped palaeography by clarifying the temporal and stylistic relationship between the maker of the Durham and Echternach Gospels and Eadfrith, the scribe and illuminator of the Lindisfarne Gospels. One of the best things a palaeographer can do to help his own subject is to work with art-historians. Francis Wormald stands out by his ability not only to play the palaeographical part in duets and trios but to perform brilliant art-historical solos to his own palaeographical accompaniment. Of the uses of art history in general I surely need not speak in a pioneering university of which the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes are part.

In our relations with epigraphy, Traube set a good example by taking from the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum much of the material for his account, in Nomina Sacra, of the earliest Latin abbreviations. Medieval and Renaissance epigraphy is, alas, a neglected subject. Whenever any work is done, it has immediate repercussions on palaeography. V. E. Nash-Williams's survey of early Christian inscriptions in Wales revealed that Insular script was used there in the first quarter of the seventh century, a fact that could not have been gathered from any other source. Millard Meiss has shown that the use in Italian humanistic manuscripts of capital letters modelled on Roman Imperial inscriptions was probably due to the influence of the painter Mantegna, and spread outwards from Padua and not, like the humanist script itself, from Florence.

In the matter of relations between palaeography and diplomatic, then — as now — respectful but distant, a mutual attitude of kühle Hochachtung, Traube went too far when he claimed that the handwriting of documents was the province of diplomatic, whereas palaeography was only concerned with the handwriting, and other aspects, of books. Latin palaeography had been born, in 1681, between the covers of Mabillon's De re diplomatica, and Traube's realization of the relevance of palaeography to philology and the history of culture, for which books and not documents were the basic material, led him to react too sharply against the danger that
palaeography might never be thought of as anything more than the reading-mistress of diplomatic. Detailed studies of the scripts of documents can best be made by people who have been trained in diplomatic, and the palaeographer should, as Traube said, take account of their findings but the three crucial problems in the historical development of European script — and by common consent the elucidation of that development is the business of palaeography — demand nothing less than close collaboration between students of books and students of documents, not just casual borrowing on one side or the other. The three problems are: the earliest origin of the minuscule letter-forms in the Roman period; the origin of Caroline minuscule; and the origin of Gothic cursive minuscule in the thirteenth century. In his attitude towards diplomatic the palaeographer had better not imitate Traube too closely. The editors of the Palaeographical and New Palaeographical Societies set a better example by including in their survey documentary papyri, and English documentary hands from the whole medieval period. Luigi Schiaparelli, who turned to palaeography only after long service to diplomatic, is another useful pattern. Palaeography ought both to accept cheerfully the role of general reading-mistress — whatever she may have been before Traube’s day she has been a real lady ever since — and to work with diplomatic as amicably, and on the same terms, as she does with art history.

Sound method is not an end in itself. Men work best for a high purpose; and Traube’s second, and greater, service to palaeography was to give it such a purpose. Bred on classical philology, he embarked, soon after graduation, on a long association with the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, for which he edited vol. III of Poetae laici aevi Carolini between 1886 — his twenty-fifth year — and 1896. His main task in the University of Munich, from 1888 onwards, was to teach Latin philology, and he was eventually promoted, in 1904, to a new chair of Medieval Latin. At Munich he taught palaeography from the beginning, and in the last ten years of his life devoted more and more time to it; but he had come to it from the study of literature, and for him palaeography was an integral part of his own particular brand of philology. What distinguished him from other good editors of his own day, and from all too many since, was a lively historical sense which caused him to see the successive stages in the transmission of a text in human terms, not just as the groundwork for an edition, but as evidence for the cultural history of the centres through which that text had been transmitted. It was the accurate dating and localization of manuscripts that gave him the means of transmuting bare, impersonal diagrams of textual relationships between manuscripts into chapters in the history of mankind. He began his still univalved introductory lectures on Medieval Latin Philology by discussing the history of script, because it gave, he said, ‘the clearest expression of the unbroken continuity between antiquity and modern times’. The overriding aim of all his work, in which palaeography and philology were combined into a single instrument of inquiry, was to discover the stages by which that continuity has been maintained. Palaeography’s contribution to this partnership is to date and localize manuscripts whose internal relationships with each other have been established by textual criticism. The affiliations of ‘neutral’ texts can, in turn, provide clues to the date and place of origin of the manuscripts that contain them. By ‘neutral’ I mean texts which have not been composed, or at least altered, for local use; of the non-neutral kind, which furnish more obvious evidence about the origin of manuscripts, annals and chronicles, liturgies, and texts concerned with civil and ecclesiastical administration and law, are only the most obvious examples.

