Deciphering Secrets: Unlocking the Manuscripts of Medieval Burgos (Spain)

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)



13th Century Paleography Manual V4.0

Dr. Roger L. Martínez-Dávila

UC3M-CONEX Marie Curie Fellow Instituto de Histografia Julio Caro Baroja Universidad Carlos III de Madrid C/ Madrid, 126 Edificio Concepción Arenal Despacho 14.2.10 28903 Getafe (Madrid) Spain

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Table of Contents

13 th Century Paleography Manual	1
Table of Contents	2
Introductory Paleography: A Script from the 13th Century	3
Archivo Municipal de Burgos (Spain). Manuscript SJ-1/2	5
13 th Century Letters (Consonants and Vowels)	6
13 th Century Numbers (Roman Numerals)	12
13 th Century Abbreviations and Marginalia	15
Paleography Problem A	21
Paleography Problem B	24
Paleography Problem C	27
Homework Assignment #1	
Homework Assignment #2	31
Answer Keys	32

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Edward Holt of Saint Louis University for his review and comments on this paleography manual.

Introductory Paleography: A Script from the 13th Century

What is Paleography?

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Source: Archivo Municipal de Burgos, SJ-1/2. Used with permission.

Merriam-Webster dictionary offers two useful definitions of the term, <u>"paleography"</u>. The two definitions of this noun are:

- the study of ancient writings and inscriptions and
- an ancient manner of writing; ancient writings.

We can then appreciate that the term is both (1) the academic investigation of older forms of handwriting as well as (2) the actual handwriting itself. For our purposes, we will use the term "paleography" to describe the process of interpreting and recognizing letters and numbers in our primary sources (the manuscripts).

As a historian of medieval Europe, my approach to paleography is one focused on pragmatic use of techniques to read text. While I appreciate the beauty and details of the calligraphy, in general, I view paleography as a tool.

We begin our study of medieval Spanish (and Latin) handwriting with a manuscript held by the Archivo Municipal de Burgos (Spain) and is catalogued as SJ-1/2.¹ This manuscript is a royal donation of properties to a monastery and is dated 3 November 1091. *However, this specific manuscript is a 13th copy of the original from 1091.* In the document, Castilian King Alfonso VI concedes valuable resources (a grazing reserve, a mill, and a communal oven) to the Monastery of San Roberto de Casa Dei, which was located in the vicinity of the city of Burgos.

Historians are often interested in these types of documents because they can reveal:

- political relationships between institutions and persons,
- economic relationships that held communities together,
- the natural and manmade resources that were available, and
- many other sorts of religious and cultural norms and patterns.

In the case of this manuscript, it is intriguing because it demonstrates how Castilian kings patronized religious institutions with the donations of income-generating properties. For example, a grazing reserve of land could be used to tend to animals. Mills and ovens were

¹ The manuscript that is included in this manual was reproduced with the permission of the Archivo Municipal de Burgos (Spain).

often communal resources that charged users for their services (in-kind and monetary payments).

This manuscript is written in a script that can be characterized as *carlovingia* (Carolingian) and *francesa* (French). The script was introduced from France and into Spain via political and religious relationships during the 11th through 13th centuries. While the scribe was influenced from Carolingian and French scripts, there is variation between different hands, as standardized type is more of a (early) modern invention with printing presses.

Below is zoomable version of the entire document.

