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Navigation NEW DIGITAL SCRIPTORIUM
WEBSITE

NEW YORK, January 11, 2007 Columbia University Libraries has launched an enhanced and expanded version of Digital Scriptorium, the online visual catalog of medieval and renaissance manuscripts. The new web site includes over 17,000 images from manuscripts in some twenty American libraries. The database, available at <http://www.scriptorium.columbia.edu>, also provides significant new searching capabilities that allow for the retrieval of detailed information about content, illustrations, provenance, bindings and locations of over 4,000 manuscripts.



Berkeley, UCB 150

Houghton Library,

MS Typ 001Univ. of Texas, HRC
leaf I.3

The manuscript collections currently displayed in *Digital Scriptorium* are from the California State Library, Columbia University, Harvard University, the Huntington Library and Museum, Jewish Theological Seminary, Johns Hopkins University, New York Public Library, San Francisco State University, the University of California at Berkeley and at Davis, the University of Missouri at Columbia, and the University of Texas at Austin. In the first half of 2007, additional manuscript collections will be incorporated from the Free Library of Philadelphia, Fordham University, Oberlin College, Rutgers University and the universities of Kansas, Notre Dame, and Pennsylvania.

In announcing the new Digital Scriptorium, Jim Neal, Columbia's Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, stated, "Columbia University Libraries strongly embrace the importance of building and sustaining new digital research tools and initiatives in the humanities. We have invested in the future of Digital Scriptorium with the expectation that it will be a rich and sustainable resource for students and scholars across several disciplines."

Among the notable manuscripts available in the *Digital Scriptorium* are a lavishly illuminated book of hours at Berkeley (UCB 150) and a stunning 14th century Italian pontifical at the Houghton Library (MS Typ 001), the Ellesmere Chaucer at the Huntington Library (EL 26 C

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9), a compilation of canon law at Columbia that antedates the reforms of Pope Gregory IX (Western MS 82), and even a 20th-century forgery or so (e.g., HRC leaf I.3).

Digital Scriptorium was initiated in 1996 by Columbia University and the University of California at Berkeley and funded by grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation; significant additional financial support has also been provided by both Columbia and Berkeley.

As part of the current NEH grant, the *Digital Scriptorium* database and search system was entirely rewritten and moved to Columbia from Berkeley, where it had been hosted for its first ten years. Project coordination has been provided by Consuelo Dutschke, Curator of Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts, of Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Columbia's Libraries Digital Program carried out development and design of the new database, search system and web site. Reviewing the new system, David Ganz, Professor of Palaeography at King's College, London commented "The quality of the images and the inclusion of binding and specimen pages are exemplary. The new search interface is splendid."

The *Digital Scriptorium* project has attracted interest from institutions across the United States and abroad, and is increasingly seen as a critical tool for both research and teaching. It is the most comprehensive database of its kind and provides an enormous range of materials for the study of the texts and their transmission, paleography and codicology, as well as illumination, heraldry, bookbinding, and the history of collecting. Planning is currently underway for the creation of a more formal organizational structure for Digital Scriptorium, which would make it possible to seek new funding to incorporate additional manuscripts and collections, both within and outside of the United States.

Columbia University Libraries is one of the top ten academic library systems in the nation, with 9.2 million volumes, over 65,650 serials, as well as extensive collections of electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms, and other nonprint formats. The collections and services are organized into 22 libraries, supporting specific academic or professional disciplines. Columbia Libraries employs more than 400 professional and support staff to assist faculty, students, and researchers in their academic endeavors.

The Columbia Libraries Digital Program Division (LDPD) was established in 2002 to carry out planning, implementation and coordination of digital projects and services for Columbia University Libraries. The Division coordinates Columbia's collection-digitization initiatives, provides technology support and hosting for major scholarly databases such as APIS, *Digital Scriptorium* and the Papers of John Jay, develops enhanced end-user interfaces and tools for discovery of and access to the Libraries' licensed electronic resources, manages Columbia's institutional repository and digital preservation programs, and provides technology and design support for the Libraries' public and internal web sites. The Division's website may be found at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/inside/units/ldpd/>.

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library owns over 600,000 rare books in some 20 book collections and almost 26 million manuscripts in nearly 2,600 separate manuscript collections. It is particularly strong in English and American literature and history, classical authors, children's literature, education, mathematics and astronomy, economics and banking, photography, the history of printing, New York City politics, librarianship, and the performing arts. Individual collections are as eclectic as they are extensive. For additional information about the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, please call 212-854-5153 or see: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/indiv/rbml/index.html>.

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