More spectacular evidence for the history of textual traditions is seldom discovered in the field of late-medieval and Renaissance palaeography; but in the period between antiquity and the ninth century Traube was sometimes able to use misunderstood letter-forms or abbreviations, mistaken division of words, and the like, as evidence for stages in transmission that preceded the oldest surviving manuscripts. This was only because frequent transmutation of a text from an unfamiliar into a familiar script — say, from Rustic Capitals, and scriptura continua, into Insular minuscule, Figs. 1, 6 and then again into Caroline minuscule — was a common sequence of events in an age when scribes who wrote too many different kinds of script were chasing too few Antique exemplars. Since Caroline minuscule was the foundation of all the later book-hands, whether gothic or humanist, transmutation of this sort occurred but rarely after the ninth century. The composers who set up Shakespeare’s plays in type can safely be assumed to have written the Secretary hand themselves, so theirs is not really a case in point.
A. E. Housman, following Haupt in a denunciation of the so-called ‘palaeographical method’ in emendation, points the finger of scorn both at his fellow countrymen (as usual) and at Munich, but Traube himself is not open to criticism here. He would have agreed with Housman that ‘anxious adherence to the duc[tus litterarum] is the fruitful parent of false conjectures’. He maintained that however accurately the usages of abbreviations and letter-forms might be dated and localized, there would still be little that palaeography could do to help extend particular errors in a text. A conjecture was no better for being palaeographically justifiable; and palaeographical possibility certainly did not make a conjecture right. Familiar as he was with the free way in which many Carolingian editors and scribes handled ‘neutral’ texts, Traube knew that the purely mechanical copying that alone can generate errors which palaeography may help to correct was not very often found. And, as Giorgio Pasquali has said, ‘in a text that has not been transmitted mechanically, the palaeographically easiest conjecture is hardly ever the most probable’. It was as a source of material, unobtainable by other means, for the history of textual traditions that palaeography could claim to be the indispensable companion of philology.

Traube would, I think, have welcomed as contributions to his own kind of philology the recent ‘diplomatic editions’ of the two oldest manuscripts of the Regula Magistri, and of the autograph manuscript of Thomas à Kempis which includes the four tracts that make up the De imitatione Christi. The purpose of such editions is to record, by an economical system of typographical conventions, such alterations and retouchings — in particular writing over erasure — as can be detected in the original manuscript, but not in a photographic facsimile. Both these editions have gone far to humanize our knowledge of the texts in question, as only the shrewd palaeographical examination of manuscripts can.

Method and purpose, then, were Traube’s two bequests to palaeography. In the long run, the second of these will prove to have been the more important. It has inspired his successors to go beyond the mere technicalities of their subject by relating them to the general trends of European culture, and so to feel that they can claim, in their own right, to share with the philologists and art-historians an honourable place in the commonwealth of historical studies.

If it is with Traube, a teacher of genius, that palaeographers during and since his lifetime have gone most willingly and profitably to school, he himself would not wish them to forget Léopold Delisle, the one contemporary whose work on medieval books he admired without reservation. Delisle’s history of the Cabinet des Manuscrits at the Bibliothèque Nationale is still one of the best models for the branch of palaeography that deals with the descent to modern times of medieval and Renaissance libraries, of which Traube’s pupil and successor at Munich, Paul Lehmann, is the most distinguished living exponent.

II

In reviewing the progress of palaeography since Traube’s death, I shall only indicate the main lines of development, and bring to your notice certain new approaches which seem to set hopeful precedents for future work. In the last fifty years Latin palaeography has made its main effort on the front on which Traube himself was most active, the fifth to twelfth centuries, largely because his own collections of material — especially his lists of manuscripts — have provided a firm base for the operations of his pupils and followers. Of writing on abbreviations I will only mention Notae Latiae, by W. M. Lindsay and his continuator Doris Bains, which surveys all forms of abbreviation, not only the contractions discussed in Nomina Sacra, that were used between the early eighth century and the mid eleventh; and Schiaparelli’s short introduction to the history of abbreviations in general. Systematic study of late medieval abbreviations — a daunting task — has yet to be attempted; it will probably come, if ever it does come, as a last resort.

The books and papers devoted to single scriptoria of the seventh to ninth centuries are far too numerous to list here. Delisle’s Mémoire sur l’école calligraphique de Tours, of 1884, was the ancestor of them all, and Traube never tired of recommending it. Among studies of larger areas the most remarkable are Lowe’s model account of Beneventan handwriting, and the more recent surveys of Switzerland by Albert Bruckner and of south-east Germany in Carolingian times by Bernhard Bischoff. By the late 1920s enough had already been done, by himself and others, to embolden Lowe to embark on Codices Latini Antiquiores, his palaeographical catalogue of all Latin manuscripts written before
A.D. 800. Lowe's working life has been twice as long as Traube's, and none of it has been mis-spent. As CLA comes into port after more than a quarter of a century, her captain — long the doyen of Latin palaeographers — can look back on a voyage of exploration which has not only revealed just how little was really known about certain familiar types of script before he set out — uncials, for instance — but brought home for the first time a great cargo of new material.

Lowe's aim in CLA has been to record the hard palaeographical facts about the seventeen hundred or so books and fragments of books written in his period. In the introductions to several of its volumes, and elsewhere, he has given concise but masterly accounts of certain groupings in particular scriptoria or in wider areas; but he nowhere claims to have said the last word, and the only worthwhile tribute that younger generations can pay to his devoted and unselfish labours on their behalf will be to examine at short range the palaeographical zones and periods whose existence his wide-ranging survey has revealed. Two enterprises of similar importance now under way will all but complete the palaeographical chart of the first nine centuries. Albert Bruckner and Robert Marichal are publishing the Latin documentary material of the CLA period; Bernhard Bischoff, the present holder of Traube's chair at Munich († 1991), is at work on a handbook of the 6500-odd surviving manuscripts of the ninth century, other than those of Spain and the British Isles. When these three great labours have been ended, and when the art-historians have revised E. H. Zimmermann's basic survey of pre-Caroline illumination — it too was based on Traube's collections — and have added accounts of all the minor centres to the late Wilhelm Koehler's magisterial work on the major Caroline schools, then most of the manuscript material for the cultural history of the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages will have been assembled, and the great historical edifice of which Traube laid out the ground-plan should rise more rapidly than ever.