n noie omium openal iere huis a entremps. testiente anuplatens. in anunchal aus . fas i comm v utra. Cui femptoni segui as non confuper ner autered. Our nur propa a se ci contentu ourgi mee Legina Costaneia evento in caro año o po volucare uo tacen carena e meete parecum mon due tor 500 robere de canta dire ut dompno adelemo de illa ma Gapalia que ar terrere eningtifte ur puppes. 7 paring widen lepeluene" ve in nora d'ungop en monatium les tots the que atter beauter ones illas bereducures que funt un duas aquas quas una user? souena. Alta usar arlangos amolendino comitas ulos de villas oms beveduarep quas bodie haber - de in antes dederer er limul concedo illo uno mohno q e lup illos banos - une p men se laurey. pa enerde win man porcione effering in prinere i ulla que ucenant comp en inper vineger pans e pileus ma river af eriler ut i eriler e lup deuvers e onib fuis anags innur e win man porcione de po ualle de pdida ulla populari ut a p bee ou concedo se sobere de caula ofer dompno delelmo. po remisione para moze ur lemp lo ibi una bena monaciou rate e ap i po monattio de sei totas neg: i pa uillula de Corar ntto peer ut enteroz. neg: pro Arupo neg: pro Anuduba. neo pro fontide adapma: ut negocia plue à e alie pleu ur le alique loien de burges fines ut castellino que que monatio de ser roins i le monatio poruere tablare rectordere de fue auere ntto homo no ereia eu to ut sigs aue homo ut tenana prinque au denan que hunge i nolucere i pris in di inenate vas fuence ambolo chamate hecenup v polt diceffum et no lepatat en an en in dij undrove eijhe aber pena. Die min parto ilta ora ut done ur es lemp habere i lempitur o condre i uto parte espe dous facta ite lepana nori de if tria. in nonap nonebus. concience. Un. of c. wing Bognance & ungane Varo me up. ja was Sonone. ary: 1 galhera. To alfonto umproz q hane carea face degre relegenou cogu to auriliante compley any manu ma con : anoberang = fignum meun confirmany. Low coltan di gin jure ber ou qo dag ello ms uffer fare libene: + Loros gongalues armiger man . El total Bernand volerane ledys ancheps of Perry affurs comer of P findeo rodrigues equom dom'n o -Gomes burgh epe of harha alone; como of: 3 Aluano biaz. of: Revinundo pulean eps of. Maran Haines comer of Forundo dias comos of & finda dias comos of. bolentos atil Kodenoy ordones. of Pero legion ens of Pater of hur mumor of. in oncaluo numer. of. Ofmunde altougelig cps of Kodia minoz of ensteltes: reiter. Belinn reites: reites.

Ann.ny.reites: reiter.

13th Century Letters (Consonants and Vowels)

Let us now familiarize ourselves with the alphabet. Please review this sample of letters so that you can begin to learn some of the peculiarities of the script. Often, lowercase letters are used the most often, as opposed to uppercase letters. We will concentrate on lowercase letters at this time, but show you some of the uppercase letters. You will be able to practice your recognition skills in the next unit.

This paleographic sample alphabet, list of numerals, abbreviations, and marginalia is based a manuscript held by the Archivo Municipal de Burgos (Spain) and is catalogued as SJ-1/2.

Not all letters and numerals are found in this document, thus missing lowercase items are supplemented with ones from Muñoz y Rivero, Jesus. *Manual de Paleografía Diplomática Española de los Siglos XII al XVII*. Madrid: Tipolit L. Faure, 1917. (This text is in the public domain.)

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
a	a	parenten
b	白馬	Bernand?
c	CC	Face Coffancia

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
d		rodriguez
e	C	parenny
f	f.	face
g	63	vodraguez Gomez

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
h		bevechizatep
i		monattio
j	No sample	7115723317
k	No sample	RKÉ
1		galhas.
m	12	pareary

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
	O).	Marran?
n	n J	monattio
0	C C	Bimundo.
p	PP	pareary Pean

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
q	9	que
r		parenny
S	No. of the second s	monaltio
t	T	pareany
u	L	parenn

Letter	Individual Sample	Sample Within Word
V	No sample	6 V P V
W	No sample	No sample
X	Nº NO	creacto2
У	No sample	277Y
Z	Z	rodriguez

13th Century Numbers (Roman Numerals)

Roman numerals are fairly easy to identify in this paleographic sample from this paleographic sample manuscript SJ-1/2.

Not all numerals are found in this document, thus missing items are supplemented with ones from Muñoz y Rivero, Jesus. *Manual de Paleografía Diplomática Española de los Siglos XII al XVII*. Madrid: Tipolit L. Faure, 1917. (Displayed following this table.)

#	Individual	Sample Within Number
π		Sample within Number
L (1)	Sample	
I (1)	1	. c. reving.
V(5)	V	. c. www.
X (10)	X	. c. vernuf.
L (50)	No sample	
C (100)	¢.	.c. vernuf.
D (500)	No sample	
M (1000)	03.	og. c. vernuf.

