manuscript "culture"

the authority of the text

history of information

February 7, 2013
under way?

administrative issues or questions?

waitlists - clearing

bspace - screwing up

forums - not yet for discussion

Bancroft tour - last chance
Title Text

Week 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 11 12 13 14 15

Year
2015
1980
1950
1900
1800
1700
1600
1200
600
300
50
500
3000
5000
30,000
50,000

Trithemius
1462-1516

Plato
427-347 BC

Wassup?
"N' much."

UDACITY

Wednesday, February 6, 2013
the authority of the text
& the "missing" revolution

history of information

February 7, 2013
manuscript "culture"

the authority of the text & the "missing" revolution

U.S. Contends S. & P. Purposely Used Faulty Models

BY PETER EAVIS
overview

unintended consequences

authority of the book

technologies of the book

eyewitnesses

manuscript "culture"

Plato
Phaedrus, ?360bc

Johannes Trithemius,
In Praise of Scribes, 1492

How would Williams judge?
Plato's perspective

that "new technology" -- writing

cast of characters

Socrates
Phaedrus
Lysias
Thamus
Theuth
Thebes
the standard view?

Socrates didn't like books

"I am a lover of learning ... Men lead hungry animals by waving a branch or some vegetables before their noses, and it looks as if you will lead me all over Attica and anywhere else you please ... by waving the leaves of a speech [book] in front of me"

"Plato ...had such a love of books that he bought three books ... at the price of 10,000 denarii. Aristotle ... acquired a few books for three Attic talents which amounts to 72,000 nummii."
what good is writing?

Theuth: "An accomplishment ... which will improve both the wisdom and the memory of the Egyptians ..."

Thamus: "The discoverer of an art is not the best judge of the good or harm which will accrue to those who practice it. ...Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources."
Thamus updated?
Internet Use Affects Memory, Study Finds

By PATRICIA COHEN
Published: July 14, 2011

The widespread use of search engines and online databases has affected the way people remember information, researchers are reporting.

The scientists, led by Betsy Sparrow, an assistant professor of psychology at Columbia, wondered whether people were more likely to remember information that could be easily retrieved from a computer, just as students are more likely to recall facts they believe will be on a test.

Dr. Sparrow and her collaborators, Daniel M. Wegner of Harvard and Jenny Liu of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, staged four different memory experiments. In one, participants typed 40 bits of trivia — for example, “an ostrich’s eye is bigger than its brain” — into a computer. Half of the subjects believed the information would be saved in the computer; the other half believed the items they typed would be erased.

The subjects were significantly more likely to remember information if they thought they would not be able to find it later. “Participants did not make the effort to remember when they thought they could later look up the trivia statement they had read,” the authors write.
Socratic concerns

speeches
rhetoric
sophists
writing
**wisdom**
truth [and authority]
dialectic
"Writing circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it."

"for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality; they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant."
"Writing involves a similar disadvantage to painting ... if you ask [words] what they mean ... they simply return the same answer over and over ... writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers ...

"when a man employs the art of **dialectic**, and, fastening upon a suitable soul, plants and sows in it **truths** accompanied by knowledge ... such truths can defend themselves ..."
"But though books are easily procured, yet, even in this age of information, there are thousands in the lower classes that cannot read. Besides, it is a well-known truth, that the same precepts inculcated by a living instructor, adorned by a proper oratory, enforced by a serious and authoritative manner, produce a powerful effect, not to be experienced in solitary retirement."

Vicesimus Knox,

*Essays Moral and Literary*, 1778
living instructors?

"The people's University of the Air will have a greater student body than all of our universities put together." --RCA, 1932

coming up: social implications
Trithemius (1462-1516)
native of Trittenheim
Abbot of St Martin's, Sponheim, 1483-1505
Trithemius didn't like print

"It is my greatest pleasure to own and to know all books I ever saw or which I knew to have appeared in print ... To my regret ... money was always lacking ... for the satisfaction of my passion for books."

1483: 48 books in monastery library

1505: 2,000
reading between the lines

internal battles

contemplation, manual labor, preaching

vs

scribal practice

"The dedicated and sincere scribe ... will not receive less than the preacher"

book collecting

"There are some who reproach lovers of books for having ... too many"
humanism & the university

"In the 700 years between the Fall of Rome and the 12th century, it was the monasteries .... which enjoyed an almost complete monopoly of book production and so of book culture.... from the end of the 12th century a profound transformation took place ... reflected in the founding of the universities and the development of learning."