Between the tenth and twelfth centuries the 'art-historical palaeography' of the Romanesque illuminated manuscripts has far outrun the study of script; few systematic surveys have been made; and of the preliminary studies that exist the most general is Bischoff's, which draws a fruitful distinction between Caroline minuscule and 'early Gothic'. In this early period three recent extensions in the range of research into manuscripts must be recorded. In the field of book-production two post-war innovations are yielding valuable results. The technique, and not just the decoration, of book-bindings is now a thriving subject for research, thanks to the example set by Berthe van Regemorter, and Heinz Roosen-Runge has found an ingenious and reliable method of identifying the pigments used in Late Antique and Early Medieval illumination. Again, Carl Nordenfalk, on Late Antique Canon Tables, and Patrick McGurk, on Gospels books before the ninth century, have shown that in those two classes of manuscripts textual and material aspects are intimately linked to each other — a discovery that may well be applicable elsewhere.

I have yet to speak of Insular palaeography. Thanks to long and patient research by Lindsay and Lowe on script, abbreviations, and book-production, and to François Masai's explosive but helpful outburst on La Miniature d'Irlandaise, we are now better able to make the distinction between native Irish and native Anglo-Saxon, which Traube himself found difficult. Gone are the Middle Ages, in which everything was scotic; gone is the age of Mabillon, in which everything was saxonic; gone too, I hope, is the age of Charles O'Connor, in which rather too much became scotaica. The Irish and Anglo-Saxon domains obviously interpenetrate each other so much, especially in the seventh and eighth centuries, that neither can be studied in complete isolation from the other; but what is most needed, now that a fairly safe fence has been put up along most of the boundary, is for the palaeographers on each side to draw back from it and put their own land into good heart. Work on the Irish manuscripts by scholars equipped with the fog-lamp of Celtic philology, which alone can penetrate the misty background of Irish history and literature, should be accompanied by work on the English manuscripts against their native background, and against the by now extensive body of knowledge about the script and culture of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries on the Continent. After a good few years of minding their own business, Irish and English palaeographers will be better fitted to re-enter the archaeological conflict, the progress of which they will have been observing closely in the meantime, but from a safe distance. For the archaeologists themselves actual disengagement is probably out of the question, since objects and patterns alike are so very portable. I shall set an example by saying no more now about Irish palaeography.
On the Anglo-Saxon side, it should not be impossible to list, as I mean to try to do, and ultimately to catalogue, all the Latin manuscripts of native origin, and of foreign origin but preserved in English libraries, between the seventh century and the Norman Conquest. Before long, the great enterprises of Lowe and Bischoff will have either included or excluded all the material down to the end of the ninth century. For the tenth and eleventh centuries the work already done by the liturgists and art-historians, with Francis Wormald in the front rank of each contingent, provides a framework into which the manuscripts that are neither liturgical nor illuminated may be fitted; for manuscripts in the Anglo-Saxon tongue we have N. R. Ker’s catalogue, which includes a masterly survey of the vernacular side of palaeography in the later period; and Ker’s list of manuscripts from English medieval libraries goes far to counteract the effects of the early and haphazard dispersion of our ancient collections of manuscripts, which has put English palaeographers at such a disadvantage beside their continental colleagues.

A comprehensive list of all the Latin manuscripts is a necessary preliminary to the ‘intensive study of individual manuscripts’ through which alone, as Sir Frank Stenton has said, ‘it will ever become possible to place the different local centres of English learning in their true relation to the general intellectual life’ of the times. Our older, Latin writers — Aldhelm, Bede, Boniface, Alcuin — have furnished scholars like Wilhelm Levison with the means to teach us much about our intellectual life in the seventh and eighth centuries, and Lowe has opened the door of the Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium; but from the ninth century onwards the scene is all too dark. Thanks to the catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts by that great ancestor of English palaeographers, Humphrey Wanley, our vernacular authors have been long and carefully studied; and Kenneth Sisam in particular has been able to use them, as Bede and the other older writers have been used, to throw some light on our cultural history. The later Anglo-Saxons may not have written much in Latin, but they did read it; and from the books that they used palaeography and philology can hope to add a great deal more to the picture, once the material as a whole has been organized, in however summary a way. Is it really true that the great literary and artistic treasure which England possessed in the eighth century was all sent away to the Continent, at the request of expatriates like Boniface and Alcuin, or else destroyed by the Danes in the ninth century? If so, and if the loss was only made good during the monastic revival of the tenth century, from where exactly did the replacements come? Our history books have too little to say in answer to these questions, simply because palaeographical and philological research, as Traube understood them, have yet to be systematically applied to the whole range of our earliest Latin manuscripts. This is not to deny that excellent work on particular manuscripts, and on small groups of manuscripts, has already been done, notably by T. A. M. Bishop, the late Fritz Saxl, and R. W. Hunt. The preliminary lists of manuscripts will, of course, have to be extended beyond the Conquest and into the twelfth century, since we know of cases where an early manuscript in Insular writing survived the Conquest to be copied — and transliterated — into twelfth-century Caroline minuscule, and was then lost, or set aside as unreadable. For the twelfth century good work on particular centres has already been done, by M. R. James and C. R. Dodwell on Canterbury; by Sir Roger Mynors on Durham; by Otto Pächt, C. R. Dodwell, and Francis Wormald (working together) on St Albans. Ker’s account of the palaeography of our Latin manuscripts in the period — no other country has anything to match it — will be a safe guide for years to come. England was, to use Pasquale’s term, one of those ‘lateral zones’, on the geographical circumference of a civilization, in which ancient manuscripts are apt to remain in actual use for longer than at the more sophisticated centre of diffusion. Textually speaking, the Italo-Northumbrian Gospels is perhaps the most striking case in point; and no reader of Pächt’s new book on English narrative illustration in the twelfth century will underestimate the importance of our pre-Conquest libraries for the history of European art. The Latin manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans are of more than local interest.