I.	٦)	8
2.	า เเ	ý	ÿ
3.	u) Y Uj	ny
4.	1111	uŋ	مرا
5.	\sim	~	∿
б.	~ ∿ເ	~ ~)ッ ~y	າງ
7.	∿ા	~4	vy
8.	\sim uı	∿๚	vu
9.	Նոո	vuij	ようまにく うちましゃ
10.	×	~	بو م
II.	7 7 7 7 7 7 7	С Ч 84 Уч	e of at a
12.	zar	284	ey
20.	295	re	rere
30.	7994	ree	vee
40.	x	BAR	eL
50.	2:	่น	L.
60.	7994 X 2: 2,X	1~	et Lite
70.	2.7	L Ire here	hee
90.	27	heppe	here
100.	C	C	<u>ہ</u>
200.	¢¢	cc	۰ ۵۰
300.	"	cce	the
400.	cccc	cacc	the
500.	Þ	δ	Ð
1.000.	M	2	ĨŠ.
2.000.	22	MM	كس
40.000.	ž	ols	ers

.

In the sample manuscript, the following date is recorded:



The date reads, "Era . M . C . XXVIIII ." This date is: Era. 1000. 100. 29. Or 1129.

However, Spanish "eras" are not the same as the contemporary Gregorian calendar. According *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia* (2013):

The medieval Christian calendar in Spain was complicated, as it was everywhere in the Middle Ages. There was, in fact, no precise fixed calendar, but rather different "eras." The most important of these, for dating, was that simply known as era, which calculated the year of the birth of Christ. However, this was erroneously calculated as 38 B.C., and thus it is necessary to subtract 38 years from the Spanish era in order to arrive at the actual Christian date A.D. This inaccurate system was replaced in the fourteenth century with *año de nascimiento* (year of Nativity), or Christian Era (as opposed to Spanish Era) dating. This was put into effect in Aragon in 1349; Valencia, 1358; Castile, 1383; Portugal, 1422."²

Therefore, the actual date is = 1129 minus 38 = 1091 A.D.

² Gerli, E Michael. *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge, 2013: 190.

13th Century Abbreviations and Marginalia

Overview

Abbreviations in text are usually indicated by a pen mark above the word. Scribes employed abbreviations for commonly used words as well as long words to conserve physical space on a document. Let us review a few of the abbreviations that appear in this paleographic sample manuscript SJ-1/2.

For our purposes in the course, we only want you to be able to recognize when an abbreviation is being utilized. To master abbreviations, you will need to memorize common Spanish and Latin words. Why is this the case? Abbreviations do not correspond to exact letters, rather they can refer to different letters in different words. For example, a dash "-" in the abbreviated "noie" corresponds to the entire word, "nomine". Here we see that the two missing "n" are symbolically communicated with the dash. (See below.) However, the dash "-" in the abbreviated "dno" corresponds to the entire word, "domino". Here we see that the missing "omi" are symbolically communicated with the dash. (See below.) Therefore, the dash can represent different letters in different words.

Marginalia refers to text that is written alongside of the main text (or in the margin). Often, marginalia is an abstract of important information within the document or used as an indexing mechanism.

Abbreviation Word	Individual Sample	Sample Within Number (notes regarding abbreviation)
et	T.	Not applicable (in this example, the symbol always represents "et", or the word "and")
noie no <u>min</u> e		(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes two "n")

Abbreviation Word	Individual Sample	Sample Within Number (notes regarding abbreviation)
dno d <u>omi</u> no	And the second s	(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "omi")
parit parit <u>er</u>	47	(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "er")
Cui Cui <u>us</u>	J.	(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "us")

Abbreviation Word	Individual Sample	Sample Within Number (notes regarding abbreviation)
aq aq <u>uas</u>	22	(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "uas")
criles c <u>ur</u> riles		(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "ur")
u u <u>ero</u>	0	(in this example, the symbol above the word symbolizes "ero")

Abbreviation	Individual Sample	Sample Within Number (notes regarding abbreviation)
Word	1	
р		
	10	MANNOC
pro or per	J.	(in this example, the horizontal line on the descender of "p" mostly likely symbolizes "pr")

If you are interested in learning some of the more common abbreviations, you can review these tables and graphics from the *Manual de Paleografía Diplomática Española de los Siglos XII al XVII*.

Vowels in Abbreviations

Here are samples of the vowels a, e, i, o, and u in abbreviated words.

1	
pta	prata.
pdictis	prædictis.
ta	tria.
integ	integro.
cdelis	crudelis.
incnatio	incarnatio.
ftile	fertile.
cciter	circiter.
cpus	corpus.
madale	muradale.

