

An Introduction to Greek Palaeography and Manuscripts

Michaelmas Term 2025

Peter Toth

Thursdays, 14.30-16.00, Horton Room, Weston Library

These sessions will provide introduction and basic skills to read and study Greek manuscripts from between 1st century AD to 1500. It will give a survey of the evolution of Greek handwriting from papyrus scrolls through parchments codices up to paper books and the arrival of printed Greek. Sessions will consist of theoretical introductions to and contextualisation of the most important Greek hands followed by actual practice to read manuscripts both in the flesh at the classroom and on scans at home.

The idea is to complete a transcription exercise every week for discussion at the following session. Materials, including slides, a coursebook and the homework, will be made available on Canvas (<https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/287625>). A guide to Weston building with instructions how to find and use the Horton room is also online on the Canvas page of the course. Bibliography is available

Planned schedule

- **WEEK 1:** Introduction, early history of Greek script, earliest texts
- **WEEK 2:** Greek script in Antiquity
- **WEEK 3:** Greek majuscule scripts from 300BC to 1000AD
- **WEEK 4:** Early Greek minuscule
- **WEEK 5:** Greek minuscule scripts in 10th-12th century
- **WEEK 6:** Codicology and binding of Greek manuscripts – Andrew Honey
- **WEEK 7:** Greek hands of the 13th-14th century
- **WEEK 8:** Greek scripts before and at printing press – 1400-1600

After Michaelmas, there will be 5 tutorial sessions, 2 in Hilary and 3 in Trinity terms, to provide further practice especially for those planning to be examined but also available for others intending to practice. Dates and times of these slots will be confirmed closer to date.