Of the other main periods of Latin palaeography — Roman, Gothic and Humanistic — I shall have to speak more briefly. The period between the first century and the fifth saw the birth not only of uncials but of the minuscule letter-forms which have been the staple of European handwriting from that day to this; and the recent work on ‘Roman’ palaeography of Jean Mallon, Marichal and Charles Perrat is as interesting for its methods as for its results. These French palaeographers have given equal attention to documentary and literary writings, since the Latin papyri which contain most of the evidence are far too few to allow of exclusive-
ness; and in order to extend their material still further Mallon, in particular, has turned to inscriptions, the 'handwritings' of which, sadly neglected by the epigraphers, seem to have developed on the same lines as those of the books and documents. In trying to explain the evolution of Roman writing from the rustic and cursive capitals of the first century through an ill-documented interval to the uncial, half-uncial, and cursive minuscule of the fifth, Mallon and Marichal have considered letter-forms not just statically but dynamically, in terms of the handling of the pen, and the construction of a letter out of a series of separate strokes: an approach only made possible by the rediscovery since 1900 of the technique of formal calligraphy by Rudolf von Larisch and Otto Hurn in Vienna, and by Edward Johnston in England. They conclude that the minuscule forms were generated by changes in the sphere of the book-hands and not, as was previously believed, in that of the documentary hands. When the time comes for final attempts to explain the origins of Caroline minuscule and Gothic cursive minuscule, the 'dynamic' method of la paleographie romaine will have a vital part to play; and in the meantime it should condition our approach to even the simplest problems of handwriting.

The palaeography of the Gothic hands used in innumerable manuscripts of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries is still a rough and ready affair. Excepting a few abbeys, like St Albans in the time of Matthew Paris,\textsuperscript{79} and certain religious orders, like the Cistercians at the beginning of the period,\textsuperscript{80} and possibly the Brethren of the Common Life and the Congregation of Windesheim at the end,\textsuperscript{81} the old ecclesiastical units no longer provide a sound basis for palaeographical classification. The book-trade is now mainly concentrated in fewer and larger blocks than before, in the university towns, particularly Paris and Bologna. The outlines of the palaeography of university text-books, including the mechanism of copying from an exemplar divided into peciae, have been established for France, Italy, and England in a book by the late Jean Destrez which is in many ways the most elegant and satisfying palaeographical work ever written.\textsuperscript{64} Information taken from statutes and archives is fused with the textual and palaeographical evidence of the manuscripts themselves into a living picture of a branch of the book-trade which in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was an essential instrument of the higher intellectual life of Europe. What I wish to emphasize here is that Destrez found his material — about eighty actual exemplaria and over a thousand copies made from exemplaria on the pecia system — by examining more than 15,000 manuscripts of instructional texts, in theology, law, medicine and so forth, composed by the university teachers of the time. The dates of composition of these texts, and their later evolution, which is admittedly of a special kind where the pecia system is concerned, gave him the chronological framework in which to arrange his palaeographical findings. For Oxford, at any rate, his work is being carried forward by Graham Pollard on a basis of intimate local knowledge,\textsuperscript{85} and we must hope that the other universities will receive the same treatment in due course.\textsuperscript{86}

In general, the use of particular texts, or groups of texts, to form manageable units of palaeographical study offers a promising means of reducing the vast mass of late medieval manuscripts to some sort of order. The manuscripts of Gratian's Decretum have already been suggested,\textsuperscript{87} with those of Peter Lombard and his commentators,\textsuperscript{88} of Peter Comestor, and of the biblical glosses, they might well throw much light on the development of the book in the universities, and elsewhere, before the introduction of the pecia system, which belongs to the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Later on, Dante should help with Italy and Chaucer with England; and the vernacular manuscripts of each country could well be studied as a whole. The palaeographer of liturgical manuscripts and romances could check his findings not only against textual evolution but against developments in illumination, both of which are already better known than script and the other aspects of the late medieval book.\textsuperscript{89} Indeed, by applying to the illuminated manuscripts of Flanders under the Dukes of Burgundy the full range of palaeographical, as well as art-historical, investigation, L. M. J. Delaissé has been able to identify the styles of several publishing houses, whose existence had not been suspected before, and to plot the courses of some of them from town to town.\textsuperscript{89} With Destrez and Delaissé to follow, late medieval palaeography should make good progress in the sphere of books. It will, however, need much support from the diplomatic side if the general history of Gothic handwriting is ever to be written, since the cursive scripts used in books had their ultimate origin in documents. Two dozen new works as comprehensive and subtle as T. A. M. Bishop's catalogue of the documents issued by the English royal chancery in the twelfth century would, if strategically dispersed in time and place, go a long way to fill the gaps. In the meantime, the international handlist of dated manuscripts now being produced in
France, with G. I. Liefling's preliminary essay on how to name the types of Gothic script, will help to reduce the general confusion, and may reveal unsuspected new areas for detailed study.