Most Common Abbreviations in Documents from the 12th through 15th Centuries

abb	abbas.
act	actum.
am	amen.
ap	apud.
	•
april	Aprilis.
au	autem.
conf	confirmat.
damn	damnum.
dat	datum.
decemb	Decembris.
den	denarios.
dic	dicit.
dioc	diocesis.
dix	dixit.
еаг	earum.
expl	explicit.
fac	facit.
febr	Februarii.
fec	fecit.
fidel	fidelis.

fuer	fuerunt.
gen	genuit.
hab	habet.
id	idus.
incip	incipit.
ioh	Johannes.
it	item.
jan	Januarii.
jul	Julii.
jun	Junii.
kal	kalendas.
legion	legionis.
lib	liber.
mat	mater.
morab	morabetinos.
nich	nichil (por nihil).
n o	non.
nob	nobis.
n on	nonas.
not	notuit ó notarius.
octob	Octobris.
pat	pater.
placit	placitum.
prid	pridie.
• prs	presbiter.
reg. exp	rege exprimente (1).
rob	roboro, roborat ó robo-
	ravit.
s a lt	salutem.
scil	scilicet.
sic	sicut.
sign	signum.
sol	solidos.
tam	tamen.

Paleography Problem A

Please review the 13th century manuscript image below. It is a selection from the manuscript: Archivo Municipal de Burgos SJ 1/2. You can practice your beginning paleography skills by identifying the letters you see in this image. You will have three attempts to answer correctly. If you do not answer correctly, you will be shown the answer. Good luck!

75	n A1	omum	operici	vera .	Juns	r nyrem	ng. Im	RICHT	e arm	29
-F-I	विडा का	14 A2	utra.	un" ien	ipitini	mani A3	non	murin	er nea	*
A4	elemeta.	cu ta	ntan?	an A5	celeftia	purit -	ácha	a A6	111.257	25

Box A1

For the handwriting labeled by the box A1, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A1, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A1, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box A2

For the handwriting labeled by the box A2, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A2, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A2, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box A3

For the handwriting labeled by the box A3, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A3, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A3, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box A4

For the handwriting labeled by the box A4, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A4, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A4, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box A5

For the handwriting labeled by the box A5, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A5, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A5, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box A6

For the handwriting labeled by the box A6, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A6, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box A6, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Paleography Problem B

Please review the 13th century manuscript image below. It is a selection from the manuscript: Archivo Municipal de Burgos SJ 1/2. You can practice your beginning paleography skills by identifying the letters you see in this image. You will have three attempts to answer correctly. If you do not answer correctly, you will be shown the answer. Good luck!

erna Colta B2 evento m contentu quar 1B1 **B**3 cam So where B6 cai

Box B1

For the handwriting labeled by the box B1, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B1, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B1, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B2

For the handwriting labeled by the box B2, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B2, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B2, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B3

For the handwriting labeled by the box B3, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B3, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B3, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B4

For the handwriting labeled by the box B4, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B4, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B4, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B5

For the handwriting labeled by the box B5, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B5, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B5, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B6

For the handwriting labeled by the box B6, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B6, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B6, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box B7

For the handwriting labeled by the box B7, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B7, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box B7, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Paleography Problem C

Please review the 13th century manuscript image below. It is a selection from the manuscript: Archivo Municipal de Burgos SJ 1/2. You can practice your beginning paleography skills by identifying the letters you see in this image. You will have three attempts to answer correctly. If you do not answer correctly, you will be shown the answer. Good luck!

C1	pupes	To pe C2	ubidem t	epeluent" v e' up invin C3 aquag quay una uocre.	ungip cen	monatium	CAIONS TE CS STO	ſ
e be	inducarer	C6 funt	ur dC7	aquas quay una uocre.	Biouena.	lla ucar a	rangover amolendu	0

Box C1

For the handwriting labeled by the box C1, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C1, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C1, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C2

For the handwriting labeled by the box C2, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C2, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C2, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C3

For the handwriting labeled by the box C3, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C3, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C3, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C4

For the handwriting labeled by the box C4, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C4, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C4, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C5

For the handwriting labeled by the box C5, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C5, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C5, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C6

For the handwriting labeled by the box C6, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C6, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C6, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Box C7

For the handwriting labeled by the box C7, please type the FIRST LETTER of the word displayed.