--Febvre & Martin, The Coming of the Book, 1984
Manuscript Production in Europe, 6th-15th century

"By 1200 most scribes were professionals instead of being monks"


Buringh & van Zanden, "Charting the 'Rise of the West': Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe" Journal of Economic History 2009
"... not obvious at first ... that printed books would universally supersede the use of manuscripts ..."

Knox, Essays, 1782

another concern

**a reasonable lament?**

"The written word on parchment will last a thousand years. The printed word is on paper. How long will it last? The most you can expect of a book of paper to survive is two hundred years. Only time will tell."
how long?

magna curta?

from

parchment v paper
to

parchment v bits?
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"The book is a machine"
I.A. Richards

eyewitnesses

manuscript "culture"
rolled to flat

"the revolution between the second and fourth centuries that changed the very structure of the book by substituting the codex for the roll"

--Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meaning*, 1995

"Homerus ... Vergilius ... Cicero ... Titus Livy ... in membranus...quam brevis immensum cepit membrana"

-Martial (c38-103), *Epigrams*
a material question?

stone
clay
wood
wax
parchment/vellum
papyrus
palm
silk
paper

the "immutable mobile"
--Bruno Latour
material changes

determinism?

- parchment at Pergamum
- papyrus at Alexandria
- palm in India (pattachitra)
- silk in China

"the parchment alone in a fine Bible, even allowing for the shorthand script of the day, represented a flock of perhaps three hundred sheep"

-- John North, God's Clockmaker, 2005

paper
looking ahead

"The stone, the palm-leaf, the biblos or bark of the linden tree, the leaden tablet, the papyrus, the parchment, the pugillares ... progressive advancement ... At a very late period, a substance formed of macerated linen ... superior in beauty, convenience, and duration and better adapted to the purposes of literature ... By the ease with which it is procured ... recused the ancient authors from the possibility of oblivion."

--Knox, Essays, 1782
"... recused the ancient authors from the possibility of oblivion ..."

Knox, Essays, 1782

different stories

a reasonable lament?

"The written word on parchment will last a thousand years. The printed word is on paper. How long will it last? The most you can expect of a book of paper to survive is two hundred years. Only time will tell."
technological leaders?

- paper
  - China, 200 BCE
  - Korea, 3rd century CE
  - India, 5th century
  - Japan, early 7th century
  - Islam, 8th century
  - Jews, 10th century
  - Byzantium, 9th century
  - along the "Silk Road"

- w. Europe:
  - Spain 1056 [?]
  - Italy 1255
  - France 1348
  - Germany 1390
  - Switzerland 1411
  - Britain 1494
  - Russia 1690
  - USA 1690/1
dark ages

silk road

[Map of the Silk Road and other trade routes]
dark ages

silk road
evolutionary doubts

"No evidence whatever to indicate whether the change of material influenced the change of form, or vice versa... papyrus roll, the papyrus codex, the parchment roll, and the parchment codex... all perfectly adequate and acceptable forms of book."

superior technology?

random access
one handed
two-sided
pagination
marginalia
footnotes
indexes
trivializing the past?

handy pages divisions (incipits, explicits, colophons, sillyboi)

Edwin Smith Papyrus c. 1600 bce NY Academy of Medicine
formal changes

parchment to paper
  China, 200 BCE
  Korea, 3rd century
  India, 5th century
  Japan, early 7th century
  Islam, 8th century
  Jews, 10th century
  Byzantium, 9th century
  Western Europe, 11th century

scroll to codex
  Christians, 2nd century
  Islam, 8-9th century
  Jews, 8-9th century
  China, 9th (butterfly)
  13th (thread binding)
  Korea, ?12th century (sutra binding)
  Japan 18th century

what happened to the "Silk Road"?
to the manor born

Earl's Court Manor Roll, 1554

"Why medieval England ... kept its records predominantly in rolls remains a mystery."

--Clanchy
"The need for readily available information, which had been steadily rising, was accelerated by the advent of Christianity ..."

"The need to find information more rapidly than is possible in a papyrus-roll-form book initiated the development of the Greco-Roman codex in the second century ..."

technological triumph?
"In late antiquity, all authority was founded on Scripture...and the highest authority, the authority of the church, was represented by the codex."