The humanistic handwritings of Italy, and their diffusion to other countries, had scarcely been investigated before Traube's death, although the efforts of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian scholars to recover classical literature had already been chronicled by Voigt and Sabbadini. Since then, however, three separate intellectual movements have converged to provide a motive for Renaissance palaeography. First, classical scholars have learned that codices recentiores, however contaminated, and even collations by humanists, not to mention printed texts, sometimes preserve readings of value taken from manuscripts which have since been lost: the humanists and their manuscripts have, therefore, come to rank as something more than an interesting episode in the long history of classical scholarship. It is to a classical scholar, Traube's pupil B. L. Ulman, that we owe the first satisfactory account of the origin of humanistic round hand. Secondly, the new movements in type-design and handwriting inspired by William Morris have led some of their exponents — most notably Stanley Morison and the late James Wardrop — to examine the humanist models which have had the strongest, and most beneficial, influence on both crafts. Thirdly — and this will count for most in the long run — Renaissance thought has become, since Burckhardt first taught the modern world to value it, a major historical subject in its own right. If we include the pre-humanist modifications of Gothic handwriting used by such men as Petrarch and Boccaccio, there is still much to be done. The textual approach seems unlikely to help here, since the contents of humanist manuscripts are so diverse; but the period is well documented, and the libraries of princes, such as that of the Kings of Naples, investigated by Tamaro de Marinis and of leading scholars, such as Coluccio Salutati, investigated by B. L. Ulman, seem to offer the most promising avenues for progress outside the charmed circle of the master scribes. The crucial position in the humanistic book-trade of the Florentine entrepreneur Vespasiano da Bisticci is luckily being attended to already. Palaeography does not, in my view, end with the Renaissance. When the time comes to write the history of modern scripts by relating the precepts of the writing masters, about which pioneers like Morison and Sir Ambrose Heal have already taught us so much, to the all too variable practice of well-educated men — clergys are another matter — I imagine that only a laborious prosopographical approach will be proof against misleading generalizations. The use of Secretary by Mrs Siddons's husband certainly makes me wish to know more about his background.

I hope this short survey will have persuaded you that the consortium of palaeography, philology, and art history formed, during and since Traube's day, to exploit the medieval book as a source of history, is working well, even if its servants, paid and unpaid, are still far too few in number. The palaeographical side of the undertaking is the one in most need of support, since at the present rate of progress it will be a long time before work on the centuries after the ninth catches up with what has already been done on the centuries before. Whether it will ever be possible to identify the thousands of scribes, decorators, and illuminators of the later period with anything like the precision already achieved in the identification of the painters of Attic vases remains to be seen. When the time is ripe for it, the attempt will have to be made, and in due course an even greater man than Sir John Beazley will doubtless be born to sharpen our eyesight and show us how; but he had better wait in the wings for another fifty years, since the stage is unlikely to have been set for him before the centenary of Traube's death.

The interest of palaeography will not be exhausted until the day to day work of the author's study, the monastic scripsitum, and the workshops of the lay publishers, scribes, and illuminators has become as intelligible and familiar to us as the world of medieval government and administration. It is only by disentangling the careers of individual authors and craftsmen, and examining the rules and records of the various institutions which they served, that we can hope to understand the human activities involved in the authorship and production of medieval books. The splendid collections of facts put together by Wilhelm Wattenbach and Emile Leine, useful though they are, are too little digested, and too detached from the manuscripts themselves, to answer our questions satisfactorily. More to the point are the revelations, which I have already mentioned, of the institution of the peca, and of the interlocking biographies of the publishers, scribes and illuminators who worked for the Burgundian court. Equally instructive is the discovery of the little group of secretaries who were
allowed by his superiors to live at St Thomas Aquinas's elbow, friar though he was, to copy texts for him and take down at his dictation fair copies of his own works. Analysis of the references to books in the writings of St Jerome has not only brought us closer to the Saint who composed them and the loyal friends who disseminated them, but furnished an enlightening general model of the literary mechanisms of the patristic age as a whole. C. H. Roberts, on the changes from roll to codex and from pagan to Christian books, and Curt F. Bühlcr, on the relations between scribes, decorators and printers in the fifteenth century, have, I believe, given us a foretaste of the kind of synthesis towards which the progress of palaeography is gradually leading. We are beginning to find that we can go behind the books to the thoughts and behaviour of men, while they were composing, copying, and decorating them; and the time has come to accept that kind of knowledge as a conscious aim.

As I first learned from my tutor in ancient history, R.H. Dundas, a man who cared more for intelligence and common sense than for brute erudition, the historian's best insurance against making nonsense of the past is to stimulate, and regulate, his imagination by putting himself in the shoes of this or that particular man. Again, handwriting and book-making in the Middle Ages were crafts and not arts, so that what one might call their 'intrinsic' content is bound to be very slight, compared to the intrinsic content of the expressive arts of painting and sculpture; but we may as well be considering whether they have any or not; and the study of particular craftsmen in their particular settings offers the best hope of either improving on, or discrediting once and for all, the bleak generalizations which have so far been the only fruit of this kind of inquiry into medieval scripts.

III

A LAST WORD about palaeography's place in a university. You will understand that a palaeographer has to do his work on script and books with one hand. The fingers of the other must all be reserved for putting into a wide and appetizing range of different pies, from philology to the history of art. The worst preparation for palaeographical research would, therefore, be a first degree in palaeography itself. The best would surely be a degree in medieval and early Renaissance studies in which the philology — in the wider sense — of medieval Latin and of a vernacular language, and the history of thought, would have equal status with political and administrative history. As they wait for that millennium, palaeographers will hope to see some changes in the usual English syllabus for history which will direct the student away from an excessive preoccupation with the world of telegrams and anger towards literature, philosophy and art. Palaeographical work disposes a man to agree with the Chichele Professor of Modern History at Oxford that although 'the study of environment can never lose its interest, it is preparatory to the study of the thoughts and visions, moods and emotions of articulate people'; and that 'these are the valuable deposit of the past'. If some such changes were ever made, palaeography could reasonably claim a place as an optional subject in the syllabus for the first degree in history; after all, it is already a useful optional subject in the English syllabus, at least in this University. Again, the history graduate who chose for his second degree a subject in which palaeography played some part would no longer run the risk of falling behind his politically-minded contemporaries in the competition for lectureships.