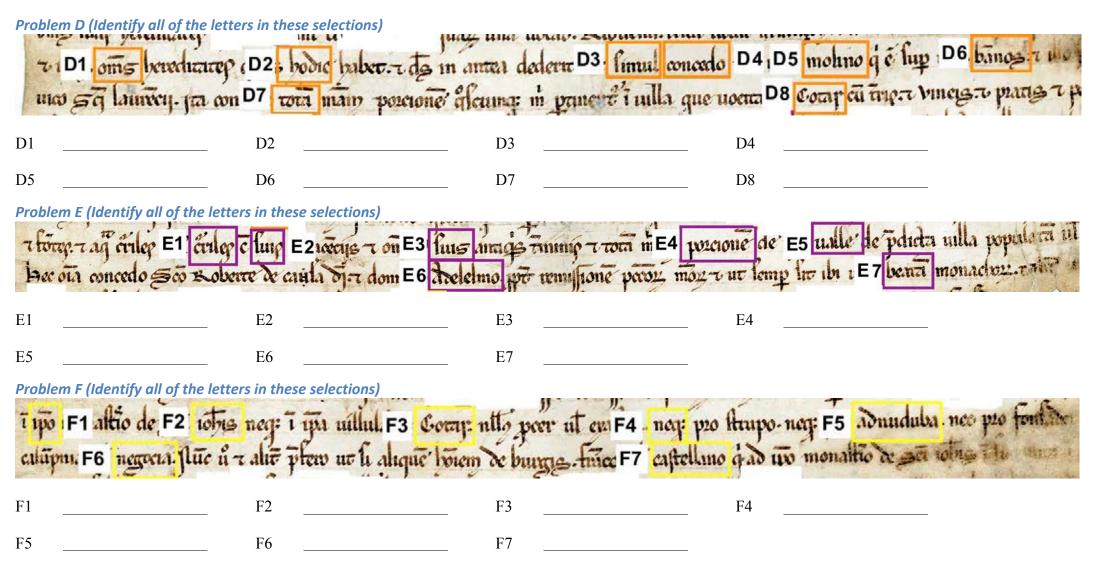
For the handwriting labeled by the box C7, please type the LAST LETTER of the word displayed.

For the handwriting labeled by the box C7, how many letters are in the word? Note: If this word is abbreviated, please only count the letters that you see written on the page.

Homework Assignment #1

Deciphering Secrets - 13th Century Paleography

Homework #1



Homework Assignment #2

Deciphering Secrets - 13th Century Paleography

Homework #2



Answer Keys

Paleography Problem A

Box Word (# of Letters)

- A1 omium (5) Note: This is an abbreviated word. The actual word is omnium.
- A2 ultra (5)
- A3 non (3)
- A4 elemeta (7) Note: This is an abbreviated word. The actual word is elementa.
- A5 celestia (8)
- A6 mari (4)

Paleography Problem B

Box Word (# of Letters)

- B1 Regina (6)
- B2 euenit (6)
- B3 caro (4)
- B4 mee (3)
- B5 dno (3)
- B6 causa (5)
- B7 dompno (6)

Paleography Problem C

Box Word (# of Letters) C1 paupes (6) C2 ibidem (6) C3 burgis (6) C4 monastium (9) C5 ego (3) C6 sunt (4) C7 aquas (5)

Homework 1

Problem D

Box	Word
D1	oms
D2	hodie
D3	simul
D4	concedo
D5	molino
D6	banos
D7	tota
D8	Cotar

Problem E

Box	Word
E1	criles
E2	suis
E3	suis
E4	porcione
E5	ualle
E6	adelelmo
E7	beata

Problem F

Box	Word
F1	ipo
F2	iohis
F3	Cotar
F4	neq
F5	adnuduba
F6	negocia
F7	castellano

Homework #2

Problem G

Word
de
auere
siqs
femina
uoluerit
chareat

Problem H

Box	Word
H1	pena
H2	pacto
H3	habeatis
H4	Facta
H5	septura
H6	nouebris

Problem I

Box	Word
I1	Legione
I2	alfonso or alfonsos or alfonsus (this one is a difficult one because we know the name,
	Alfonso, but the spelling is a hybrid one)
I3	carta
I4	auxiliante
I5	manu
I6	signum