

The Digital Humanist's Renaissance: *verba volant scripta remanent digita sunt*

By a happy coincidence, the publication of the new *Standards for Classical Language Learning* appear just as the first fruits of the grand digitization project of the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* are becoming accessible. *Digita Vaticana Onlus* is the fund-raising association that is supporting the digitization of some 80,000 manuscripts in the Vatican Library. They expect the project, which will total about 40 million pages or 45 quadrillion bytes, to last fifteen years at a cost of 50 million euros. The list of available manuscripts—the Vatican Vergil just appeared last July:

[http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.3225](http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3225)--comprises a unique repository of instructional tools and potential career opportunities. Free access and the search ability of such a wide range and volume of manuscripts will inevitably bring new approaches to paleography and textual criticism. Conundrums in manuscripts that a handful of scholars (often working in isolation) in each generation might read and advance are now able to be determined with mechanical certainty, and with a celerity that would have been unthinkable just a few decades ago. This rediscovery of antiquity in Greek and Latin digitized texts, many from the Renaissance, has presented classicists with a thrilling second Renaissance, an opportunity to reinvigorate manuscript study among undergraduates, Latin secondary teachers in training, graduate students and on-line scholarly communities. No longer tied to a location, scholars can create novel global communities in which anyone with a proficient knowledge of Greek and/or Latin will be able to participate. The digitization of the Vatican manuscript collection presents classicists with the call to interpret and present the cultural, historical, and linguistic

heritage of antiquity to the world community, the same world community of humanist learning that the manuscripts themselves represent.

Access to the digitized Vatican manuscripts will have rich and immediate implications for all five of the goal areas of the new *Standards*—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. My paper will discuss some of the general applications in the goal areas before concentrating upon three specific applications of the digitized manuscripts in our program at the University of Arizona as they relate to the goal area of Communities: 1) their use in the professional development of teachers earning secondary school certification; 2) the opportunity to coordinate a publication project of a related body of texts among graduate students and faculty; and 3) as new career opportunities in the transcription, translation, interpretation and presentation of the material in the manuscripts with their related prospects for personal and public professional outcomes.

**Professional Development:** In their methodology course, graduate students earning secondary certification will study manuscripts in all goal areas in order to use them in secondary level classroom instruction. Keeping in mind the language proficiency and cultural background of their intended audience, they will prepare a variety of instructional modules that isolate grammar, syntax, and communicative perspectives in the texts.

**The Translation Project:** The Communities goal relies upon the other four goal areas in engaging with the language and its cultural constructs beyond the classroom. A sustained translation project of a discrete set of manuscripts related to local

faculty/student interests will forge direct links between the ancient and modern world for a global community of teachers and learners.

Career Opportunities: Finally, the *Digita Vaticana* project develops in students the information, media, and technology literacy essential to the specialized expertise necessary for careers in Greek and Latin manuscript transcription, translation, interpretation, and presentation; students also profit from this close study to become competent, self-confident learners skilled in communication, critical thinking, and problem solving.

The *Digita Vaticana* publications together with the new *Standards* invite us to explore antiquity and its reception in a modern Renaissance that humanist learning would embrace even if could not have anticipated its reach.