So long as things remain as they are, full-time palaeographers will be rare birds, and progress in palaeography will be slow and erratic, since it will have to wait on other interests. But we have no call to be gloomy, least of all here. The collection of palaeographical books in our University Library is one of the best — and surely the best tended — in the world; the Board of Studies in Palaeography provides excellent lectures on everything from archaic Greek script to nineteenth-century English autograph-collectors; the activities of the Institutes of Historical Research, Classical Studies, and Archaeology, and of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, are often relevant to palaeographical problems; the British Museum and the Public Record Office are round the corner; travel to Oxford and Cambridge, with their great collections of manuscripts, is still just possible. With all this behind him, any occupant of this chair is bound to feel that if he can not merely show his pupils how to read their manuscript sources aright, but give them some insight into the methods and higher sums of palaeography, good will come of it.

He will hope to be allowed to influence in this way pupils from as many departments as possible. For one thing, the basic skills of palaeography are archaeological, and training in the make-up,
script, and decoration of medieval books is as good an introduction as any to the cleaner side of archaeology in general; and a tincture of palaeography can encourage historians and philologists to collaborate more readily in archaeological work. Again, no medievalist can hope to avoid for ever the task of describing manuscripts. By now, nearly everybody has passed beyond the stage of writing down 'Codex membranaceus, saeculo nono, ut ferunt, exaratus', or 'Char- taceus, saec. XV', and leaving it at that; but many editors, and others, could usefully tell us more than they habitually do about manuscripts which are, and may long remain, under-catalogued, and about neglected aspects of manuscripts that are better known. So long as the editorial policy of *Scriptorium*, our distinguished and flourishing trade paper, continues to be governed by the catholic taste of its founder François Massai, nothing that is good need be wasted; and Sir Roger Mynors's introduction to his *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* shows how much an editor who understands and respects palaeography and the history of textual transmission can do to forward them, even when his 'sole aim has been to establish the relationship of the manuscripts to one another'.

What chiefly matters is that most of the best palaeographical writing — including Ludwig Traube's — has come, and always will come, from scholars whose chief commitment has been to some other discipline, but who found themselves, in the course of work they were paid to do, attending to a palaeographical problem and finding a solution to it. When 'amateurs' of this kind turn to palaeography, nobody who has taught them will regret that he saw too little of them to make them orthodox, since amateurs, to quote Kenneth Sismam, are 'less likely to be over-influenced by ... those simplifying assumptions and generalizations which, in an historical subject, are convenient for teaching but unfavourable to research'. But if enough dogs are allowed to see the rabbit, a few of them will go after it.

So much for the place of palaeography in the training of professional historians and philologists. Has it anything to offer to the student who leaves his university after taking his first degree? Yes, it has. A mind that has been well trained in other ways will lose nothing — far from it — by seeing the physical world through a trained eye. As an undergraduate, I went to classes given by a great classical and Celtic archaeologist, Paul Jacobthal. He would hand one a photograph and hiss through his veil of tobacco smoke: 'Now: tell me what you see.' My whole life, not just my work, has been enlarged by the attempts I then made to tell him what I saw. The greatest privilege given to the teacher of an archaeological subject is the chance to enlarge the lives of his pupils by arousing a faculty — the sparkling faculty of sight — that might else have lain dormant, under a dead weight of reading. Nowadays, to make friends with Ekkhardt's geese can reward us in ways which their master did not foresee.
2 · Names of Scripts:
A Plea to all Medievalists

Let me start by offering a warm welcome to Oxford, on behalf of the British participants in this Symposium,¹ to all our friends from abroad. It gives us very great pleasure to see so many of you here and to know that we are about to enjoy your company for a week.

We owe this pleasure to the generosity of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (D. A. A. D.), to whom we are most grateful for it; and I am sure I may speak for you all, wherever you come from, and express our collective thanks to the D. A. A. D. for their patronage and to Frau Schmitz, Dr Kent and Professor Ganz for all the hard administrative and academic work that has gone into the preparation of what is surely destined to be a memorable Symposium.

Much of what else I am going to say will be personal, for reasons which will appear in a moment, and unworthy to be recorded; but I will try to be partly serious. The 'Role of the Book in Medieval Culture' is a complicated affair, and not even the sixteen learned speakers whom we are to hear this week will be able to cover it with any approach to completeness. But we are certainly going to hear, under each of the headings that Peter Ganz has selected, exemplary treatments of important themes; and the volume in which the lectures are to be published will be much more than the sum of its parts — a collection valuable not only for the content of each paper but as a guide to five crucial aspects of the medieval book as a historical phenomenon.

The aspects of medieval books which engage my own attention and affection — namely their physical characteristics, their handwritings, their decoration and their illustration — will not be in the foreground, I suspect, in any of the papers we are going to hear; but it will still be fair to say at the end of the week that everything we have heard has depended on sound knowledge of things like that: what Bob Delaissé used to talk about as l'archéologie du livre.