--Guglielmo Cavallo, "Du Volumen au Codex," 1997

"[P]agans ... continued to regard it as a culturally inferior form. In contrast, the great majority of Christian texts were already in the form of codices."

--Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls," 2002

"[A Jew] took an oath 'on his roll' ... whereas a Christian swore on the book of the Gospel."

--Michael Clanchy, "Memory to Written Record," 1993
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"The oldest writings to survive to our time were inscribed five thousand years ago by temple bureaucrats recording economic transactions ... crops, animals, manufactured goods"


"In the twelfth century... magnates used documents occasionally ... In the thirteenth .. laymen began to convey property to each other by charter; in the latter half ... this practice extended below the gentry class to some peasants.

-- Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 1993
trustworthy?

donations of Constantine (c. 750-800)

forgery recognized by Nicholas of Cusa, 1565
Hadith & Isnäd

"documenting the authenticity of all transmission of knowledge ... truth does not reside in documents, however authentic, ancient, or well-preserved, but in authentic human beings ... Documents alone, without a line of persons possessed of both knowledge and righteousness ... are useless ... a book ... of no use without ... certification of master"

Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam," 1993
what/who to trust?

Henry I v Anselm

"We don't accept the evidence of monks against bishops, why should we accept that of a sheepskin?"
medieval contracts
truthiness

documentary problems

"If you ask [documents] what they mean ... they simply return the same answer over and over again ..."

"Truth is not enough for your; you think it matters who the speaker is and where he comes from. ..."

--Phaedrus
sealing the deal
"Fine and Recovery: Conveyance of property, 7th Ward NYC, 1793
chirograph
1793

how different from ...?
Hacked: Passwords have failed and it's time for something new

By Mathew Honan  |  17 January 13
Hacked: Passwords have failed and it's time for something new

By Mathew Honan  |  17 January 13

TURKTRUST: No harm from fake digital certificates

07 January 2013

In the wake of the revelation that browser vendors Microsoft, Google and Mozilla have blocked two faulty SSL certificates generated by Turkish Certificate Authority third-party TURKTRUST, the company has responded that there was no attack, fraud or other crime leading up to or arising from the mistake.
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documenting ownership ancient issues?

**Buri Buri land grant 1827-1872**
documenting ownership ancient issues?

Buri Buri land grant 1827-1872
unintended consequences

quo warranto?

"No document coming from such centres of proved fabrication as Westminster, Evesham, Winchester cathedral, Chertsey and Malmesbury should be accepted at its face value without close examination. ... Ancient monasteries like Chertsey had traditionally forged charters. Now that the king was keeping copies ... abbots ensured that their forged documents were reinforced by inspection in the Chancery and enrollment among the royal records. The Chancery rolls, which were intended to prevent fraud, thus became a means of making forgeries official."

--Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record
Jean Mabillon (1632-1707)

*De Re Diplomatica*, 1681

"the Reformation era ... bringing to light thousands of documents .. hitherto inaccessible and unknown. ... France pioneered in this new historical research ... Mabillon .... Montfaucon."

-- James Thompson, "The Age of Mabillon," 1942
from authority to ...

a guide to forgery

Mabillon "had exposed the fabricated charters of the Carmelite Father Andrew, in a model memorandum which later fell into the forger's hand, and was taken by him to heart with such good effect that he was able with a subsequent fabrication to have his revenge by planting one of his forgeries ... on Mabillon himself"

--David Knowles
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manuscript "culture"
"this will kill that"?

manuscript after print

accounting

music

note taking

personal communication

"subversive forms"
a real "revolution"

and so to Gutenberg

12 Feb: Print ‘Revolution’

Required Readings

  *read* "Introductory Remarks on the Art of Printing" pp. 76-81; "On the Circumstances which Led to the Discovery of the Art of Printing, with Miscellaneous Remarks on It" pp. 81-87; & "On the Moral, Political, and Religious Effects of Printing, with Concluding remarks" pp 87-96.


Additional Materials

- Listen to *Economist* discussion at the same link.
On looking back in 1900, Henry Adams wondered whether the child of 1854 stood closer to the year 1 than to 1900. Similarly, looking at Vicesimus Knox, we ask do he and his account of printing in the 18th century seem closer to Socrates and Trithemius or to the writer of the *Economist* article on Luther in 2011.