I came up to this college as an undergraduate on 17 January 1941, knowing little about it except that it was 'done' to call it 'the
House', not Christ Church, and certainly not Christ Church College. Snow had fallen the night before and the crumbling Headington stone of which most Oxford buildings then consisted looked more than usually time-honoured against the pure whiteness on the ground and the blue of the sky. I was enthralled and started a journal which never got beyond its epigraph, taken from W. H. Auden, who had been an undergraduate at the House in the 20s and was to return to it at the end of his life as a part-time resident:

Since you are going to begin today,
Let us consider what it is you do.

One possibility I failed to consider was that on the Sunday afternoon of 26 September 1982 I should be standing here talking to you. How then has it come about?

My first tutor at the House, R. G. Barrington-Ward, was a distinguished exponent of a traditional Oxford approach to the Classics, in which what counted was the ability to forge Greek and Latin prose and verse by authors such as Plato and Sophocles, Cicero and Ovid; and yet he more or less ordered me to take, in my first examination, the optional paper in Greek sculpture. This meant classes with Paul Jacobsthal, a Student (meaning Fellow) of the House and Reader in Celtic Archaeology. The former Professor of Classical Archaeology at Marburg had come to Oxford as a refugee because it was the home of his friend of pre-1914 student days in Germany, J. D. Beazley. A weekly class on sculpture with Jacobsthal, attended by one other undergraduate, and two lectures a week on Greek vases by Beazley, attended by half a dozen others at most, for four terms, marked me for life. Barrington-Ward was a master of his trade — as Deputy Public Orator he was busy writing dozens of Ciceronian eulogies on the political and military pillars of the Allied war effort on whom the University was assiduously conferring honorary degrees (and he was very apt to read them to his pupils at tutorials); but there were too many false quantities in my verses, though I did well enough in the sculpture paper, and the result was a second-class in the first half of the degree. In the second historical and philosophical half, for which I came back to Oxford from the mock battlefields of Salisbury Plain in 1945, I got another second-class, after which I let myself be dissuaded from a career in classical archaeology on the grounds that there were too many better men ahead of me in the queue for a mere handful of jobs. After a number of unsuccessful attempts to find employment in the real world, a series of accidents, of which I will spare you the details, led me into the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum, where I soon found that the Early Middle Ages offered congenial scope to a historical sense attuned to the variety and discontinuity of the sources for Greek history and archaeology down to the Peloponnesian War.

Will you forgive me if I recall the reactions of the two men from whom I learned most as an undergraduate at the House to my attempt to enter the British Museum? Though his published work was confined to a handful of short notes on Greek history (the manuscript of his commentary on Thucydides was stolen with his luggage from a wartime train), R. H. Dundas was a brilliant teacher who was proud to have taught Stanley Robinson, Humphrey Payne and Alan Blakeway; and if his colleagues in other Colleges — Wade-Gery, Meiggs, Andrewes — were better informed, I doubt if they were better critics. To my request for another reference, Dundas's characteristically needling reply was: 'You'd better get this job. I'm sick of writing for you'. Jacobsthal had more to say: 'Why the Museum? You should go into the City and make some money, like Rendel [a promising pre-war pupil who came back in 1945 only to find it was too late for him to take up where he had left off]. You are not a scholar, but I will write a reference for you. You have good manners, and that is important in the Museum. It is a good club. You will be happy there'.

Jacobsthal's ability to talk to his pupils as if they were people and not merely undergraduates distinguished him, in my experience, from any other don I encountered. The references did the trick; and I even discovered years afterwards, on an overnight stay, that at least one person in the House had thought well of my academic prospects, namely Adams, the scout who looked after my rooms in 1941-42: 'So you're a Professor in London now, sir. I always expected you'd be staying here with us'.

If I had stayed here it would have been as a classicist and I might never have met Francis Wormald, whom I had the good luck to follow in the Museum and after that at King's College in London. I should no doubt have met Richard Hunt, Neil Ker and Roger Mynors; but I should not have understood from the inside the extent of their influence on medieval studies in this country — an influence which has been growing steadily in the thirty-odd years
since I went to the British Museum and which, I believe, has permanently and most beneficially re-adjusted the balance of interests among British medievalists.

That Neil Ker's death just a month ago should have deprived us of the opportunity to meet him at this Symposium is a deep sorrow to us all: he was loved for more than his learning, and his loss will be felt as a personal loss by many people in many places. Though the strictly palaeographical and codicological side of his learning was both very wide and very deep, direct expression of it was more or less confined to *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* and to the introduction to *The Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon*; but the distinction as a cataloguer of medieval books on whose future reputation, as with Humphrey Wanley and M. R. James, will mostly depend, had his mastery of the archaeology of the book as its indispensable bedrock. Again, as his new handbook so clearly demonstrates, nobody knows more about Latin palaeography than Bernhard Bischoff; and yet I once heard him say that he looked forward to finishing his list of ninth-century manuscripts because that would allow him to give more time to important work. Again, if you like, Berthold Ullman's *Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* has been as fundamental to Latin humanistic palaeography as Montfaucon's book, sub-titled *De ortu et progressu litterarum Graecarum*, was to Greek palaeography; but Ullman himself saw it as an essential preliminary to the edition of Catullus, towards which he had been working for many years and which he never completed.

Since most books exist to be read, and since full appreciation even of a picture book depends on understanding its iconography, which is usually to be explained in terms of literature, there is no doubt in my mind that a working philologist, provided he can also look at manuscripts in the kind of way that Jacobsthal looked at sculpture and Beagley at vases, is likely to be the most effective student of manuscripts; by effective I mean not only comprehensive in his approach but able to draw the historical conclusions — in the widest sense of 'historical' — which justify the hard labour of collecting and analysing archaeological details, much as gold justifies the hard labour of mining and refining the ore.

Of course, there are good palaeographers of another kind. A London colleague who attended E. A. Lowe's classes in Oxford many years ago told me that he never came down below the ninth century — which was rather disappointing for her, since her research concerned bishops' registers of the thirteenth century; but that her attitude to her materials was none the less revolutionized. As a case in point, she evoked the elegant little figure writing an uncial *a* on the blackboard, stepping back to contemplate it for a moment, and then turning round with a delighted smile on his face to say: 'Isn't that a beautiful letter?' Aesthetic discrimination of a high order contributed much to the dependably high quality of the judgements in *CLA*; and a palaeographer who tries, as some do, to work as if there was no such thing as quality in handwriting, is working with one eye shut. Joan Mallon was still alive when this lecture was delivered, but now that I come to write it down I cannot bring myself to pretend that the warmth and vigour of his personality are not, alas, subjects only to be remembered, not again to be experienced at meetings such as this. If quality is important, *ductus* is fundamental; and Mallon was the first palaeographer to take adequate account of changes in the way in which written forms were constructed by separate movements of the pen.

The index to his collected papers, published by the CNRS very soon after his death as *De l'Écriture: Recueil d'Études publiées de 1937 à 1981* (1982), reveals no references to Edward Johnston, whose pioneering work in the revival of formal calligraphy in the early years of the century was known to Lowe, whose own copy of *Writing and Illuminating, and Lettering* was well worn when I saw it on his shelves at Princeton in 1966, but not much exploited even in his papers on handwriting. Mallon's own account of the origin of his method — doodling providentially interrupted by a telephone call — is perfectly in keeping with the originality of which his life and work contained so much.

And this brings me to my main point. Interested as he was in the dynamics of handwriting as the key to its development, Mallon was acutely, indeed obstreperously, aware of the silliness of the names for Roman scripts which we have inherited from the age of Mabillon and the Two Benedictines.

Silly though they undoubtedly are, most of us have declined to accept Mallon's contention that the scripts should be renamed in some manner that reflects their natures and historical relationships to each other: for one thing, they are too deeply embedded in the literature, and for another we all know what they mean. Traube's
introduction of the term 'Insular' has enabled early specimens of handwriting from the British Isles to be compared with Continental script without begging the question of whether they were Irish or Anglo-Saxon in type or origin; and the attribution of suitable names to distinct local types of pre-Caroline minuscule on the Continent has greatly reduced the area of uncertainty in what Traube called the 'transitional period' between Late Antiquity and the Caroline rotunda. Lowe's use of 'Insular majuscule' in CLA was unfortunate; and I myself prefer to use — in preference to Lowe's binary system of majuscule and minuscule — a more elaborate set of definitions for the various grades of Insular script; one inspired by Gerard Liefeinck's set of definitions for Gothic cursiva, as expounded in his part of *Nomenclature des Écritures litterales* (1954), the work which includes Bischoff's definition of 'gothique primitive' as the link between the Caroline and Gothic book scripts.

Thanks to *Nomenclature* and to applications of Liefeinck's principles such as Malcolm Parkes's *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250-1500* (1969), the old dispensation under which all late medieval handwriting was either 'book hand' or 'charter hand' — to use the English terms for an international concept — has been, or ought to have been, superseded. When I was examined in philosophy in 1948, Wittgenstein was beginning to enter the collective bloodstream of Oxford philosophy and I came away with one proposition of his which I sometimes think I understand. 'Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen'. I find that with the help of Liefeinck and Parkes on *litera cursiva* and of S. J. P. van Dijck on *litera textualis* ('An Advertisement Sheet of an early fourteenth-century Writing Master at Oxford', *Scriptorium* 10, 1956, 47-64) — not to mention Martin Steinmann, *Ein mittelalterliches Schriftmusterblatt*, *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 21, 1975, 450-8, and work by J. P. Gumbert, including 'A Proposal for a Cartesian Nomenclature', in *Miniatures, Scripts, Collections, Essays presented to G. I. Liefeinck*, 4, Amsterdam, 1976, 45-52 — one can discuss Late Medieval scripts with students in a way that was impossible with nothing but a binary system of book hand and charter hand. *Nomenclature* was intended to prepare the way for the use of adequate definitions in the international catalogue of dated manuscripts which owes its existence to Charles Samaran — whose death is another all too severe loss to be mourned since this lecture was delivered; and it is a disappointment to me that only Liefencek himself has had the courage to offer definitions according to his own system. The reason, I think, is that the editors have worried far too much about what are in fact only minor discrepancies between one region and another; the exact forms of letters may differ, but basic types and/or grades of *textualis* and *cursiva* are general enough within the Northern European and Italian systems of scripts in Late Medieval Europe to justify the assumption that two corresponding sets of definitions can be applied overall: of course there are many trees, but there are also two perfectly good woods.

So I should like to urge all those who write about medieval books, whether as editors of texts, as historians of art, or — most particularly — as cataloguers, to make use of the available terminology, even if their interest in the history of scripts is only incidental. Between them, they see so much and find out so much, in their own ingenious ways, about the dates and origins of books, that by making their lists and descriptions a little more informative, they will be helping themselves by helping the few palaeographers who specifically write about scripts to identify more instructive cases in the still largely uncharted ocean of Late Medieval manuscripts.

Traditional descriptions like 'Codex membranaceus sacculi fortassis duodecinis' or 'Codex chartaceus sacculo quinto decimo pulchre exaratus', and their vernacular equivalents, are no longer quite good enough although an occasional *pulchre or negligent* is better than no comment at all.